



North Sonoma Valley Municipal Advisory Council

Notice of Meeting and Agenda

July 20, 2022



PLEASE NOTE: In accordance with AB 361, Governor Newsom's March 4, 2020 State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sonoma County Public Health Officer's Recommendation for Teleconferenced Meetings, and the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Resolution 21-0399, the North Sonoma Valley Municipal Advisory Council meeting will be held virtually.

Join Zoom Conference Meeting:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/96334431757?pwd=OXJoSHZHN0I2NkZzaHc5NXZqT3pDdz0>

9 Meeting ID: 963 3443 1757

Passcode: 428947

Join by Phone: 1 (669) 900-9128

5:30 p.m.

Contact: Hannah Whitman, Board Aide for Supervisor Susan Gorin – hannah.whitman@sonoma-county.org

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Land Acknowledgment, Roll Call

Call to order 5:31pm

Roll Call: Vice Chair Handron

Present: Chair Dawson, Councilmember Dickey, Councilmember Nardo-Morgan, Councilmember Oldroyd, Councilmember Nehouser

Absent: Councilmember Eagles, Councilmember Cooper

Land Acknowledgment:

We acknowledge that the citizens and communities served by the NSV MAC occupy the unseeded ancestral lands of the coastal Miwok who are closely related to neighboring indigenous peoples: The Pomo, The Wapo and others. Asking forgiveness for past transgressions they and their ancestors experienced, we humbly invite them to join us in person or in spirit as we give gratitude for their ongoing stewardship of this place since time in memorial. Recognizing how much would benefit from their continuing presence, as culture keepers and teachers, we commit ourselves to building positive and lasting relationships with our local indigenous community and to honor all the diverse peoples in our region.

The NS MAC serves the communities of Kenwood and Glen Ellen as well as the former Sonoma Developmental Center at Eldridge. As the most local arm of county government, we represent people who live and work outside of incorporated cities like Sonoma or Santa Rosa. We are in many ways a country town council. Like other advisory councils in Sonoma County we were established by the Board of Supervisors to act as a two-way communication channel. The MAC serves as our community voice and county government as a means for us to learn about and access county resources and as a place to identify challenges and opportunities and innovative solutions in partnership with our supervisor. Our bylaws limit us to issues concerning Transportation, Health and Human Safety, Community Projects, and Emergency Preparedness; others can be added at the request of our supervisor. There are no limitations on subject matter during the public comment section at the beginning of the meeting.

Chair Dawson, I tried with 3 or 4 people with special guests and I struck out this month, so I'll try again next month. I talked to John McCall this afternoon. He sends his regrets that he couldn't make it today and basically the reason is that he doesn't feel that they're quite ready to publicize exactly what's happening with the land trust and Infill Builders. The Infill builders are still working on their proposal and they're not quite ready to expose that. He assured me that next month they would most likely be able to come and so he's looking forward to having them do that. They're putting a lot of resources into developing a proposal. They would like to have a meeting with the MAC before the September 9th RFP deadline. He also set up an August 5th meeting on site with Infill Builders. They are going to tour the site, meet some community members. It is going to be a small group so at this point it's

invite only but just to introduce him into the area, into the community. I take that as a really good sign that they're wanting to meet with us. I'm unfortunately not going to be able to be there so I told John that I'd be happy to have someone else from the MAC go. He fully supports one or more MAC members being part of that meeting. I also just wanted to say that we are having an impact. We sent the letter to McGuire last month and as most of you probably know, we were invited to have a small meeting with Senator McGuire. Myself, Kate Eagles and from the MAC, Tracy Salcedo, Nick Brown from The Forum, Susan Gorin, Logan Pitts. It was a good meeting. I don't get any red flags from Senator McGuire. He promised to put together a list of bullet points of what we discussed that we could share with the community, so we're kind of waiting on that to really go public with more of that discussion. He assured us several times that the open space preservation is part of the legislation, the original legislation that is absolutely going to happen. I mentioned the process was either heavily compromised or a broken process from the point of view of the community, so they're taking us seriously and invited us for another meeting in September. We will get to meet with him again in September. He expressed this was the beginning of a longer dialogue. It feels like we're making a difference here. We're being heard and thank you to all hard-working MAC members and community members who've gotten us this far. I take all this as a positive sign.

