



## County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department Agricultural Advisory Committee

John Vars  
Koren Widdel  
Jess Brown  
Jim Howard

Frank McPherson  
Judith Humburg  
Lauren Silberman  
Louie Figone

William Cook  
Peter Marchi  
Natalie Sare  
Fred Crowder

Ryan Casey  
James Oku  
Jonathan Winslow  
Summer Burlison

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### ACTION MINUTES

*Adopted as amended on April 11, 2022*  
Monday March 14, 2022

On March 17, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-29-20 suspending certain provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act in order to allow for local legislative bodies to conduct their meetings telephonically or by other electronic means. Pursuant to the Shelter-in-Place Order issued by the San Mateo County Health Officer on March 16, 2020 and March 31, 2020, the statewide Shelter-in-Place Order issued by the Governor in Executive Order N-33-20 on March 19, 2020, and the CDC's social distancing guidelines which discourage large public gatherings, public hearings will not be held in person until the Shelter-in-Place Order is lifted. Instead, members of the public may provide written comments by email to the San Mateo County Planning Liaison Summer Burlison at [SBurlison@smcgov.org](mailto:SBurlison@smcgov.org). To be read into the record and discussed at the meeting, comments must be submitted via email no less than 30 minutes before the scheduled meeting. Comments received after that time will be held for the next scheduled meeting.

#### 1. **Call to Order**

At the virtual meeting room hosted by the San Mateo County Planning Department on the Zoom Video Communications platform due to Covid-19 Shelter-in-Place Orders, Vice Chair/Acting Chair John Vars called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

#### 2. **Member Roll Call**

##### Regular Committee Members Present:

Judith Humburg  
James Oku  
Natalie Sare  
Louie Figone  
Jonathan Winslow  
John Vars  
William Cook  
Peter Marchi  
Ryan Casey  
Fred Crowder  
Lauren Silberman

##### Regular Committee Members Absent:

None

##### Nonvoting Committee Members Present:

Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner  
Summer Burlison, Planning Staff Liaison

##### Nonvoting Committee Members Absent:

Jim Howard, Natural Resource Conservation Staff  
Jess Brown, San Mateo County Farm Bureau Executive Director

Frank McPherson, UC Co-Op Extension Representative

3. **Adopt a Resolution** that, as a result of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency, meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health and safety of attendees.

**PUBLIC SPEAKERS:**

None

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

Committee Secretary Lauren Silberman moved, and Committee Member Louie Figone seconded, a motion to adopt the above resolution.

**Motion passed 10-0-1, with one absent member.**

4. **Officer Elections** for chair and vice chair, item continued from December 13, 2021 meeting.

The committee decided to address this item at the end of the meeting to allow enough time to discuss the regular agenda items. Later in the meeting, the committee ran out of time and decided to address this item at the next regular meeting.

Committee Member Peter Marchi moved, and Committee Member Fred Crowder seconded, a motion to move this item to the April agenda due to timing.

**Motion passed 10-0-1, with one absent member.**

5. **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.

None

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

- Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, shared about the following:
  - The Department of Agriculture has scheduled a Farmworker and Pesticide Safety training session on May 4, 2022 in Pescadero and May 5, 2022 in Half Moon Bay. There will be two sessions each day, with one in English and one in Spanish. The session will also be made available virtually. More information will be sent out to all growers on their mailing list.
  - The Department of Agriculture sent out the Crop Report Survey for 2021, and encouraged farmers to spread the word and respond.

7. **Consideration of the Action Minutes** for the February 14, 2022 AAC meeting.

Committee Member Louie Figone moved, and Committee Vice Chair John Vars seconded, a motion to approve the Action Minutes for February 14, 2022 as amended. The amendment was to add the word "next" to the last sentence on page 4 to read "the next meeting."

**Motion for February 14, 2022 Action Minutes passed 10-0-1, with one absent member.**

8. **Committee Discussion and Update** on the current COVID-19 pandemic, potential policies needed to protect local agricultural and water from contamination, how the pandemic may affect local food supply, and access to farm labor and resources available to producers and farm workers.

**PUBLIC SPEAKERS:**

None

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

No action required. The Committee discussed the two year anniversary of the beginning of the pandemic, continued availability of Covid-19 testing and vaccinations clinics weekly across the coastside and at the county Expo Center, and that the Department of Agriculture and local service providers also have rapid tests available by request. The Committee also discussed that State small business relief grants are available through April 11, 2022 and that rent relief grants are available through March 31, 2022 (more information at [www.housingiskey.com](http://www.housingiskey.com)).

