

Marin Conservation League
North Marin Unit
Final Meeting Notes
May 10, 2012

The meeting was called to order at the Wilhelm home. Present were: Joyce Appen, Pat Eklund, Pat U'Ren, Bernie Meyers, Rick Fraites, Bob Burke, Dorothy Thomas, Don Wilhelm, Gail Wilhelm, Frank U'Ren, Roger Roberts and Susan Stompe.

Announcements included: Business breakfast on May 17 with Ed Ueber speaking about the politics of ocean protection. A joint meeting of ABAG and MTC will be on May 17th in Oakland at 7 p.m. Susan invited anyone interested in attending to join her.

The notes of the April meeting were approved as distributed.

Rick requested an opportunity to discuss AB1530 which would establish "Clean Manufacturing and Job Creation Incentives". It would allow local agencies to provide an annual rebate of property tax to qualified manufacturing properties located within a "clean manufacturing zone" until January 2020. Rick expressed concern that the bill encourage cities to further deplete their resources during this era of stressed budgets. Roger asked what was meant by 'clean' manufacturing and whether the bill undercuts any existing environmental protections. Rick said "clean" was not defined. He distributed some copies of the bill.

Projects and Issues around Novato:

General Plan: A presentation was made to the City Council that the General Plan revision would be done in house to save money. There will be no steering committee, but there would be a few general public meetings in addition to the Planning Commission meetings where recommendations would be made to the City Council. Susan circulated the timeline. Gail said the plan would be based on the 1996 plan. Susan suggested a subcommittee to track the GP activities. Gail, Joyce and Pat U. offered to serve on the subcommittee.

The solar farm at Olive and Atherton is coming back to life. Ann Thomas picked up preliminary plans from a county project review meeting. Susan showed the plans and the reaction was that covering marshes with solar panels was not "green". **M/S/C (Gail, PatU) that MCL discourage placement of solar panel farms over viable marshland and encourage utilization of already urbanized sites such as over parking lots and on rooftops.**

SMART Quiet Zones: Roger came to the meeting to discuss the "Quiet Zones" which were part of SMART's commitment to the communities through which the track runs. He said the Federal Rail Authority (FRA) requires local jurisdictions to apply for Quiet Zones and asked whether Novato has applied. Pat E said she did not think it has. Roger said that SMART has reduced its budget for quiet zones to \$2.4 million. The SMART strategic plan identifies their obligation to fund quiet zones and states that "up to \$4.5 million" would be allocated. Roger felt that \$2.4 million would not cover even the Initial Operating Segment (IOS). Bernie, who sits on the NCRA board, said the NCRA and SMART recently received an ISTEA grant for quiet zone work in Novato at seven crossings and to upgrade signal warning systems on 32 sites along the rail line. Under the Novato Consent Decree, work in Novato must be completed by the end of 2013. Pat E. is going to check the DOT website. Roger recommended that the cities and counties apply to FRA for quiet zones.

Pat E. expressed concern that a state assembly bill recently submitted would exempt SMART from their earlier commitment to have station designs reviewed by local jurisdictions before construction. After some discussion the group **agreed by consensus that SMART should sustain their current policy to meet with local jurisdictions about their station designs.** Bernie abstained.

State and County Park issues: The county BOS will discuss the possibility of a countywide ballot measure for 1/8c sales tax to fund county park and open space and agricultural easements on Tuesday, May 15. Marin state parks Olompali and China Camp are still struggling to raise the funds to stay open. Olompali Heritage Day is May 20.

RHNA methodology: Pat E. reviewed the process ABAG goes through to come up with the RHNA numbers. She has served on a couple of the methodology committees. The committee consisted of staff people, elected people, environmental justice and housing groups. It is quite complicated. 70% of the development is allocated to PDA's and 30% to non-PDA's (priority development areas). Issues that are taken into consideration include sustainability, past RHNA performance, employment numbers and transit. They start with a 40% floor for household formation growth anticipated in each city. Pat did not know where the 40% floor came from or why. Many questions arose as to (a) what assumptions were used, (b) how they deal with a 2 income household where the people commute in different directions, (c) what the weighting factors are for the formulas. Pat suggested doing a freedom of information act request to ABAG.

The meeting adjourned at 10 p.m.

The next meeting will be on June 14 at the Webb home.

Notes by SS