2. Special Guest Opening Remarks

No special guests.

3. Approval of June 15, 2022 minutes

Chair Dawson, Are there any amendments or corrections to the June minutes?

Councilmember Nardo-Morgan moved to approve June minutes.

Vice Chair Handron seconded.

June minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Public Comment Receive (Limited to items not appearing on the agenda)

No public comment.

5. Supervisor Gorin Update

Supervisor Gorin was not present.

6. Vegetation Management Grant Program Receive • Kim Batchelder, Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District • Presentation on Vegetation Management Grant Program

Kim Batchelder, I have been working for Sonoma County Ag and Open Space for 17 years. I wanted to provide a little bit of background about the program I'm currently managing. It is called the Vegetation Management Grant Program through Sonoma County Ag and Open Space. I've worked as a natural resources planner and been involved with a number of different types of projects including a trail on Sonoma Mountain, Trail of the Open Space Preserve in Healdsburg, and a variety of different natural resource planning projects. In September of last year, the district asked me to focus on managing this grant program that is part of the County's efforts to help to become more of a resilient community against wildfire and improve the overall health of our natural resources. Today I want to give a short presentation about what that entails. A little bit more background is that in 2017 we suffered from the Tubbs and Nuns fire. This led to a legal action against PG&E. A settlement was agreed upon where the PG&E paid to the county the sum of 149 million dollars and the Board of Supervisors decided to set aside 25 million dollars for vegetation management. That includes a number of different tasks. I won't go into all those but I'll focus primarily on the vegetation management grant program. One of the things I wanted to share with you is beginning with kind of the selection criteria and project ranking that we used to select this last round of Grants grants round in 2021, where 19 projects were approved and I help them to the finish line in getting the grant agreement with the county to be able to spend about 3.2 million dollars in an 18-month period for projects that are working on vegetation management throughout the county. In September

when I was asked to do this full-time, one of the things I thought was really important is that clear criteria about what we are going to be focusing on, what should this grant support across the county? We have a very diverse county and have a high risk of fire in many areas, some higher than others. What we really wanted to do is focus on those areas that are very vulnerable to wildfire and ways in which we could apply vegetation treatments such as strategic fuel breaks or a prescribed fire using understory thinning and prescribed raising is another. Additional factors that we took into consideration in 2022 were things that included:

- Multiple benefits of projects, so looking at the whole ecosystem at a landscape level to try to think about actions that could be taken place across multiple landowners, so there is collaboration to do something on a larger scale than a defensible space. The district felt strongly about protection of natural resources and landscapes.
- Other factors included benefits to lower income or highly vulnerable communities.
- Organizational capacity is to be able to manage a large grant such as these.
- Support local workforce development and training.
- Project engagement with multiple communities and landowners.
- Pilot projects that advances public education, scalable, innovative and affordable techniques

When we received 40 proposals in 2022, we created a spreadsheet and evaluated different criteria in the context of the scoring system. Essentially, we had eight different reviewers like CalFire, Permit Sonoma, various agencies, Ag & Open Space staff, etc. Each one of the projects were evaluated based on the merits of the proposal that was submitted and evaluating their technical capacity to be able to do the job on the ground. We also looked at ways in which the proposer was looking to enhance the environmental qualities of their particular area. Wildlife is the highest criteria but we also wanted to see how any grantee was able to look at protection of watersheds and the ability to try to enhance wildlife corridors. All those factors are rolled up into an overall score per candidate. We were able to select 19 different proposals. In 2021 we supported 26 projects covering 1,100 acres of treatment area. We wanted to demonstrate the types of treatments that were being supported in 2021 versus 2022, where we supported 3.1 million dollars worth of grant projects.

