



# SAN BENITO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tim Foley   Jim West   Eric Brunnemann   Damon Felice   Jessica French   Robert Gatto   Vicki Montoya   Joan Moore   Jason Noble   Antonio Ortega   George Rajkovich   David Roemer   Jan Saxton   Franz Schneider   Tom Tobias

County Administration Building – Board of Supervisor Chambers, 481 Fourth Street, Hollister, California

## MINUTES SEPTEMBER 2, 2010

**PRESENT** West, Felice, Moore, Noble, Saxton, Tobias

**ABSENT:** Foley, Brunnemann, French, Gatto, Montoya, Ortega, Rajkovich, Roemer, Schneider

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

The regular meeting commenced at 6:13 p.m. without a quorum and as a committee of the whole instead.

### 6:00 PM ~ CALL TO ORDER

Also present at the meeting were Larry Mintier and Dan Amsden of the General Plan Update (GPU) consultant Mintier Harnish.

DoP Armstrong introduced himself and spoke about the special Planning Commission meeting September 8, 2010, regarding the GPU.

### AGENDA

**1. Approve minutes from July 8, 2010 meeting.**

Because of the meeting's lack of a quorum, the Committee took no action on the minutes.

**2. Review General Plan Update status.**

Larry Mintier and Dan Amsden each spoke on the status of the GPU process.

**3. Discuss major findings from the remaining Background Report chapters.**

Amsden asked for questions on the Background Report chapters in discussion this evening. Mr. Tobias requested that availability of water be considered a limitation, as the population would use more water if it could. Vice Chair West commented that, in the agenda packet's findings memo, page 6's last three bullet points contradicted themselves and that permanent reserved be described as "identified reserves." Mr. Tobias said that page 13's discussion of air quality should define "GHG." Vice Chair West asked why page 12 referred to hazardous waste sites within the incorporated City of Hollister; Amsden said the report intends to show what is in the entire county, including incorporated areas. Vice Chair West and Mr. Tobias talked about which airports were listed in the report, and Amsden said private airstrips were not listed.

**4. Discuss draft Opportunities and Challenges Report.**

Amsden discussed the report, its purpose, and the county's least constrained areas identified in the report. Mr. Tobias noted that Williamson Act lands can potentially become unconstrained when their contracts end; Mr. Noble said that contracts take 10 years to discontinue, and Mr. Tobias responded that the County may see a site that is under a Williamson Act contract but may want to remove that constraint, which is possible. Mintier said that degrees of constraint can be decided and that this is just a first draft. Discussion took place on the weighing of constraints and on which issues were counted as constraints. Amsden continued explanation of the report; Mr. Noble stated that his agenda packet was missing several pages of the report, as was apparently every agenda packet. AP Kelly, DCC

Murphy, and Amsden noted that the full report was available on the GPU website and would be brought back to the Committee at the following meeting for review by a quorum.

## 5. Conduct an alternatives exercise.

Mintier introduced the exercise and spoke on population and employment projections. Vice Chair West commented that the employment projection seemed not in balance with housing and that the GPU was aiming for a better jobs–housing balance. Amsden noted that the numbers had come from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). He then further discussed jobs distribution and level of productivity, and then Mintier discussed factors for alternatives. Noble remarked about housing density and land use mixes. Mintier said the categories came from the July 8 GPAC discussion.

Mintier then asked Committee members to identify the most important places in the County and why. He instructed the Committee to identify three places on the map displayed before them and to give the places' names and reasons for identifying them. The meeting paused for five minutes as the Committee placed dots on the map. After this, Mintier suggested the members one-by-one speak on the importance of the locations of the dots. Mr. Noble referred to home, work, and Hazel Hawkins Hospital. Mr. Felice referred to the Leatherback site, the Union–156 area, and the Union–Cienega/San Benito Street area for development potential. Vice Chair West referred to the San Juan Valley for its organic agriculture and aesthetic appeal, the Cienega Wine Trail, and the entire South County for recreation and tourism. Ms. Saxton pointed to Hollister as the focus of housing density and growth and to the County's two largest areas of available prime farmland, one being the San Juan Valley. Mr. Tobias pointed to the San Juan Valley for agriculture, scenic qualities, and tourism; the Hollister Valley for agriculture; and the Cienega region as a water source and for the Wine Trail. Ms. Moore identified the San Juan Valley, Pinnacles and Cienega (as a pair), and Hollister's airport (for economic development and future expansion).

Mintier then asked for the locations of areas for preserving agricultural production, for open space and parks, and for future urban growth. Amsden set up another map. For agriculture, Mr. Noble and Vice Chair West named San Juan Valley. Vice Chair West spoke about the area east of Mitchell Road and west of 156 and said commercial development could be appropriate there, since the City of Hollister sewer ponds make agriculture in the location unviable. Discussion took place regarding organic agriculture, wells, hardpan, and the sewer ponds. On areas for preserving agriculture, Mr. Tobias named the Hollister Valley north of Hollister and south of 156, plus near Paicines and nearby wineries. Santa Ana Valley was mentioned. Ms. Moore referred to the Cienega Valley vineyards.

