

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting Notes: January 5, 2011

Present: Marge Macris, Chair; Betsy Bikle, Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Don Dickenson, Randy Greenberg, Susan Stompe, Ann Thomas, Don Wilhelm, Doug Wilson. Met at MCL, 8 to 10 AM.

December 1, 2010 Meeting Notes: OK as distributed.

Community Marin/CWP Issues: The Community Marin group meets next on January 21 to try to complete chapters on agriculture and parks and open space. The goal is to have the entire Community Marin document wrapped up before the PC takes up the Local Coastal Program.

Housing Issues Forum. Marge and Nona have talked with several potential panelists including San Rafael planning director Bob Brown, County Supervisor Susan Adams and political commentator Dick Spotswood; Nona has also asked Michael Krasny to be moderator. They (Marge and Nona) are considering titles for the program that would sound inviting to the public.

North San Rafael SMART Station Planning. Marge has been attending meetings of the citizens' advisory committee on this project, which has been slowed down in its work until SMART selects a location for the station. San Rafael planner Linda Jackson provides staff support. The elephant in the room is the need to increase housing density on land surrounding the train stations to comply with TOD guidelines for transit centers; in this case the additional housing would have to be in the area approximately between Merrydale Road and 101.

Bay Plan Revision. Betsy will draft a letter to BCDC in support of recommended amendments to the Bay Plan, based on existing MCL positions. BCDC staff has recommended modifications to the Bay Plan to address climate change impacts along the bay shore and public comment thus far has come largely from opponents, who allege that this is an effort on BCDC's part of extend their jurisdiction inland. BCDC has subsequently backed off from recommending changes as amendments with regulatory authority and instead propose the revised language as policy. MCL will urge that the changes be incorporated into the Bay Plan.

Easton Point, Tiburon. (Randy) An administrative draft of the DEIR is being circulated.

Alta Robles. (Randy) A hearing on the final EIR and merits of this proposal for 13 estate residences in landslide territory south of Trestle Glen along Paradise Drive is scheduled in Tiburon on January 26. None of the four alternatives examined in the EIR would meaningfully reduce impacts and eight of the 13 houses would be on ridges. There has been no attempt to reduce the grading, approval of which requires Tiburon to suspend its landslide guidelines, or to reduce the number or size of units. The homes are all expected to be in the 8,000 square foot size range. This is considerably more than the median home size in the area but is being promoted as appropriate for estate homes. Nona will rework a letter of comment that MCL submitted earlier and resubmit.

Novato General Plan. (Susan S) The City Council has canned DEC consultants so general plan work is on hold. Also they are waiting for recommendations from the housing task force as there has been considerable controversy over housing density requirements.

Transportation. (Don W) Don reported that MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission), a major source of transportation funding, has become involved in analyzing SMART's financial planning and told SMART that their sales tax projections were optimistic and should be revised. MTC has suggested that SMART should defer building stations in north Petaluma and at Atherton Avenue in Novato (Fireman's Fund) and down-size the planned bicycle-pedestrian path, in order to free up \$42-50 million that could be used to extend the start-up line to downtown San Rafael. The two station locations that would be dropped are ones that have low housing density and in so recommending, Don said, MTC is emphasizing housing rather than jobs; the two sites were in the SMART plan because they are destinations, not housing sites. A result of dropping the two stations is lower ridership projections. However MTC has told SMART that the terminus needs to be extended to downtown San Rafael or SMART would risk losing \$22 million in Regional Measure 2 toll money that the district was scheduled to receive. As a result of the financial downturn SMART agreed to have its sales-tax revenue numbers peer viewed before proceeding to issue bonds for the project. Susan suggested that Land Use members might want to meet with Supervisor Kinsey to get an update on MTC and SMART.

Nona reported that she has been invited by TAM (Transportation Authority of Marin) to participate on two focus groups they will conduct regarding express lanes: January 20 in Mill Valley and January 12 in Novato. She will probably join the Mill Valley focus group. Don said the purpose of these groups was to pre-determine the effects of a hot lane in Marin County.

650 San Pedro Road. The County can't certify the EIR as there currently is no longer a project. The owner is in foreclosure on the property.

West Marin Meteorological Towers. (Nona) The Board of Supervisors upheld Next Era's appeal, adding one additional condition at the request of environmental groups: post-construction bird surveys that would include carcass counts. EAC executive director Amy Trainer has suggested appealing to the Coastal Commission but given the Commission's operational timeframe Nona thinks this may not be realistic. She, Amy and Barbara Salzman (of Marin Audubon) will meet with Ellie Cohen of Pt Reyes Bird Observatory to review this situation.

Marin General Hospital Expansion Project. (Ann) This project appears to be on hold and MGH representatives plan to meet with the Larkspur City Council sometime in January.

Spirit Rock. A public field trip is planned for February 10.

Target. (Nona) MCL sent a letter to the San Rafael City Council expressing objections to this project and as a result of the considerable public opposition the Council has deferred action and hired a consultant to do a community impact report. Land Use members noted that approval of the Marin City shopping center, much like Target in San Rafael, was justified on the economic help it would provide to Marin City, and it is dying.

Next meeting February 2, 2011

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