2022 Vegetation Management Projects

- Project highlights
 - Multiple Treatments= 55%
 - Fuel breaks= 9%
 - Roadside Treatments: 11%
 - Prescribed fire & grazing= 20%
- Project Cost range
 - Range: \$26,120 to \$422,191
 - Average: \$162,689
 - Total: \$3,200,000
- Examples
 - Cavedale & Trinity Roadside Treatment: 10.3 miles + Critical Asset Protection
 - Coast Ridge Forest Council: Fort Ross Road/ Sonoma Coast Collaborative
 - COPE Northern Sonoma County: Mill Creek Shaded Fuel Breaks
 - Ag + Open Space: Southside Russian River Shaded Fuel Break. Will be using a tool called California Vegetation Treatment Program. Will do treatments over a period of 10 years.

Next Steps: Vegetation Management Grant Program

- Close the gap
 - Technical assistance
 - Project design
 - Environmental compliance
- Outreach and Education
 - Vulnerable Communities
 - How to reduce high wildfire threat
- Planning and technical assistance grants
 - 5K to 50K to support projects for up to 500K in 2022-2024

Kim Batchelder, Any questions or additional information needed?

Councilmember Dickey, How many of these projects require ongoing maintenance? I assume there's probably going to be a requirement for doing them every two years, five years depending on rainfall. What's sort of the projection on that and how do we pay for that?

Kim Batchelder, That's a great question. That's why we really try to emphasize kind of a shift towards projects that really have contemplated how they will go about doing the maintenance part of it. In many of these types of treatments the most expensive part is the establishment of the treatment, doing the initial cut if you will. That will be removing some stems to provide better spacing, removing understory vegetation along the ridgeline for example to be able to provide better access for fire service agencies. Whoever is designing and developing a project will ultimately be responsible for maintaining it as well. One of the things that we really want to work with is trying to think about how that's going to be most cost-effectively done, so hand crews are probably the most expensive type of expenditure. We're trying to consider other more feasible ways of doing that such as using prescribed burns in a very limited area. Another factor that is becoming pretty prevalent is the use of grazing using goats and sheep to get on these sites and be able to munch down on that vegetation on a pretty good cycle so that we don't have to come in every 5 years with a hand crew.

Councilmember Newhouser, Thank you so much for your presentation. I may be more on the skeptical side of vegetation management and having compatible fire management and restoration or conservation of habitat. I have a couple of questions, but I was wondering if you considered requiring land owners to provide all the follow-up as a prerequisite for a cost share? Also, regarding the grazing and prescribed fires is probably the most ideal but it's very difficult to do, especially in close proximity to homes. I've seen what goats can do and they're pretty indiscriminate. Supposedly you can train them but I guess I'm very concerned about the loss of our understory to protect people. I was wondering if you could speak to that a little bit. I wonder if the space district has done any calculations on how much under story is being lost in fire protection?

Kim Batchelder, We started this program based on our need to respond to some severe fire burns where the wildfires dictated what happens with our vegetation and our homes, so the board of supervisors wanted us to create a grant program from the get-go so we got funding on the ground to work with the communities that have been burned, as well as helped protect these highly important strategic areas, but also start to work on tools that can help us to reduce the risk of fire as well as be better planned on how to access an area in the future. Regarding the understory question, I think one of the things I want to share is that the types of treatments we're advocating for are pretty narrow in scope. Working with Cal Fire we have identified a number of different ridge lines that are important typically on the northeastern slope, so that the trajectory of winds that are coming during a Diablo event or these heavy wind weather events. How do we start to create these systems where you have successive lines of entrance to be able to do things like a back burn in the case of a fire. The alternative is sending in large machinery and cutting indiscriminately across these lines which leads to severe erosion, severe habitat destruction and we're spending a lot of money restoring it at the end of the day. I think what we're trying to find is that balance. We've really been trying to put our kind of fingerprint on this program where we are looking at how to enhance the environmental values of each treatment that we're trying to advocate for. When we look at a project, is it advocating for wildlife corridors as well? Can they be working together where we're trying to build up our capacity to be able to provide training in that. I'm literally finishing up the last parts of a proposal due tomorrow for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, where we want to advocate a training program where we really contemplate this comprehensive perspective of looking at wildfire resilience, but also looking at carbon sequestration, watershed protection, and enhancing biodiversity. I can't answer your question directly as far as the amount of understory lost, but I think we are working in that direction so that we're starting to hopefully get some understanding of how we balance everything from prescribed burns, which can be heavy impact on understory, but also by contrast wildfires a pretty heavy hit on our ecological systems as well.

