



# 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 FEBRUARY 3, 2011

**PRESENT**    Foley, West, Gatto, Moore, Noble, Roemer, Saxton, Schneider, Tobias

**ABSENT:**    Brunnemann, Felice, French, Montoya, Ortega, Rajkovich

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

The regular meeting commenced at 6 p.m.

### 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. No general public comment was given.

### AGENDA

#### 1. **Approve minutes from the December 2, 2010, meeting.**

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

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

County Supervisors Margie Barrios and Anthony Botelho were present for this item. Dan Amsden gave an update, including a visual presentation. Chair Foley invited the Supervisors' questions. Supervisor Barrios thanked the Committee and introduced herself and Supervisor Botelho as the Board's ad-hoc GPU committee. Supervisor Botelho asked about the number of future workshops and conveying information on a preferred alternative to the public. Larry Mintier responded and explained the purpose of current steps and described future workshops as an open question, which the Committee should discuss. Supervisor Botelho asked about progress on reviewing existing General Plan elements. Mintier responded that how to address the elements is being worked out. Supervisor Barrios remarked on subcommittees to review the elements, and Amsden and Mr. Schneider explained the subcommittee review. Supervisor Barrios stated she was looking forward to a quarterly report on the GPU.

#### 3. **Discuss community input from January 26 community workshop.**

Amsden introduced the item, stating that 40 people were on the workshop's sign-in sheet and that additional people attended but did not sign the sheet. He described the workshop's purpose, activities, and results. Mintier stated that the summary his office prepared of the workshop attempted to do as little editorializing as possible and to represent what was said without additional philosophizing. Ms. Saxton remarked on economic development, that it would not be as high of a priority if not for the current recession and that its priority should be kept in the context of reality. Vice Chair West responded that, while that was true, the county's bedroom-community characteristic made economic development a high priority even before the recession. Mr. Schneider added that local unemployment had been historically high even in relatively good times.

Amsden gave more summary of the workshop, including comments and ideas written by attendees. Some contradictory statements were juxtaposed against each other, eliciting some laughter. Committee members noted the

comments' diversity and occasional disagreement, and Mintier remarked that these were all individual and not group statements. Amsden then summarized the results of the break-out group discussion. Mr. Schneider spoke as a member of one of the groups to say that his group, which preferred Alternative C, wanted Alternative B's commercial areas to be also depicted in Alternative C. Amsden welcomed questions. Chair Foley asked whether any discussion happened on transferable development credits (TDC); Amsden said none was in the recorded comments.

Mr. Noble remarked that the Hollister Valley does not have enough large blocks of land to achieve a village without assembling properties. Discussion then took place on the "village" concept, with Mr. Schneider's remark that he understood the concept as an adaptation of the transit-village concept to rural areas. Ray Pierce, under public comment, said that the TDC Committee had talked about this concept. He referred to San Juan Bautista's land area and walkability as desirable attributes for a village and said that a village should not be city-sized, should not unduly consume grazing land, and would preferably be hidden. Scott Fuller, under public comment, stated that TDC would not be practical under Alternative C for lack of a market. He explained that most City of Hollister land is designated for high-density development already, even higher than how developers currently want to develop, and directing new development only there would allow no incentive for developers to purchase the credits intended as substitutes for farmers' development rights. He said Alternative C had a false premise and that Alternative B would be more balanced and allow for a TDC market. Ray Pierce returned to say Scott Fuller was "spot-on," that the TDC program was always meant to be voluntary, and that the City of Hollister wouldn't go along with Alternative C.

Amsden continued the workshop summary. Chair Foley referred to the idea to expand residential clusters and decrease South County density and asked whether the two were connected. Mr. Noble responded that 40-acre sites were said to be not helpful across South County. After Amsden gave more summary, Ms. Saxton commented that, if maximum projected growth were not to happen, the projection might have been too high. Mr. Schneider responded that more growth land than actually needed would need to be allocated in order to allow choices. Mintier commented that old plans showed the full capacity of zoning even though much of that capacity was false and could never be achieved. He said this plan's intent is to be more refined and conscious of real constraints, but capacity typically is larger than what is expected to be achieved. Few places, he said, can restrain holding capacity to the projected growth numbers. Amsden thanked the Committee for their input.

