

Sonoma Coast MAC
March 16, 2023 Minutes
Bodega Bay Grange

Meeting Called to Order – 5:38 PM

Chair Brian Leubitz

Pledge of Allegiance, led by Ginny Nicholls

Roll Call– Present

Brian Leubitz– chair

Beth Bruzzone- vice chair

Marti Campbell

Scott Farmer

Jill Lippitt

Drew McCalley

Caroline Madden

Ginny Nicholls

Absent–

Abreanna Gomes

Approval of Agenda

Beth Bruzzone moved to approve the agenda and Marti Campbell seconded. The motion carried 7-0

Oath of Office

Leo Chyi administered the oath of office for Drew McCalley.

Marti Campbell highlighted the community service work Drew McCalley has done in the community.

Consent Agenda

Marti Campbell moved to approve the consent agenda and Beth Bruzzone seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Statements of conflict of interest, if any, from Council members

There were no statements of conflict of interest

Correspondence

There was no correspondence

Chair and Council Member Reports

There were no chair and council member reports

Public Comment

Michael Keyes spoke about a new beach in Scotty Creek that is currently without a name. He highlighted the influence that Indigenous People have had on the area, and suggested “Katan Xal” as a possible name with the consultation of the Native community.

Jim Moore highlighted a project that the Bodega Bay Grange is working on to become a commercial kitchen.

Lynn Kelsen spoke on a series of projects the Native Plant Society was working on in the area.

Supervisor Lynda Hopkins

Leo Chyi gave the staff update for Supervisor Hopkins

He noted that the County has been pushing Permit Sonoma to make their process for Coastal Vacation Rental policy available as soon as possible. The document on policy options available at this meeting was created by Permit Sonoma based on feedback from the Board of Supervisors for this purpose.

Presentation from Creative Sonoma, Director Kristen Madsen

Kristen Madsen gave an overview of the work and projects of Creative Sonoma. Slides available [here](#).

Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan Update and Policy Options

- The discussion began on agricultural fencing. Vice Chair Beth Bruzzone and Scott Farmer both shared concerns over whether the fencing requirements proposed will be adequate to keep animals and people out of fenced areas, as well as that the term “agricultural enterprise” must be entirely removed since the requirements it imposes are cumbersome for small farmers and difficult to meet. Public comment made on this topic highlighted tensions resulting from the fact that agricultural communities were not consulted.
- The next topic discussed was the Marine Lab. Scott Farmer spoke of the community benefits the marine lab has provided. Supervisor Hopkins explained that District 5 reached out to community members and the Bodega Marine Lab and developed this policy in order to facilitate continued scientific research as a result of this meeting. Vice Chair Bruzzone noted the tensions landowners in the area were feeling over this proposed policy. Public comment made on this topic included suggestions for the County to support educational initiatives in partnership with the Marine Lab, as well as to clarify that this policy would help to streamline communications between the Marine Lab and other organizations and individuals.
- Campgrounds were discussed next. Scott Farmer asked whether this policy would allow for more private campgrounds, and Supervisor Hopkins clarified that the intent was to create more camping opportunities to expand regional parks, as flooding will make some current locations inaccessible. Supervisor Hopkins also said that she will bring the concern over the proliferation of private campgrounds to the BOS.
- Estero Americano: Vice Chair Bruzzone began by providing some background for this policy, and highlighted the tensions experienced in the community, with the public wanting increased access, but property owners struggling with trespassing. Supervisor Hopkins noted that some public points of access had been blocked by Marin County. Public comment was made in support of a Sonoma County Access point, and Chair Leubitz echoed this sentiment. In response to comments from the public and Vice Chair Bruzzone stating the concerns of property owners at the current proposed location for the access point, Supervisor Hopkins noted that the goal has been to identify broad areas where public access points were placed, and that the access point would not necessarily be at the specific location marked by a dot on

the map. Vice Chair Bruzzone commented that the put in is not blocked. Marin County narrowed the access, the walkway to the put in to stop vehicles driving down onto the sensitive eel grass beds and launching boats causing significant damage to the environment. There is plenty of room to walk around the off set K-rail to kayak and canoe.