Councilmember Newhouser, I really appreciate the fact that you're trying to put your imprint on these plans and the priorities because we need people like you who have the ecological background who can help to move toward reaching that balance so that's that's wonderful. We're in the process of doing a fire safe plan for our community. We will eventually have a Fire Safety Council here in Glen Ellen and eventually in Kenwood as well. People are already asking about how to tap into some of these funds. It's a two-part question. One is how much longer will the funds last? The other is we want to focus on getting rid of the broom, but the fire department doesn't want to grind it up in their chippers because they can't move it around because it's an invasive plant,

so we're forced to pile it and either burn it or chip it in place with our own equipment. We need to come up with a

solution to that.

Kim Batchelder, We are experiencing that in spades when it comes to our Ag and Open Space lands at Calabasas Creek, Saddle Mountain, etc. We see the amount of brooms. It's ridiculous. Trying to stay ahead of that is a really difficult question. What we've seen most effective is trying to get on it early, so the population doesn't explode and trying to hand pull as much as possible. I know that's sometimes completely unfeasible, but that's been the most effective when getting it restocked and when the soils are soft. We also know that the seed banks stay forever so fire after that type of treatment is another tool that has been effective with these projects. We have a complete two years of funding. We have about 14 million dollars left of the grant. We are working with the board of supervisors, primarily supervisor Hopkins and supervisor Gore to develop a strategy that we would like to present to the Board of Supervisors to determine whether we can continue to provide this type of funding. Also addressing the high-priority areas and being as strategic as possible, so the reason I mentioned the grant for the Russian River Corridor is that that grant is going to help leverage the PG&E funding. There's a lot of different grants that are out there and the board has instructed me to be pretty proactive in trying to get grants to support this continuation of a grant program. We hope to go to the board at the end of October or beginning of November with that strategy to hopefully continue doing an annual grant program such as the one we've done in the last two years that has really started to gain some great ground and be able to continue doing technical assistance and support groups like yourself that are forming your plan, needing technical systems or different forces/sources and being able to go forward. Even if the grant program isn't supportive, we will help you to get other funding sources. That's why you wanted to make it more holistic when it comes to the Cal fire prevention program, things like that. My team consists of a technical advisory committee which is Cal Fire and a lot of people who have served on the project evaluation committee. One of the things we do is serve as a sounding board to different initiatives and so about a month ago we had a John Mack from Permit Sonoma present his roll out of how he anticipates using the Hazardous Mitigation or Fuel Mitigation Project funding from FEMA and the BRICK Foundation also from FEMA. Those are two multimillion-dollar efforts to try to provide communities with support and so the more advanced that you have your proposal, when his money is ready to hit the ground, you will be ready for that source of funding as well. It's one of the things the board has asked us to do, try to consolidate the different sources of funding and all be marching on the same in the same direction, so that there's no competition.

Chair Dawson, I was just kind of curious if PG&E might have any plans to continue funding of this type since there's a good chance they will be liable for some additional wildfires and are insurance companies funding some of that stuff that might save them money?