9. **Committee Discussion** on action steps for market development for San Mateo County's agricultural production and potential.

**PUBLIC SPEAKERS:**

Adria Arko

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

No action required. The Committee discussed that the group coordinating this project continues to conduct planning work, that the initial general interest meeting for this project has been scheduled for May 11, 2022 from 5:30-8:00pm at the I.D.E.S. Hall in Half Moon Bay. Please RSVP by May 9, 2022 if you are able to attend via <http://tiny.cc/smc-agmarkets>.

Member of the public Adria Arko, San Mateo County Agricultural Ombudsman, shared updates regarding the public interest meeting and planning committee via email.

10. **Committee Discussion** to plan for future trainings in topics including but not limited to water, Planned Agricultural District/agricultural land use regulations, wildlife conservation, and Brown Act compliance.

**PUBLIC SPEAKERS:**

None

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

No action required. The Committee discussed the recent San Mateo County Boards and Commissions Members Training on March 3, 2022, that a recording of this training will be available and provided via email soon, and upcoming committee training on PAD, Williamson Act, and land use regulations that relate to AAC work.

11. **Community Development Director's Report**

**PUBLIC SPEAKERS:**

Ron Sturgeon

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

No action required. The Committee discussed the items on the report, details regarding the item (a) project, and specifics regarding how cannabis cultivation is defined as agriculture.

Member of the Public Ron Sturgeon shared context and detail regarding the evolution of the item (a) project (Application Kurt Simrock), including changes made to designs based on feedback.

**Regular Agenda**

- 12. Owner:** **Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and Peninsula Open Space Trust**  
**Applicant:** **Mike Williams (MROSD) and Ben Wright (POST)**  
**File Number:** PLN2021-00381  
**Location:** Higgins Canyon Road, unincorp Half Moon Bay  
**Assessor’s Parcel No.:** 064-370-200, 064-370-070, 065-210-240, and 065-210-220

Consideration of a Certificate of Compliance (Type B), Lot Line Adjustment, Planned Agricultural District Permit, Rescind and Replace existing California Land Conservation Act and Farmland Security Zone Contracts (Williamson Act), and Land Conservation Act modifications. Please direct any questions to Project Planner Angela Chavez at [AChavez@smcgov.org](mailto:AChavez@smcgov.org).

**PUBLIC SPEAKERS:**

Dante Silvestri  
 Ron Sturgeon  
 BJ Burns

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

The applicants provided a brief refresher presentation to the committee about the project. The Committee discussed the site visits conducted since the last meeting; that proposed parcel 4 was enlarged to account for reservoir work, cleaning, and enlargement if needed in the future; details regarding potential future use of the stock ponds on proposed parcel 2; that the project will rescind the Williamson Act and replace it with 20-year conservation contracts, 20-year open space easement contract with a 5-year grazing lease with a 5-year option, and a 10-year open space easement contract; that POST will consider an agricultural conservation contract for fallow land for grazing if a viable options come along, and that the Giusti family is interested in purchasing the row crop property they are currently farming and continuing agricultural operations for generations. Committee members also asked clarifying questions regarding the difference between public agency and private landowner subdivisions, back up plans if a farmer contract falls through, the process for cancelling Williamson Act contracts, and comparisons between Williamson Act contracts and conservation easements.

Member of the public Dante Silvestri shared that the project looks straightforward and asked about the adjacent historic parcel where the Johnston House is located. This historic parcel was left out of the project to keep the application simple.

Member of the public Ron Sturgeon asked clarifying questions about lot line adjustments vs. subdivisions, how local operators are selected, and the process for rescinding Williamson Act contracts.

Member of the public BJ Burns asked clarifying questions regarding the open space vs. agricultural easements and the ponds on the property, which he hoped could be expanded.

Committee Member Fred Crowder moved, and Committee Member Jonathan Winslow seconded, a motion to support the proposed lot line adjustment with consideration that the open space easement continue to be grazed.

**Motion passed 9-0-2, with two abstentions due to potential conflict of interest.**

13. **Committee Review of (AAC) Subcommittee Meeting Notes on Agritourism Guidelines** from Subcommittee Meeting 1 (January 28, 2021) and Subcommittee Meeting 2 (February 17, 2021).

**PUBLIC SPEAKERS:**

None

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

No action required. The Committee discussed the previous subcommittee meetings, the context of the meeting minutes included for reference, and desired timeline for reviewing this item and providing feedback to the County.

14. **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m. by Committee Vice Chair/Acting Chair John Vars.