The topic turned to selecting a preferred alternative. DCC Murphy stated that the Committee could discuss, but not select, a preferred alternative because the agenda did not state this action might occur at this meeting. DoP Armstrong said the Committee could discuss alternatives' pros and cons but not take action. Ms. Saxton suggested a special meeting for selecting the preferred alternative; Mr. Gatto agreed and suggested it take place in a couple of weeks. Mr. Noble suggested the Committee bring the GPU to the Planning Commission; DCC Murphy said the Committee and the Planning Commission could meet together if publicly noticed as a joint meeting. Mintier remarked that his office had anticipated the Committee might not come to a decision this evening and that it would be good to meet soon. Discussion took place on scheduling the meeting.

Versions of a motion to schedule a special meeting to decide the preferred alternative were discussed. Ms. Saxton suggested for that special meeting that the Committee bylaw on voting requirements for motion passage be agendized. Mr. Tobias made a motion to meet on February 24, 2011, to select a preferred alternative that would serve as a "starting point," with an intent to amend and refine; Mr. Gatto seconded. Ms. Saxton suggested February 17; Mr. Gatto moved to amend the motion so that the meeting date would be February 17, 2011, and Mr. Roemer seconded. Mr. Noble stated that both a quorum and a majority of the Committee needed to be present. Discussion followed about the effect of member absences on the Committee's activities; Chair Foley directed Committee attention back toward the motion regarding the next meeting. The motion to meet on February 17, 2011, to select a "starting point" preferred alternative that would be subsequently amended passed 9-0.

Discussion followed on the Committee bylaws and the requirement that motions pass with a majority of all 15 members and not just a majority of the present quorum. Ms. Moore suggested the subject of a hypothetical 7-2 vote could be posed to the Planning Commission, which, as Mr. Roemer added, could be treated as a "minority report." DCC Murphy confirmed this was possible.

Mr. Roemer requested to Mintier and Amsden that the consultants, prior to the next meeting, give advice on alternatives in addition to reporting the basics of alternatives and comments. Mintier responded that the Alternatives Report contains analysis but that his office could provide positives and negatives on the alternatives. Chair Foley asked about a point in the consultants' visual presentation regarding identifying features in South County and elsewhere. Mintier said opinions were to be invited on geographical areas other than those covered by the alternatives. Mr. Roemer asked whether data was available on things like a four-lane Route 25. DoP Armstrong responded with information on highway level-of-service that resulted from study of the local traffic impact fee. Discussion on the topic followed.

Mr. Schneider asked for information on the "village centers" concept; Amsden said that could be brought to the Committee. Ms. Saxton said rail service to the county is a 2035 issue and that the county should plan and reach for it; Mr. Schneider added that Union Pacific is upgrading track within the City of Hollister and shows no signs of abandoning the line. Mr. Roemer asked to see what community members drew on the workshop maps; discussion followed. Mr. Tobias suggested the Committee go home, study the alternatives, and find ways to tweak them.

Mr. Gatto gave ideas in response to the suggestions of Group 6 at the community workshop; his ideas included alternatives for residential development and commercial development along arterials. Discussion followed on where new commercial development should and should not be located. Extensive attention was given to the depiction on the alternatives diagrams of new commercial uses' locations and the degree of specificity implied by the diagrams' dots representing commercial development at road intersections and interchanges. Mr. Roemer stated that a dot suggested commercial uses at all four immediate corners of an intersection and no farther; Ms. Saxton suggested "fuzzy dots" for more generality, and Vice Chair West suggested clearly defined dots to invite activity at those particular spots and to convey a definite will to allow commercial uses there. Ray Pierce, under public comment, remarked that dots will elevate land values at those locations, while a corridor focus on future commercial would invite competition. Amsden commented that dots make for specificity but that at this time ideas would be meant for policy decisions, not parcel-based decisions; Mintier added that the GPU would, by law, need to become more specific. Vice Chair West stated that a more balanced community is a goal of the GPU and achieving that would require more commercial. Mintier responded that that was a policy choice and that all parts of the plan would need to be reconciled for the later purpose of an environmental impact report (EIR).

**4. Adopt schedule for additional regular meetings in 2011.**

Mr. Noble moved to accept the proposed schedule for regular meetings. Ms. Saxton seconded, and the motion passed 8-0, with Mr. Gatto abstaining.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m. to the special meeting of February 17, 2011.

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