



County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department Agricultural Advisory Committee

Natalie Sare, Chair
John Vars, Vice Chair
Daniel Theobald
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou

Crystal Chaix
James Oku
Jess Brown
Jim Howard

Dr. Igor Lacan
Koren Widdel
Peter Marchi
Ryan Casey

County Office Building
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, California 94063
650/363-1825

ACTION MINUTES

Draft
Monday July 8, 2024

A full recording of this meeting can be accessed on the official government YouTube channel of the County of San Mateo at https://youtu.be/OfspdR_5ysk.

1. **Call to Order**

At the Ted Adcock Community Center, in the South Day Room, located at 535 Kelly Avenue, Half Moon Bay, Chair Natalie Sare called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

2. **Member Roll Call**

Regular Committee Members Present:

James Oku
Natalie Sare
John Vars
Peter Marchi
Ryan Casey
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou
Crystal Chaix
Daniel Theobald

Regular Committee Members Absent:

None

Nonvoting Committee Members Present:

Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner
Jess Brown, San Mateo County Farm Bureau Executive Director
Dr. Igor Lacan, UC Co-Op Extension Representative

Nonvoting Committee Members Absent:

Jim Howard, Natural Resource Conservation Staff

Planning Liaison Present:

Olivia Boo, Planning Staff Liaison

- #### 3. **Oral Communications** to allow the public to address the Committee on any matter not on the agenda. If your subject is not on the agenda, the Chair will recognize you at this time.

Public Speakers:

Kerry Burke, Public Member - asked for information regarding why the County passed on the Bay City property purchase.

4. **Committee Member Update(s) and/or Questions** to allow Committee Members to share news and/or concerns for items not on the agenda.

Committee Member Speakers:

Daniel Theobald, Committee Member, requested to agendaize farm stays, when people come and stay on a farm for education, as an agenda item discussion topic regarding regulations to allow this. It was noted that the discussion should include whether farm stays are in conflict with zoning regulations.

Natalie Sare, Committee Chair, requested that the AAC receive a copy of a 2015-2016 comprehensive assessment on farm labor housing conditions and needs that was referenced by a Board of Supervisor at the Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council meeting. The Supervisor mentioned that a current study is to be completed in December 2026 by the Department of Housing. *Planning staff emailed a website link of this information to Natalie Sare on August 2, 2024.*

Chair Sare expressed concerns regarding difficulty for farmers to stay in the area to farm and she proposes to collect other topics from AAC Committee members and other farmers, in order to create a comprehensive list of challenges for farmers.

Jon Vars, Committee Member, raised that his Farmworker Advisory Commission term is ending and AAC members may be asked if they are interested in the position, on behalf of the AAC Committee. For more information, interested AAC members can contact him.

Koren Widdel, Committee Member, noted that Justin Mates, Deputy County Executive, will be presenting on the County's Farm Labor Housing Taskforce on July 10, 2024, at the Pescadero High School, 7-8:30 p.m. He is schedule to present at the August 12, 2024 AAC Committee meeting.

Dr. Igor Lacan, UC Co-Op Extension Representative, his supervisors, university staff from the University of California, Agriculture of Natural Resources (ANR) will be visiting August 23, 2024 and will provide an opportunity for stockholders, which includes the AAC Committee members, to give input on the program. Committee members can alert the department of agricultural needs.

5. **Planning and Building Department, Director's Report.** *(Planning Liaison)*

Speakers:

Natalie Sare, Committee Chair, inquired whether the listed Ag Event Permit project is a renewal.

Regular Agenda

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| 6. | Applicant/Owner: | Jeb Boynton |
| | File Number | PLN 2023-00078 |
| | Location: | 1000 Bear Gulch Rd, San Gregorio (unincorp.) |
| | Assessor's Parcel No. | 081-310-140 |

Consideration of a California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act Contract for a 42.23-acre parcel located at 1000 Bear Gulch Road in the unincorporated San Gregorio area of San Mateo County. Project Planner: Luis Topete, LTopete@smcgov.org.

