



SAN BENITO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Eric Brunnemann Damon Felice Tim Foley Jessica French Robert Gatto Vicki Montoya Joan Moore Jason Noble Antonio Ortega George Rajkovich David Roemer Jan Saxton Franz Schneider Tom Tobias Jim West
County Administration Building – Board of Supervisor Chambers, 481 Fourth Street, Hollister, California

MINUTES SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

PRESENT: Foley, West, Brunnemann, Montoya, Noble, Roemer, Schneider,

ABSENT: Felice, French, Gatto, Moore, Ortega, Rajkovich, Saxton, Tobias

STAFF: Director of Planning (DoP) Art Henriques, Assistant Director of Planning (ADoP) Byron Turner, Associate (AP) Planner Michael Kelly, Deputy County Counsel (DCC) Shirley Murphy

The regular meeting commenced at 6:08 p.m. without a quorum and with a committee of the whole instead.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joseph Thompson offered to give a presentation on his “white paper” regarding preserving the branch rail line connecting Hollister with Gilroy. Thompson also spoke of rail-oriented economic development, referring to Graniterock’s operation near Aromas and near a rail line. He also offered to give a presentation on “smart growth” in Santa Clara County, a topic of which he spoke negatively.

DISCUSSION

1. Minutes of August 6, 2009

A quorum did not exist at this point in the meeting (or at any time during the meeting), and the Committee took no action on the minutes. At this time Chair Foley instead requested that the present Committee members reintroduce themselves with an emphasis on their backgrounds, affiliations, and interests they represent. Mr. Foley stated his background in local education and interest in natural preservation and economic growth; Mr. Schneider, his Planning Commission experience in the City of Hollister and the County; Ms. Montoya, preschool teaching, local youths’ future, Villa Hermosa neighborhood representation; Mr. Roemer, urban and regional planning, airport land use commission; Mr. Noble, real estate broker experience, family history in area and in civic activities; Mr. Brunnemann, superintendent of Pinnacles National Monument, connecting federal public lands with State and County public lands; and Vice Chair West, Parks and Recreation Commission and mineral resources.

2. Creating a General Plan Vision Statement

DoP Henriques introduced the item. AP Kelly reviewed the vision statement’s purpose and asked the Committee to respond to the bullet-point list of vision “statements” found in the agenda packet. Discussion began as Committee members recommended changes and additions to the list. Mr. Schneider noted that the statements resembled potential policies more than a vision for the future, and Vice Chair West recommended a short, “uplifting” statement that Schneider suggested should read like the preamble to the Constitution. DCC Murphy noted that the Committee could not make a motion in favor of a vision statement unless a quorum were present, and Henriques suggested a special meeting could be held prior to the next regular meeting. Mr. Schneider then recommended the Committee members each take five minutes to write a statement.

Before the Committee paused for five minutes, Joseph Thompson stated under public comment that the County does not have a supportive atmosphere for small business. He noted that the County cannot afford environmental protection with economic development. The backbone of the County, he said, is businesses with one to 20 employees.

Richard Bettencourt suggested under public comment that high school students should draft their own County vision statements as a class assignment, as the new General Plan would especially affect them (“the future”).

The present Committee members then took five minutes to draft their respective vision statements. Following these minutes, the members shared their statements, which Mr. Roemer as "volunteer editor" then summarized. Discussion then took place on local culture, diversity (and whether it exists), how to make the County more inviting (especially to young people), and other points. Mr. Schneider recommended that the vision statement's drafting be based on Mr. Noble's text as edited by the other Committee members.

Discussion then took place about scheduling a special meeting to finish composing the vision statement, with the week of September 21 suggested. DCC Murphy gave advice on what actions the Committee could take without a quorum and stated that no discussion of the statement by the Committee would be allowed to take place outside the publicly noticed meeting. Chair Foley recommended that Planning Staff suggest September 22, 23, or 24 to the Committee for the special meeting. Mr. Roemer and Mr. Noble agreed to prepare the next draft. Staff indicated it would contact all GPAC members to schedule the meeting.

3. Considering Health Policy

DoP Henriques introduced the item and discussed the information in the agenda packet. Mr. Schneider commented that including a Health Element in the General Plan is not necessarily the best approach, but promotion of healthy activities, promotion and preservation of health institutions, and health impacts of development should be considering in updating County policy. Chair Foley mentioned health and nutrition screening in Marin County, and Mr. Schneider suggested that might be more personal than the County would intend. Henriques noted that a Sustainability Element favored by the Board of Supervisors could tie health together with related issues. Vice Chair West made reference to the County Parks and Recreation Commission master plan, Mr. Roemer referred to Davis as a planning example, and Humboldt County's recognition of horseback riding as a healthy activity was noted. Mr. Brunnemann stated that national parks have a role in health and that parks could waive fees as health treatment under direction of a physician, an example of how plans can be connected with healthy lifestyles. Mr. Roemer mentioned the Americans with Disabilities Act as a possible necessary aspect of health policy.

After briefly skipping to agenda item 4, Chair Foley returned to item 3 to invite public comment. None was given, though Mr. Foley recognized the presence of County Supervisor Pat Loe.

4. Some Items for October 29 Meeting

- a. Review of Criteria for Including Private Proposals in General Plan Update
- b. General Plan Phase Two Draft Background Report

DoP Henriques discussed the two items and gave information on the criteria, to be hopefully ready to discuss at the next regular meeting. He asked the Committee whether they have requests for future meetings. Mr. Schneider stated that, in the past, reviewing private proposals in advisory committee proceedings didn't serve its purpose and instead served as a "shortcut" to the regular process. Vice Chair West commented that the County needs to attract industry and make a gesture that industry here is feasible (such as the designation of a specific area for industry); Mr. Schneider referred to Hollister's Northeast Specific Plan as an example of planning for industry that subsequently did not appear.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m. to the regular meeting of October 29, 2009, with a special meeting to be scheduled in the interim.

Minutes prepared by Michael Kelly, Associate Planner. Attest: Art Henriques, Director of Planning.