

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Land Use, Transportation and Water Committee
February 1, 2017, 9:10 to 11 AM

Present: Susan Stompe, chair; also Nona Dennis, Don Dickenson, Rick Fraites, Doug Karpa, Bob Miller, Kate Powers, Judy Teichman, Ann Thomas, Doug Wilson, Greg Zitney. Guests: Rick Capretta, ECOcap Ventures; Melissa Apuya of Assemblyman Levine's office.

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING. Minutes of January 4, 2017 OK as distributed.

AGENDA. OK as distributed.

REDWOOD SOLAR FARM, NOVATO. Mr. Capretta described a proposal, which he is discussing in pre-application with the County CDA, for a 2 MW solar farm on property north of Novato. Salient features: adjacent to landfill so could plug into PG &E grid, proposed for 12 acres on a 20 acre site, 99 year ground lease for site, energy purchaser would be Marin Clean Energy (MCE) through feed in tariff program, financially viable due to rate offered by MCE, estimated 20-40 year life, 3 x 5 foot panels approximately nine to 10 feet tall, several studies including biological assessment underway, project in the Baylands Corridor. The property is zoned A-60. Land Use members noted concern about the county's lack of design standards for these installations, to insure they do not obliterate important habitat values.

WATER ISSUES. *Marsh Restorations Underway.* There are two marsh restorations in the works in central Marin. 1) The Golden Gate Bridge and Highway Transit District has completed a plan for the 72 acre property it owns adjacent to the Corte Madera Ecological Reserve. Restoration would be done, in advance of need, to satisfy requirements for environmental compensation for future ferry terminal projects. The District is working with Marin Baylands Advocates, Marin Audubon Society, Town of Corte Madera, and regulatory agencies to complete plans, construct the project and eventually turn the site over the Department of Fish and Wildlife to become part of the Reserve. 2) College of Marin is discussing with Friends of Corte Madera Creek possible conversion of its Lot 13 for marsh restoration, along with removal of a portion of the concrete channel upstream of their new bridge, if this is a suitable component of the USACE Corte Madera Creek Flood Control Project. Friends is financing a feasibility study of this work. Nona, Ann, and Kate represented MCL at a recent meeting with college officials and board members from Friends and the Native Plant Society to review the proposal. Design proposals for the USACE project are currently undergoing environmental review, concurrent with refinement of project alternatives; the EIR is due in fall 2017.

MMWD BFFIP EIR Scoping. Nona and Paul Minault prepared scoping comments for the MMWD Biodiversity, Fire and Fuels Integrated Plan EIR. The letter asked that an alternative be added to the EIR that includes limited use of herbicides, and provided a CEQA-based rationale for doing so even if the alternative was rejected as inconsistent with district policy.

STRAWBERRY SCHOOL PROJECT. Plans proposing a new 1,000 student high school on the former seminary site have been withdrawn. Property owners still plan to proceed with a housing proposal for the site.

TAM/TRANSPORTATION ISSUES.

- 1) TAM completed an online survey to gather public input on transportation projects and goals, part of public outreach for the Regional Transportation Plan. The final report is not yet out.
- 2) TAM is investigating the possibility of raising the state sales tax cap for transportation taxes.
- 3) The state legislature (Senate and Assembly) is considering a transportation bill, possibly for about \$6 billion, for action in the upcoming fiscal year.
- 4) Field work has begun on evaluating the interior of the Alto Tunnel, the 2,172-foot-long former railroad tunnel bored through Corte Madera Hill from Willow Avenue in Corte Madera to Scott Valley in Mill Valley. When rail use ceased the tunnel was filled and sealed at both ends. Biking advocates have since lobbied to have it re-opened as a multi-use path, a project estimated to cost \$40 to \$60 million. The \$558,620 study uses drill rigs to take samples from the tunnel interior at two locations: Chapman Drive at Corte Madera Grade, and Underhill in Mill Valley. The study is to determine the physical condition of the interior and is not a feasibility study for re-opening the tunnel. An informational meeting January 18 drew about 70 members of the public.
- 5) Rick and some others plan to attend the SR 37 Policy Committee meeting February 2.

AG LAND USE QUARTERLY MEETING. DFW elk and antelope specialist Joe Hobbs gave an excellent presentation at the quarterly meeting on Friday, January 27. Judy stressed the value created by these meetings getting people from east and west Marin together. David Lewis will assume co-chair of the Ag committee planning as Judy steps down..

NOVATO GENERAL PLAN/NORTH MARIN UNIT. The Novato city council currently plans to make its final decision on March 7 regarding whether or not it will place renewal of the city's urban growth boundary on the November ballot. MCL's North Marin Unit has been working with Greenbelt Alliance to encourage the council to take this action. The NMU also drafted a letter with recommendations for the Novato general plan update, and the Land Use Committee approved submittal of the letter. It will be circulated to the MCL board for comment.

NORTH MARIN WATER DISTRICT. Rick reported that the board has selected three final applicants for the seat left vacant by Dennis Rodoni's election to the Board of Supervisors. They are Rhonda Kutter, Michael Joly, and Gary Butler, and he believes it is a good group.

COMMUNITY MARIN ACTION COMMITTEE. MCL and most other environmental groups that participated in preparing *Community Marin 2013*, have agreed to work on an update, preparatory to the CDA's amendment of the 2007 CWP which will begin this year..

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