

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE
Land Use and Transportation Committee Meeting Notes: December 4, 2013

Present: Susan Stompe, chair; also Priscilla Bull, Nona Dennis, Randy Greenberg, Jana Haehl, Judy Teichman, Ann Thomas, Doug Wilson, Periann Wood. Guests were Stephanie Larson, Sonoma County UC Farm Advisor, and George Harris from Assemblyman Levine's office. Met 8:30 to 11:10 AM at MCL offices.

November 6, 2013 Meeting Notes. Approved as distributed.

Agenda. OK as distributed.

Stephanie Larson/Impacts of Elk on Leased Pastoral Lands within the National Seashore.

Stephanie, a specialist in livestock and range management, spoke about a problem West Marin ranchers in the Seashore's pastoral zone are experiencing with Tule elk that have strayed onto ranch lands where they mingle with cattle, munch on pasture and organic feed, drink water intended for cattle and break fences. There is also a possibility that some of the elk are diseased but so far no testing has been done to check this. This situation creates costs for ranchers and a special challenge for those seeking organic certification. This is because the organic certification requires a specific minimum area of grass per animal and the grazing elk interfere with this.

The elk's association with West Marin began in 1978 when a herd was located in the Tomales Point Wilderness Area on the former Pierce Point Ranch. In 1998 a group was moved to a non-fenced area near Limantour Estero and, as their population grew, some migrated outside their designated "wilderness" area onto ranches in the pastoral zone. Stephanie said it is unclear what responsibilities state Fish and Wildlife have regarding the elk.

The ranchers are represented by the Pt. Reyes Seashore Ranchers Association, which has 28 member ranches of which six are affected by the elk.

Following the talk committee members agreed there is a need for more information on this issue, including steps taken by the National Seashore to address the elk problem. As this topic could fall under either the Land Use or Parks and Open Space Committees those present agreed to have a joint committee meeting with presentations from National Seashore personnel as well as from the affected ranching community. Land Use members also agreed that a regular Land Use Committee meeting was needed in January to address other topics.

Land Use Committee members agreed to the following: 1) the January Land Use Committee is changed to January 8 in deference to the January 1 holiday. 2) The Park's Committee's January meeting on the 2nd Thursday (January 9) will be a joint meeting of Land Use and Parks Committee members. Nona said she would like to agendize National Park personnel at the Parks Committee to learn from them any steps being taken to address the elk issue, and everyone agreed this would be a good approach. 3) Following the joint committee meeting a decision would be made as to next steps. These might include a presentation to the MCL board, making this a topic for a Business Breakfast in late February, or sponsoring a forum for involved parties.

Committee members expressed an interest in MCL doing something to facilitate communication among the various involved parties on this potentially divisive issue.

Final Gness Field EIR. Susan has been following this issue and was preparing a letter raising some concerns about the FEIR. Notably she expressed concern that the EIR did not consider a runway smaller than 1,100 feet, and also noted that mitigation should be in a suitable location.

SCA Ordinance. The ordinance to enact protective measures for county waterways that was approved by the BoS in October was challenged by a lawsuit by SPAWN and an East Bay group. Although the ordinance remains in limbo until issues are settled by the courts an associated work program remains unaffected by the legal action and will be implemented in coming months. This will include outreach activities and services for owners of properties along creeks. The San Geronimo Valley building moratorium in the San Geronimo Valley, which was imposed by a court until an SCA ordinance was adopted, was lifted when the ordinance was enacted.

Hwy 101/Greenbrae and Twin Cities Project/Marsh Walk. Susan is trying to set up a walk of the proposed pathway for committee members. Jana reported that SMART is doing a survey to determine where the path, or greenway, would be located as they have agreed to let the greenway occupy part of the right-of-way. The ROW, however, is not centered on the high levee as one might assume, and its precise boundaries are not known. Also, MTC's allocation committee will not make its recommendation to MTC re: funding for the greenway until March or April.

SMART Station Area Plan/Larkspur. Jana attended the 12-3 evening meeting at Larkspur City Hall but the meeting was jammed with protesters of the proposed development scenario. The EIR is underway and once the project is in the updated general plan the densities will be in place. The DEIR should be available December 16.

Martha/Easton Point. At their December 3, 2013 meeting the BoS again continued this project to allow for additional studies to be done. They will approve a modified scope of work for the EIR consultant and continue the hearing to February 25, 2014.

Community Marin. Nona drafted a comprehensive letter on the County Open Space district Road and Trails Management Plan and draft Tiered Programmatic Environmental Impact Report and several groups associated with Community Marin signed on. Environmental groups have asked that natural resources be given a higher priority than recreational uses on open space lands.

Novato General Plan. The city's housing element is moving along with a maximum density of 23 units per acre proposed which, with density bonuses, could be raised to 30 units.

Pacheco Valle Open Space, Novato. Susan spoke at the Novato City Council's hearing at which the council approved establishing a Mello-Roos district for a spring election on a parcel tax for properties in the Pacheco Valley to purchase the open space. A community group is actively working to secure public support for the tax district. Marin Open Space Trust executed the purchase and sale agreement with California Newspapers, Inc. to acquire the 15 acre site for \$550,000, with the land to go to the Marin County Open Space District at close of escrow.

Marin County Regulatory Improvement Advisory Committee. Nona said this committee has not completed its final report, but the focus of recommendations is on the permitting process.

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