Kim Batchelder, I have not worked directly with those two different sources of funding. We do have a partner at UC extension that is doing a lot of work on looking at that insurance question and many people are starting to experience elevation of their rates. How can we work with insurance companies to say, what if they're doing good defensible space? What if they're doing resource management or I received grants for different ways to treat their property? Can that reduce the rate? Can you show a net positive by them protecting their assets? That's one way we think that might work and then with PG&E, the counties are trying to think about ways in which PG&E can be more proactive in working with our local government so that if they're doing a clearance of a vegetation under a power line, if they can tap that into an existing shade of fuel break that we're trying to develop, that helps create a larger extended area that can hopefully protect communities down below. Regarding them actually participating in additional funding, we haven't broached that subject. That's a good idea though. I appreciate that feedback.

Public comment:

Jay Gamel, Thank you Kim for your many years of fine service to this County and this Valley. You have done many things to help us be aware and prepared for many ecological issues. Have you been able to approach or secure cooperation or devise any system of getting full cooperation from the local fire departments, who I think are really well positioned to identify vegetation management issues, as well as to help how well you can graph the programs together? What has your experience been so far and are you able to improve it? Does it seem like a likely source of help and administration for your projects with vegetation management?

Kim Batcehlder, Thank you for your kind words but I also appreciate that question because we have allowed fire service entities to apply for a grant program under the same scrutiny of that criteria that we are trying to fulfill. In 2021 we did support the Sonoma Valley fire district to purchase a chipper and a vehicle to transport the chipper and generate a

number of different training events to help people do their own defensible space work and then the chipper program is designed to essentially serve as an additional arm to what our County Chipper Program does. Sonoma is in one of those outreach areas where it's tough for the crew to spend a whole day going out and doing a chipper program to go back to the station in Santa Rosa. I'm working together with Steve Mercer. We looked at the values of having those different chipper programs in the outlying areas of the county. That's one example of our collaboration with the local fire service. In the Cavedale Trinity Road Project we were working with the Mayacamas Fire District where they were identifying the road as a very important part of safe evacuation. In that case, the area had been burned pretty heavily and so there are a lot of threatening trees and vegetation that could potentially disturb evacuation routes. We have been working with Cindy Forman from the Sonoma County Fire Department on various initiatives. It was her support of the Bennett Valley or Bennett Ridge Project that we saw as favorable for that group and saw the value of trying to protect that community from the wild lands area. We have a pretty good relationship. Our technical advisory team includes Ben Nichols, a chief forester for Cal Fire for the Napa Lake and Sonoma counties. He's been instrumental in being able to help us bridge the gap about fuel treatment and meeting the needs of local fire departments. One of the challenges they have is that their jurisdiction is largely housefires, emergency medical emergencies for instance. Sometimes they are stretched too thin to be able to help with that but our hope is that through funding that Permit Sonoma is bringing to the table, they have a really high interest in working on defensible space and home hardening. They are absolutely going to be working closely with the fire departments so that those lessons learned and those funds can be dispersed equally throughout the county.

David G, I wanted to ask for a little more follow up, if possible, from Kim on the FEMA grants administered from Permit Sonoma and specifically the BRICK Grant which is a total of about 50 million dollars. I'm just curious about what more information they have about the rollout plan for that or how that will work? Will there be a grant-like program for organizations to apply? Or will it be more coordinated centrally and just regionally? What is the timing of how that may roll out?

Kim Batchelder, We've had a lot of conversations about it. I think their idea is to try to create technical teams for each District so that the teams can evaluate all the high-priority projects and try to provide funding to those projects. I believe Permit Sonoma was interested in contracting the service providers to be able to do the work under contracts directly with Permit Sonoma and that way they manage the resources from beginning to end. Federal funding is always a little bit more complicated. The program is aimed at a tighter control and maybe not go through a grant program like we're offering but instead do more direct technical assistance and implementation through Permit Sonoma using a variety of different service providers. We're hoping that at the end of July, beginning of August we have more information out on the teams that will be starting to form and working with the variety of different service providers in each area. To Mark's point about the need to develop these community wildfire protection plans and fire safety council's, that really helps us as the county to understand that you guys are really putting in the effort to identify the highest priorities in a way that is driven by the community. Those efforts are highly respected and I think this grant will help to support those efforts as well.

