



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 OCTOBER 7, 2010

PRESENT Foley, West, Gatto, Montoya, Moore, Noble, Rajkovich, Roemer, Schneider, Saxton (arrived at 6:16p.m.)

ABSENT: Brunnemann, Felice, French, Ortega, Tobias

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 6:03 p.m.

6:00 PM ~ CALL TO ORDER

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

AGENDA

1. Approve minutes from:

a. July 8, 2010, meeting.

Mr. Noble made a motion, seconded by Mr. Roemer, to approve the minutes of July 8, 2010. The motion passed 9-0.

b. September 2, 2010, meeting.

Mr. Noble made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair West, to approve the minutes of September 2, 2010. The motion passed 9-0.

2. Review General Plan Update status.

Dan Amsden briefly spoke on the status of the GPU. He used a PowerPoint presentation for this and the rest of the meeting's agenda items. Amsden confirmed to Chair Foley that the GPAC's lack of a quorum at the previous meeting had not put the process behind schedule.

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

Amsden continued by speaking on the Background Report. He asked for the Committee's comments and questions on the report's findings. Mr. Noble pointed to Section 7.2, regarding wastewater, and spoke about wastewater treatment at various local residential developments. Ms. Montoya referred to Chapter 11 (Safety) and asked about flood hazard, earthquake hazard, and Rancho Larios wastewater disposal.

4. Discuss draft Opportunities and Challenges Report.

Amsden introduced the Opportunities and Challenges Report. The Committee viewed a map displaying constraints on development, depicted in varying shades of yellow indicating degree of constraint. Vice Chair West noted that the quarry in Aromas and the San Andreas Fault appeared to be depicted as less constrained than expected. Mr. Roemer asked about whether hilltops were included as constraints, and Amsden listed variables used in the map. Chelsey Norton stated that only the scenic-corridor land (along roads) were counted as scenic and not the views

themselves. Mr. Schneider remarked that, decades in the past, scenic corridors were designated without defining what constituted a scenic corridor.

Amsden asked the Committee for questions on the report. Ms. Saxton noted that endangered and threatened species presented a significant constraint but that the report considered critical habitat just a moderate constraint; Amsden responded that this related to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. Ms. Saxton also asked about infrastructure capacity, a “severe constraint,” and its meaning, given that water was considered separate from infrastructure; Amsden responded that “infrastructure” related to connection and extension of infrastructure such as wires and pipelines. Mr. Gatto asked about why New Idria was not considered a hazard; Amsden responded that the report did include discussion of hazard at New Idria. Mr. Noble remarked that the City of Hollister’s Measure U was to twilight five years after the sewer moratorium’s lifting and that the measure was about to expire. Ms. Saxton expressed objection to the use of the word *premature* to describe conversion of agricultural land and its implication that all agricultural land will eventually be converted. Chair Foley suggested adding reference to expansion of equestrian trails in addition to the existing references to bike/ped trails. Mr. Roemer made reference to a recent decision by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) Board decision on regional greenhouse gases (GHGs); AP Kelly clarified that the AMBAG Board aimed for zero per-capita GHG increases through 2020 and a per-capita reduction through 2035. DoP Armstrong said he had received a phone call from an individual stating that railroad rights-of-way should not be considered a constraint. Mr. Gatto recommended adding New Idria to the discussion of natural and cultural resources. Mr. Schneider added that a UC Santa Cruz graduate student had done substantial research on New Idria and could be used as a resource. Further discussion took place on New Idria and resources for addressing its issues. Ms. Saxton spoke on the high priority of the report’s climate-change findings; Amsden responded that AMBAG would be performing a GHG inventory. Discussion followed on climate change as Ms. Saxton noted that climate change’s effect would likely have a significant effect on the county and Mr. Schneider remarked that the same amount of water would have to serve a doubled local population.

During this item’s discussion, Ms. Saxton arrived at 6:16 p.m.

5. Review draft land-use alternatives and provide input.

Amsden introduced the alternatives using the PowerPoint presentation. He had earlier passed out alternatives handouts and placed large versions of the alternatives maps on easels behind the dais. Chair Foley commented on the presentation slide listing the factors used in developing the alternatives and said he believed this reflected the Committee’s work. Amsden reviewed the work resulting from the September 2 meeting (which had no quorum). Ms. Saxton remarked with pleasure that Aromas had since gained bus service (Monterey–Salinas Transit).

Amsden described the details of the alternatives, beginning with Alternative A as a base case. Mr. Noble asked a question about tax sharing, which ADoP Turner and DCC Murphy answered. Mr. Schneider made a remark on the Williamson Act, that he couldn’t remember when the Act had prevented development and that he didn’t consider it a constraint. Amsden responded that it’s a minor constraint, and DCC Murphy said some projects are delayed to let Williamson Act contracts expire. Amsden continued by describing Alternative B. Vice Chair West said he couldn’t find Union Road on the map, and Amsden said the road would be added to the map. He described how Alternative B would allow for some clustering and that San Juan Bautista would not change in any of the alternatives, an assumption that he suggested the Committee could examine.