- Fire Fuel Management: Marti Campbell raised concern over the fact that, with the exception of Sea Ranch, homeowners need County permission to do fire clearing, and added that clarification is needed as to what the policy's wording means exactly. She also expressed concerns over whether this policy will sufficiently address existing concerns. Scott Farmer added that the policy should be broadened to include not only roads and houses, but forests as well. Matt Greene (public, professional forester) added that vegetation removal was only permitted inside the coastal zone with a timber coastal development permit. He also highlighted the fact that terminology used is unclear, and that the simplest fix would be to remove "Timber Harvest Plan" from the proposal and instead use existing permitting procedures. He also noted that public parks and 100 ft defensible spaces around private property are still exempt from this policy. Fire Chief Nicholls expressed concern over potential unforeseen consequences and cautioned that this be approached deliberately and carefully. He also added that resource staff from Cal Fire should be consulted on this further. Supervisor Hopkins proposed postponing a final vote on this. Matt Greene expressed support, adding that the Board of Forestry is taking up this topic next Wednesday. Public comment was made explaining the added complications that the bifurcated LCP process poses. Additional public comment was made noting the need for balancing careful long-term planning with the immediate needs of the community, given the existing difficult permitting process, as we head into the Summer. Chief Nicholls also raised concerns over the statement in the proposal that all trees removed must be replaced at a ratio greater than 1:1.
- Offshore Energy Production: Scott Farmer stated that the current policy seems to take a position entirely against offshore wind/sea mining. He added that we support sustainable alternative energy development and that we have a strong interest in how landfall is accomplished, should Bodega Bay be considered.
- Cea Higgins (public) expressed concern over the policy's unrealistic assumption that offshore wind/sea mining will never happen here. She highlighted that a key concern was maintaining local control, and that the LCP needs to reflect the discussion at the Planning Commission on this topic, which prioritized local control. Public comment was also made on the need to prepare as a community for potential unintended consequences. Cea Higgins also added that, if a prohibition on these devices was created, any company would have to appeal to the public through a vote, but the language needs to be clarified to reflect this.
- Scott Farmer noted that the California Coastal Commission has final determinative discretion where they deem the greater good is served and could override local positions. It is in our interest to remain in the conversation to achieve good outcomes.
- Sea Otters: Drew McCalley stated that reintroducing sea otters is only one of several possible ways to restore kelp. Supervisor Hopkins provided context that sea otter reintroduction is only one portion of this section of the LCP, whose broader focus is stewardship and kelp restoration, but is in the heading because it is new. Cea Higgins (public) recommended looking at other areas where sea otters were reintroduced to get a clear sense of the issues and benefits that resulted. The reintroduction of sea stars may also be beneficial. Public comment

was also made on broadening exemptions to help harvesting and clarifying the language, to which Supervisor Hopkins agreed.

- Site-Specific Uses: Marti Campbell expressed support for Permit Sonoma's suggestions, as they modernize a policy that is no longer relevant, but expressed support for removing specific businesses from the policy. Scott Farmer and Jill Lippitt also expressed support for this. Public comment was made to support this. Cea Higgins (public) recommended selectively revising instead of entirely removing the Site-specific policies entirely, as they provide better protection than the CDP Process. Public comment was also made on the importance of historical context in this discussion.
- Jill Lippitt created a motion for the coastal MAC to write a letter in support of Supervisor Hopkin's recommendation to lengthen the LCP update. Supervisor Hopkins added that specific issues that are in need of further discussion should be highlighted in this letter as well. The motion was amended to include the sentiments expressed by Supervisor Hopkins. Beth Bruzzone seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Informational Item: Coastal Zone Vacation Rental Ordinance Update Fact Sheet

Cea Higgins (public) expressed concern over the fact that the language was selectively taken from a Coastal memo, and did not reflect community concerns that were in the memo. She proposed adding language on "housing stock and affordability, community character, noise, traffic impacts" to the LCP so these factors can be included for future consideration. Supervisor Hopkins expressed support and added that she'd like to strike the language of "high density." Leo Chyi added that he has been working with Permit Sonoma to clearly get an explanation on where this process is in regards to the Coast. Marti Campbell noted that the head of the vacation rental group in the area was not aware of this and that insufficient communication has been made with the Coast regarding the Coastal Zone Vacation Rental Ordinance. Leo Chyi added that he believes the fact sheet available at the meeting is the plan Permit Sonoma is going forward with, however this is not guaranteed. Concerned stakeholders should show up to the meeting on April 24th. Public comment was made expressing concern over the way that this policy feels penalizing to some areas. Chair Leubitz clarified that restrictions were localized, not applicable to the entire Coast, and that different areas have experienced different proportional rates of increase in concentration of Vacation rentals, making localized regulations helpful and important.

Staff Report

None

Adjournment

Scott Farmer motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm and Vice Chair Bruzzone seconded the motion.