Action Request: That the AAC provide a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on the proposed project.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

None

COMMITTEE ACTION:

The applicant made a presentation regarding the proposed project. The owner confirmed the project is under Williamson Act.

Committee Members, Jon Vars and Daniel Theobald, commented the owner has done a good job recovering the land that was defunct; the land is being taken care of now.

Committee Member, James Oku, asked why the land was taken out of Williamson Act and will the land be cattle farmed? The applicant confirmed the plan is for the neighbor to farm the land.

Committee Chair, Natalie Sare, asked what the current lease terms are. The applicant confirmed the term is January 2023-2025. At the end of the lease the applicant would have to start the non-renewal process.

Committee Members, James Oku and Peter Marchi, supported the project.

Motion passed 8-0-0, with no members absent.

The Committee suggested to revise the "Staff Evaluation" wording from "Based on the information submitted by the landowner, staff recommends the parcel be encumbered by a Williamson Act contract" to "Staff believes the project fulfills all requirements".

7. Discussion Items:

a. Pescadero Fire Station Mitigation Measures - review a draft recommendation letter written by the AAC Committee, addressed to the County.

Natalie Sare, Committee Chair, requested Planning staff to send the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors staff reports and the respective decision letters to her so that she can finalize the draft letter. Did the Farm Bureau receive a response from a similar letter? *Staff emailed the documents to her July 22, 2024.*

James Oku, Committee Member, asked how the California Coastal Commission and the County check that the mitigation measures have been met? What if the County and the Coastal Commission have determined that the land doesn't comply? He suggests a follow up letter to be sent to the California Coastal Commission and to ask the County to write a letter to the California Coastal Commission.

Peter Marchi, Committee Member, Peter Marchi, commented he is surprised the Pescadero High School property was chosen for the new fire station location.

Jon Vars, Committee Member, expressed concern that the AAC didn't recommend approval because there is no land that exists that meets the mitigation measure criteria.

Cole Mazariegos – Anastassiou, Committee Member, concurred with Committee Member, Jon Vars, and would prefer that the County invest in a larger property that hasn't been farmed in 30 years but is still viable for agriculture. Non-farmed 30 year land is more viable than no farming in the last three years.

Daniel Theobald, Committee Member, commented it would be good for individuals to submit a similarly drafted letter to the California Coastal Commission.

The Committee Members requested to continue to agendaize this item for the August meeting.

Action item

No action required.

- b. Revised wording of Exhibit Item A of Director's Report for Peninsula Open Space Trust parcels excluded from wildlife conservation easements that are associated with the Lake Lucerne Mutual Water Company.**

James Oku, Committee Member, proposes this item to be removed. Committee Member, Peter Marchi, can provide any updates when new information is available.

Action item

No action required.

- c. Drafting steps and paths for the County to help preserve and promote farm labor housing.**

Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, Committee Member, proposes forming a subcommittee. Suggestions to propose trailers and tiny houses as options for a faster permitting process and to expedite septic system permitting. There is a lack of trust between the County and the farmers due to the farm labor housing taskforce inspections. Farm Labor Housing families fear reporting noncompliance of housing conditions due to fear of losing affordable housing. There is also a concern regarding the farmers leaving the area. If trailers and tiny homes are a successful option, this could potentially lead to lower rent.

James Oku, Committee Member, commented the farm labor housing loans are not enough. The investment to place and provide new farm labor housing units is a bigger investment than the budget of the loans. There are also issues with water service, including having to work with the state, and septic systems. Can a prefabricated living unit program be set up with the County's Building Department to be more proactive to help provide farm labor housing and to create a ready-made program.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Kerry Burke, Public Member, commented that different jurisdictions have different rules; thus limitations are different.

Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, Committee Member, proposed this topic to continue as an agenda item for August.

Action item

No action required.

d. How to encourage City of Half Moon Bay to start their farm labor housing unit inspections.

Crystal Chaix, Committee Member, asked how to start the Farm Labor Housing taskforce for the City of Half Moon Bay.

Action item

No action required.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. by Committee Chair Natalie Sare.