

Marin Conservation League
North Marin Unit
Final Meeting Notes

November 8, 2012

The meeting was called to order at the U'Ren home. Present were: Dorothy Thomas, Don Wilhelm, Gail Wilhelm, Carole Dillon-Knutson, Pat Eklund, Pat U'Ren, Frank U'Ren and Susan Stompe, and guest Chris Stewart, Economic Development Manager for the City of Novato.

Announcements included: .The MCL Holiday party at MCL's new office is on Dec. 14, the success of Measure A at over 73%!

The notes of the October 4th meeting were approved as distributed.

Speaker: Everyone introduced themselves to Chris and Chris described his background. He received a Masters degree in Business from Northwestern after graduating from the University of Chicago. He worked in the private sector on the east coast and the west coast before turning to public employment. He spent a number of years in Los Angeles in Economic Development. His top priority in Novato is to fill existing empty stores, such as the Pini building on Grant Avenue. He pointed out that the Target store going up in San Rafael will reduce the sales tax in Novato. He feels the downtown theater has the potential to be a catalyst for other downtown improvements. He has been told that parking is a problem, but sees progress being made to strike a deal with SMART to use the area around the old train station for parking. He agreed that the Square Shopping Center is an embarrassment. Susan will send him contact information for people in that neighborhood who would like discuss potential uses for the center. Gail pointed out that the Nave Shopping Center needs embellishment, too. Gail shared other observations such as the downtown has crowd gathering activities such as the Art and Wine festival and the summer Farmer's Market, but the merchants don't seem to take advantage of them. She encouraged Chris to visit Fourth Street in Berkeley for ideas about amenities that can be replicated in Novato, especially along Redwood Blvd. north of Grant. Pat E. described an area in San Francisco near her office that has a very wide median strip with park amenities. Gail urged Chris to discourage the city from giving away any more property to developers without fair market value payment. She also encouraged him to meet with Mill Works to get them to improve the atmosphere of the garage at Whole Foods. Chris was asked if he had met with the new owner of Circle Bank to find out how they will use the brand new building. He has not, but will meet with them soon. He said that some high quality chefs would do a lot for downtown – pointing out that critical mass is important. Gail suggested that MMOMA is a great asset for Novato and a gift store in one of the city buildings would be good. Chris invited Gail to walk Old Town and explain the history of some of the buildings – as well as to find Trek Winery. The Firemans Fund site was discussed. Novato tried to encourage BioMarin to use one of the buildings, but they are obsolete for current businesses.

Projects and Issues around Novato:

Hamilton Sports Complex: Gail met with some neighbors of the proposed site. A project has not been submitted to the City, but plans were displayed at the meeting. It would be a regional

facility with professional teams. The proponents already have a lease with the federal government for the Landfill 26 site which would be used for lighted baseball fields. A 100,000 square foot gym and a hotel are also proposed. Pat E. said the Hamilton community seems to be split about the project. She encouraged meeting with Mendohlson.

Potential Solar Farm Policy – The Climate Action Committee will be discussing developing a policy for MCL on solar farm locations, but have not done so at this time.

Millworks survey: Susan and Gail need to get back on it and send it out before the holidays.

Port Sonoma/Carneros Ranch: Sonoma held a scoping meeting for the Port Sonoma/Carneros Ranch project on November 1st. There were 6 people from Marin and 4 from Sonoma in the audience. MCL sent a letter of issues. Many good issues were raised. Skip Berg and J.T. Wick were also there.

General Plan revision: Susan suggested having a Planning Commissioner attend the January meeting.

Buck Center: They are planning to do a solar installation over a parking lot to generate 1 MW, but no plan has been submitted to the City.

The next meeting will be the Holiday Potluck at the Stompes on December 17
The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Notes by SS