

Marin Conservation League
North Marin Unit
Final Meeting Notes

April 4, 2013

The meeting was called to order at the Stompe home. Present were: Dorothy Thomas, Don Wilhelm, Gail Wilhelm, Pat Eklund, Pam Drew, Ed Mainland and Susan Stompe, and guests Tom and Jane Kelly of the Helios Project for solar school energy programs.

Announcements included: A Native Plant sale on April 13 at GreenPoint Nursery, where home composting courses are available. MCL Annual Dinner April 19 and Clean & Green Day, April 20.

The notes of the February 21st meeting were approved as distributed.

Solar Energy proposal for Novato Unified School District: Ed introduced Tom Kelly and his wife Jane who have worked with school districts in the Eastbay and elsewhere to draft plans for installing solar energy on schools. Tom explained that it is not practical to do one school at a time, that a district needs to look at a comprehensive proposal for the district. It can be implemented by increments. He reviewed the Berkeley School District program where Helios was able to secure a technical assistance grant to create a master plan for the district. The master plan included developing benchmark energy use of the district, owning the system rather than leasing, and identifying sources of funds to pay for the equipment and installation. Advantages now are that panels are less expensive and construction costs are down. They made a presentation to NUSD CFO, Karen Maloney, but have not heard from her since the presentation. One Boardmember, Debbie_____, has been supportive. Helios needs to establish a district benchmark. NUSD probably spends between \$1 and \$2 million a year on energy. After some discussion, it was agreed that since Helios does not charge the district for their services and MCL has supported NUSD investigating how to solarize the schools a dozen or so years ago, the NMU should encourage MCL to support this effort. MCL should work with a NUSD Board champion and encourage a benchmark study before school is out.

Pat asked if the City of Novato has been approached. Tom said they have not, but should be. Ed, Tom and Jane left at this point.

Projects and Issues around Novato:

North Redwood Blvd.: Pat said that a plan has been submitted to the City for the property north of Trader Joe's. Some Councilmembers have suggested a moratorium, which will be suggested on the next Council agenda. The proposal is for 200,000 sq. ft. of 'lifestyle commercial' retail use. A General Plan amendment has been proposed for the San Marin Business Park. It was not clear whether that request would be included in the moratorium. The Partridge Knolls neighbors are concerned about high density residential at the business park and have met with the property owner.

Concern was expressed about creating an additional shopping center when there is so much retail space empty in town. The Square and the old Pini building were cited as examples. Pam said that the neighborhood around The Square have given the owner some suggestions for uses and design. Pam is the liaison with the owner. Gail suggested being more aggressive with the owner, but Pam felt that would not work well with his personality.

Millworks survey: Susan and Gail have collected 12 surveys, 10% of the units have responded. Gail reviewed the surveys and will do an analysis of the responses. Basically, half the respondents are retired and of the other half only one rides transit.

Novato Housing Element: The Housing Element was accepted by the City Council and Planning Commission on Monday night. Pat said the meeting was noticed as scoping for the EIR, too. No one knew when the time for scoping comments closed.

Plan Bay Area: Pat pointed out that the TAM meeting on Monday will discuss the transportation investment strategy for Plan Bay Area.

Port Sonoma ferry: Susan received an email from Karen Nygren that MTC has on the funding charts funding for studying ferry service at the Port. Susan will verify. If confirmed it was suggested that MCL write to MTC objecting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15

The next meeting will probably be May 9.

Notes by SS