

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting Notes: September 3, 2014

Present: Susan Stompe, chair; Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Don Dickenson, Rick Fraites, Randy Greenberg, Cheryl Longinotti, Kate Powers, Judy Teichman, Ann Thomas. Met 9 to 11 AM.

August 6, 2014 Meeting Notes. Approved with edits.

Announcements. 1) The County PC agenda includes these hearings: County Climate Action Plan on October 13; Santa Venetia Community Plan on October 27, and Black Point Community Plan on November 10. 2) There will be a presentation by the BCDC representatives of “Sea Level Rise and the Corte Madera Baylands” Monday, September 8, 7 PM in the Corte Madera Community Center. 3) MMWD staff will take part in a workshop on residential and commercial graywater systems September 13, 9:30 AM to Noon at the Humane Society. This is the last of three workshops sponsored by the County’s Environmental Health Services. 4) A demonstration of a SMART warning bell was given this morning in San Rafael.

Gross Field. Decisions on the EIR and merits of this proposal to expand the runway from 3,300 to 4,400 feet on the north end have been ongoing for 10 years with a BoS hearing of merits now scheduled for February 2015. North Marin Unit has recommended against expansion. There will be a county Public Works speaker at the next Land Use meeting

SMART Draft Strategic Plan. Susan attended the district’s citizens’ oversight committee meeting last week. She believes they are trying to address issues raised by the public and now would be a good time to submit the letter MCL prepared in July in support of the Marin and Sonoma Grand Jury recommendations, so this will be done.

County Housing Element. The planning element approved by the PC would allow up to 298 units on the St. Vincent’s/Silveira lands due to multiple density bonus allotments allowed by state law. This is not consistent with the CWP language for these sites which says “up to a maximum of 221 units, including 121 units plus an additional 100 units if they are low-income housing.” State rules regarding density bonuses, however, have complicated housing calculations for this site and also for the Marinwood Plaza, an equally controversial location.

Environmental review for the housing element did not consider the tiered density bonuses now permitted which raises the question if the EIR was adequate for the proposed housing program. Committee agreed that it would be pre-mature to raise this issue now given the public’s confusion about housing rules and housing element functions. But MCL should be prepared to address this issue at the November meeting when the PC is scheduled to consider final action on the element. In the interim MCL should prepare a statement about the failure to address the density bonus program in the element EIR, and recommend that the element be modified to bring the total of allowable units at the St. Vincent’s/Silveira sites to 221, including all bonuses.

It was agreed, however, to send a letter to Brian Crawford well before the PC meeting, copied to LeeLee Thomas, regarding the problem we perceive by continuing to rely on an insufficient EIR. Nona agreed to draft the letter

Community Marin Action Committee. Priscilla reported that the group continues to meet regarding a long-term objective to enable collaboration on SLR action among jurisdictions.

Easton Point. Randy reviewed a draft letter intended to go the Martha Company board members, based on a report that TPL (Trust for Public Land), an entity that may have an interest in participating in efforts to secure this site for open space, would appreciate MCL's support for permanent protection of the site. The letter was prepared following a meeting with Tiburon open space advocates, Randy and a TPL rep. Randy will verify with TPL that an MCL letter would be helpful for this acquisition effort. Randy also discussed a concern in the Tiburon area that project applicants are making an effort to have MMWD install a water tank at a higher elevation than may be suitable and MMWD is doing soils testing now to determine if this would work. It was noted that the development proposal for the site has not been approved so rearranging the tank is pre-mature. The EIR evaluated the tank at a lower elevation but suggested as mitigation that it be raised 10 feet if feasible. Raising the tank raises questions about if the road also needs to be raised and other considerations.

Novato General Plan. The staff working on the new General Plan have recommended removing or consolidating about 350 programs that are in the current plan. The North Marin Unit is concerned that removing these programs could reduce the Plan's environmental protections,

Marin General Expansion. An application for design review for construction of a six level garage, set into the hill, and a parking lot, is being processed by County staff. This is the first of a four phase program to build two garages, an out-patient facility, and two new acute care hospital structures on the 20-acre campus. The County has limited review authority over the expansion, but the PC will review the garages and other non-acute care parts of the plan. The current application remains incomplete. Major issues about the expansion are increased area traffic and whether or not there will be sufficient on-site employee/patient parking. Several changes to Bon Air Road are proposed and the County's Department of Public Works has authority over these and is currently working with the community and applicant on appropriate changes.

Water Speaker Programs/Issues. The water speaker series will continue with MMWD's Janet Klein reviewing invasives in the watershed on September 25 and the County's new Stream Outreach Coordination Sarah Phillips speaking October 30. Ann and Priscilla also tracking other issues: in October will prepare scoping comments on MMWD's major storage facility construction, in early 2015 will address the EIR for the revised vegetation management program (Wildfire Protection and Habitat Protection Plan), and are following drought-related planning on an ongoing basis. There is no word on litigation that stalled the County's SCA ordinance.

Agricultural Land Use Programs/Issues. (Judy, Susan, Ann, Kate, Nona and Priscilla remained present). Judy reviewed plans for an October 19 program in Nicasio on natural fibers and dyes, and noted that she and Sally are planning the October 24 quarterly committee meeting in Point Reyes, currently looking for a speaker topic to highlight the meeting.

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