

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting Notes: March 5, 2014

Present: Susan Stompe, chair; also Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Don Dickenson, Rick Fraites, Randy Greenberg, Jana Haehl, Bob Johnston, Bob Spofford, Judy Teichman, Ann Thomas. Guests: George Harris, Assemblyman Levine's office., and Liz Dale from Lucas Valley. Met 9 to 11:20 AM at MCL.

February 5, 2014 Meeting Notes. Approved as distributed.

Easton Point/Martha Property. Randy and Nona reviewed a letter with recommendations and comments for submittal to the BoS for their March 11 meeting when they will consider certification of the Easton Point final EIR. The letter would ask 1) that the EIR not be certified due to failure to provide an alternative that would substantially lessen significant project impacts and thereby qualify as an environmentally superior alternative, 2) reclassification as Significant and Unmitigable, prior to EIR certification, those impacts addressed by mitigations of questionable feasibility, including impacts that deal with endangered species, rely on speculative outside agency approval, and address construction road safety. Randy also noted her concern that the EIR does not address the serious impacts of a 10.74-acre remainder lot on the property which will require substantial landslide repair, because it would be set aside as open space.

M/S (Ann/Rick) and approved to accept the recommendations as stated in the letter. Don abstained from the vote.

Farmer's Market Ballot Measure. The BoS have approved placing on the June 3 ballot a measure that would ask voter approval for a building and canopy in what has been known as the Christmas tree lot across from Marin Center, to serve as a permanent location for the Farmer's Market. There are no project specifics in the ballot description so Judy will invite someone from the Agricultural Institute of Marin to attend our April 2 meeting to provide an update.

Gross Field Master Plan/Merits. The BoS in February approved the FEIR for the runway expansion for the county airport. Merits will be considered at a later date. Bob S, who formerly flew a private plane from the field, provided information on the proposal. He said that he believes the traffic and operation numbers in the EIR are out of date due to the general decline in interest for aviation as a hobby. He also said that 1) Gness does not attract many private plane users due to its lack of amenities, 2) with the longer runway many larger craft would still not be able to use the field, 3) limited instrumentation also precludes many users, 4) the lengthening would largely serve to make usage safer. He believes that federal sources would pay about 90 percent of the \$15 million dollar project cost and that County DPW has been preparing to be able to absorb the remainder.

Larkspur Landing SMART Station Area Plan. Jana has followed this ABAG-funded planning process for 920 housing units plus commercial and retail uses. The EIR is postponed indefinitely and consultant Anne Moore has been retained to help shepherd the plan through the process. Jana expects that the area preliminary plan will eventually be folded into Larkspur's general plan.

PRNS Pastoral Zone Elk Issue. Judy is heading up a short-term working group that will research this issue and develop scoping questions for an eventual environmental assessment that the Park Service will conduct in preparing a plan for managing the tule elk along with long-term leases for the ranchers. The group met over the weekend and began preparation of scoping comments, although the Park Service has not announced a schedule for its planning. MALT

Easement Program Director Jeff Stump also attended the meeting to review MALT's easement provisions, which could be a helpful model for terms in the Park Service leases.

Jana reported that the MCL Executive Committee at the previous day's meeting approved establishing an agricultural land use committee, with 18 months allowed to pilot the venture and see how it works out.

Scenic Highway Designation/Lucas Valley Road. Liz Dale, who lives in Lucas Valley, told the committee that a working group including people from several Lucas Valley neighborhoods, is again preparing to ask the BoS to approve the county nominating Lucas Valley Road for designation as a Scenic Highway through Caltrans' California Scenic Highway Program. This was done in late 2012 and the County did not proceed.

Marinwood Plaza. Susan announced that scoping for the EIR for this proposal for mixed use redevelopment of 3.5 acres at Marinwood plaza, including 82 units of housing plus retail/commercial, will be held March 29. MCL has endorsed this project and committee members believe that if the project is not built that the existing grocery store, which needs customers to stay in business, may not remain. Major issues for many members of the surrounding community are the lack of tax dollars from the affordable housing for Dixie School District. The project could general 40 or 50 students who would attend schools there. A problem has also emerged regarding a toxics plume under the site and which is spreading across 101.

Transportation Update. Bob said that 1) the Richmond Bridge third lane is now being studied. 2) His research has not uncovered clear details regarding proposals for new FAA flight patterns over Marin that would be part of the SFO regional flight planning.

Strawberry PDA. Nona spoke at the BoS to encourage approval of a reduced PDA (Priority Development Area) for the unincorporated Strawberry area. Her recommendation, on behalf of MCL, was to modify the PDA by contracting boundaries to more closely follow the commercial and mixed-use areas adjacent to or near 101. Supervisor Sears, however, was under intense pressure from some of her constituents, to drop the PDA altogether, and with her concurrence the Board voted to do so. Nona noted that many of the PDA proponents are housing advocates who do not live in the area, which was not helpful to their cause.

Whistlestop. Ann attended a February 13 meeting of the Marin Environmental Housing Coalition, chaired by Bob Pendoley, at which the group heard a presentation on plans which have been submitted to San Rafael for redevelopment of the Whistlestop building in central San Rafael. Projects details include: 1) First floor with offices, café, restrooms, 22 covered parking spaces for staff. 2) Second floor with a 250-seat assembly room where they could also have classes for dance fitness, etc; storage areas; health and social service offices; maybe a small terrace. 3) Floors 3 to 5 would have 48 one-bedroom senior units about 600 sf each, and possibly a library. 4) No parking spaces provided for residential units, which would only be rented to people who do not own cars (to be checked with DMV records annually).

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