Chair Foley asked whether clustered residential development would yield the same density and allow the costs of land and houses to remain the same, and Amsden said it realistically would. Chair Foley also asked whether employment growth would allow for clustered housing to be employee housing, and Amsden said the nature of this kind of development suggests it might not. Mr. Noble spoke of a village concept for clustered development, with project scale and what’s offered as factors in the nature of the housing; Mr. Schneider remarked that a 100-to-200-acre village seemed unrealistic in keeping people from driving to Gilroy. Discussion followed on residential density under the alternatives, including the possibility of businesses serving the residences. Chair Foley asked about what would occur in built-out areas of five-acre development, and Amsden responded that they could be further filled or remain the same.

Mr. Gatto asked about why Santa Ana Valley was omitted from the maps presented this evening; Amsden asked the group whether to look beyond the boundaries shown in these maps. Discussion followed on what parts of the county should be considered in studying land-use alternatives. Mr. Gatto requested that Santa Ana Valley be included because of its proximity to other areas already included in the prepared alternatives.

Discussion took place on the basis for the boundaries, on soils and farm viability, and on scenic qualities. Mr. Gatto requested attention be given to the Santa Anita area; others disagreed for the area’s remoteness and conservation easement land, but Mr. Gatto asked that the area be mentioned. ADoP Turner suggested that the GPU could bring zoning into agreement with the Santa Anita area, including the lower-than-minimum lot sizes found there.

Discussion took place on Alternative C. Amsden noted a typographical error on the map presented to the group. Discussion followed on all three alternatives. Mr. Schneider suggested that Alternative B is the best; Ms. Saxton said that the Committee was not to choose an alternative but to craft three alternatives for the community to choose. More discussion took place on the alternatives' appropriateness. Vice Chair West asked about the maps' depicted Route 25 realignment; ADoP Turner explained that project. Mr. Noble remarked on the term "protected agriculture"; Chair Foley noted that "mandatory" would be not easily accepted in this community.

Amsden asked about whether the alternatives should focus only on the northern part of the county. Mr. Schneider mentioned the Paicines Ranch project. AP Kelly explained the current General Plan's informal delineation of northern and southern halves of the county. Discussion took place on the possibility of changes in the county's southern area and what could limit those changes. Mr. Gatto spoke of clusters of possible commercial land use in Tres Pinos and Paicines, with possible clustered residential development there, too. Ms. Saxton said looking only at the north would be short-sighted. Mr. Schneider spoke of a large subdivision near Hernandez Dam, with many lots sold of about 40 acres; Mr. Noble said the State Subdivision Map Act now controls that type of subdivision. He further mentioned that 2004's Measure G would have restricted occasionally necessary lot splits and that "protected" is not a good word to use.

Amsden discussed the use for these alternatives, and Norton said that difficulty would result if the alternatives were too similar to each other. Discussion by the Committee followed on using the alternatives. Mr. Schneider said Alternatives A and C would generate turnout at community workshops because of concerns, and discussion about community workshops followed. Ms. Montoya asked whether Committee members would be present at workshops to represent geographic areas. Amsden said that was true but the workshops would not function as GPAC meetings; DCC Murphy said the presence of Committee members would require the workshops be agendized as GPAC meetings to comply with the Brown Act.

Amsden then asked about how far away from the northern areas the alternatives should study. Discussion followed with reference to constraints on southward growth, and with Mr. Schneider mentioning that a lack of water availability did not prevent the construction of Rancho Larios, contrary to what was thought to occur at the time. Amsden said the consultants would make the alternatives work somehow and asked a different question, on whether the population and employment distributions made sense. Mr. Noble said that time would tell how they would turn out. Amsden then asked whether the boundaries in the alternatives made sense. Mr. Schneider expressed concern on the depicted apparent size of commercial development on US 101 at the county's west boundary. Mr. Roemer disagreed with the term "single-family residential" for the area southeast of Hollister, and it was agreed that "urban" or something similar would be more appropriate for the area. Amsden then suggested evaluation of how to raise the jobs-housing ratio to one or higher in 2035. Mr. Schneider remarked that the GPU could not just create jobs, while Amsden noted that an Economic Development Element could help. Vice Chair West said that AMBAG looked at this in the past and that San Benito County has been anti-business; Mr. Noble said that would change. Mr. Gatto said good potential exists in the county and a higher jobs-housing ratio number would be realistic. Vice Chair West referred to the denial of commercial development at Routes 129 and 101. Jobs-housing balance discussion followed. Amsden then asked whether to include any other major variables in the alternatives. Mr. Roemer suggested considering tops of hills as constraints in order to protect ridgelines. ADoP Turner noted that design review is currently required on hills. Chair Foley asked about whether to abolish ridgeline development; Ms. Saxton recommended that idea and made reference to communities that had done it. Mr. Roemer suggested referring to AMBAG maps depicting constraints. Mr. Schneider asked about sources of water; Amsden said engineers on his team would look at that issue. Discussion followed on the location of water lines and where infrastructure restricts development. Mr. Schneider talked about how the Rural Electrification Administration brought electricity to isolated places.

Amsden then spoke on the next steps, including revisions to the alternatives, presentation of the Opportunities and Constraints Report to the Board, and the December 2 GPAC meeting.

6. Discuss upcoming Community Workshops.

The Committee did not discuss this item.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m. to the regular meeting of December 2, 2010.

Minutes prepared by Michael Kelly, Associate Planner. Attest: Byron Turner, Assistant Director of Planning.