For open space areas, Vice Chair West named the San Benito River parkway. Ms. Saxton asked about balancing commercial corridors with scenic routes; Mr. Noble suggested limiting commercial zoning in these areas. Vice Chair West restated his earlier idea on development east of Mitchell Road. City parkland in Hollister was mentioned with regard to open space. Mr. Noble remarked that a buffer is needed between agriculture and housing, and he said that Pinnacles, the Gabilan Range, and the Flint Hills should be recognized as open space. Discussion took place on issues of private property, the scope of this exercise, and a linear park between Hollister and the proposed Gavilan College site near Hollister.

Amsden asked where an open space buffer should be located. Ms. Moore suggested the Hollister Valley—to keep the City of Hollister from creeping that way, Ms. Saxton added. Mr. Noble and Ms. Moore mentioned the De Anza Trail. Mr. Tobias said that unbuildable spots, like fault zones and the river, should become open space. Mr. Noble said parkland and trails could be established in master-planned developments. Mr. Tobias stated that agricultural people dislike the expression “open space” because it implies they can't build a barn. Mr. Felice suggested looking realistically at what's already developed and that, as an example, only about 3 percent of Monterey County has been developed.

Mintier asked about locations for new, urban growth. Ms. Saxton said that existing cities are located on some of the best farmland, that city growth would encroach on it, and that ideally a new city would be started on less desirable farmland. Mr. Tobias mentioned directing growth toward five-acre lots east of Hollister. Amsden referred the Committee to the map of constraints. Discussion took place regarding development near Route 25 toward the county boundary. Mr. Noble pointed toward near Fairview and Ridgemark. Mr. Tobias mentioned the lower part of the Flint Hills. Mr. Felice referred to the area where DMB was going to develop. Ms. Saxton responded that this would load the county with residential services far from the center, Hollister. Ms. Moore said she saw the lack of constraints in that location is a better sell than DMB made for developing the area. Ms. Moore said southern Santa Clara County businesses have not had to widen roads. Mr. Tobias suggested working off concentric growth from Hollister and San Juan Bautista. Mr. Noble remarked on the large side for San Juan Bautista's sphere-of-influence, which Vice Chair West noted points toward the city's south. Ms. Moore said that any new communities in the county should be located in the county's north. Amsden said one alternative could focus more on the Hollister area and another could focus more on the area farther north. Mr. Noble mentioned underused land within the City of Hollister for commercial and

industrial uses. Amsden asked for the Committee's thoughts on the Rocks Ranch and Red Barn areas. Mr. Felice mentioned interchange areas, and Vice Chair West spoke of development at 101-156 and 101-129. Mr. Tobias spoke about using the airport and nearby train tracks for intermodal purposes and related development. Ms. Saxton spoke on improving the rail line over the next 25 years.

Mintier asked about features that could make communities and neighborhoods more livable and robust; he mentioned walkability as a possible example, and Amsden gave further examples. Mr. Tobias said the San Juan Bautista area doesn't have jobs and a job base and that it could use help in fixing its infrastructure. Mr. Noble added that San Juan Bautista depends on tourism, and discussion took place on San Juan Bautista infrastructure, jobs, and character. Further discussion took place on unincorporated areas around Hollister. Mr. Tobias said more parks, like baseball fields, would help. Discussion followed on neighborhood-commercial uses and on housing types (such as upscale high-density housing as mentioned by Ms. Saxton and Vice Chair West). Mr. Noble suggested that "mcmansions" are a thing of the past, and discussion took place on mixed-use housing. Ms. Moore mentioned commercial work-live areas. Mr. Noble said that walkability needs to be addressed. Vice Chair West suggested that mixed-use development could be attractive in Tres Pinos. Mr. Felice referred to Downtown Hollister as walkable, and Ms. Moore added that people walking supports Downtown Hollister. Mr. Noble spoke about Morgan Hill's downtown and activities there and noted that State Route 25 would be moved out of Downtown Hollister soon.

Mintier asked about unincorporated communities like Aromas. Mr. Tobias compared Aromas to San Juan Bautista. Ms. Saxton suggested Aromas needs public transportation. Vice Chair West responded that Aromas doesn't have enough people. Mr. Felice said jobs exist there, primarily at the quarry, and Mr. Tobias said Aromas doesn't have bad neighborhoods. Amsden asked about Tres Pinos; Mr. Noble mentioned a hotel (eliciting some laughs) and expressed a need for hotels closer than Gilroy. Mr. Tobias spoke of a need for a hotel, a center park, and more trees. Discussion took place on senior population needs. Ms. Saxton said senior housing is needed, and seniors employ people and demand services. Amsden asked about Paicines. Mr. Tobias spoke about tourist support services.

Discussion followed on meeting scheduling, with the consideration that this meeting did not have a quorum.

#### **6. Discuss upcoming Community Workshops.**

The Committee did not discuss this item.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m. to the regular meeting of October 7, 2010.

Minutes prepared by Michael Kelly, Associate Planner. Attest: Gary Armstrong, Director of Planning.