Councilmember Newhouser, If I can follow up on that just really briefly, the funding you're projecting for this, you would have a pool of prescreened contractors. Would that just be technical assistance or also implementation?

Kim Batchelder, It's going to be the design of the project and it will not be technical assistance other than getting the job done. It's going to be implementation. It's called BRIC: Building Resilience Infrastructure in Communities. BRIC is designated for three specific areas: Rio Nido, Upper Northwest area, Cotati Penngrove area. The Hazard Fuel Mitigation is also a FEMA supported project.

Councilmember Newhouser, who should we follow up about more details on funding?

Kim Batchelder, I can serve as that point person for the county. We do want to create a website where you will have good access to funding resources, vegetation management, permitting, etc. Feel free to reach out and send me an email with any questions or comments.

7. Sonoma Developmental Center Update, Sonoma Land Trust (continued 6.15.22) Receive • Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) update from John McCaull, Land Acquisition Director, Sonoma Land Trust

- Discussion of coalition of housing and conservation interests in conversation on Sonoma Developmental Center Request for Proposals (RFP)

8. Reports and Announcements from Councilmembers and Ad Hoc Receive *Due to time constraints, the Chair requests this be limited to crucial or time sensitive items*

Chair Dawson, nothing's really been done with the transportation Committee in the last month, but we will get on it. I guess the only thing to say about that is just that if people have a chance to read the letter from the Springs MAC. That talks about the transportation plan for the Springs, so that might be something to think about down the road.

Vice Chair Handron, I have a report out for our Community Development ad hoc. We reached out to both the Glen Ellen Forum and the Glen Ellen Kenwood Rotary to get a sense of what people have in mind for Community Development projects. At the first meeting, Jim Burton and Ann Dominguez were there, who are very talented professional sign makers and much more than that. They suggested an idea of coming up with a master plan of community projects and reaching out to different community stakeholders, so we think it's a really good idea and because it involves a lot of local community groups, organizations, and community members. We can get feedback from a lot of people. It's a really big project and we realize we might not be able to accomplish everything in our tenure, so we are just really focusing on maybe getting a map and reaching out to some individuals. We were interested in having a discussion with the larger MAC about the scope of the project and getting feedback from everyone on how we approach it, if we don't want to just go rogue on it. I understand this is really more for reporting out so maybe we can discuss that in the future meeting. It started out as the project for the signs, but it sounds like the Glen Ellen Forum is working on a sign and would like to continue owning that so the conversation moved to what other projects does the community want?

Chair Dawson, any other report outs or community announcements?

Councilmember Nardo-Morgan, I just wanted to say thank you to the community for stepping forward and helping, connecting and coming to the 150th Year Celebration for the town of Glen Ellen. It was really great and we had a lot of support. We got a gold resolution as you know, Arthur, it's now in the History Center where you are, from the county. Senator McGuire's people showed up. Susan Goran came and it was just a really lovely event. We had music and food and the community really loved it, so thanks for all the support from the MAC and from the community in general.

Chair Dawson, Thank you Angela. You had a huge part in pulling that whole event together so thank you for that and another Community Builder. I'd like to invite people. We have one wall of our eventual downtown history display right behind my office. Anytime the building's open you can walk in and there's a really great exhibit that I was lucky enough to provide the content. Laura Glenn Winery and The Glen Ellen Historical Society are involved. Stop by sometime. It will be expanding to three walls.

9. Consideration of items for future agenda

Chair Dawson, Item 7 hopefully will be moved to August. John McCall from the land trust will be able to bring in Infill Builders, who are probably going to put in a proposal for SDC, so next month could be a big meeting and I'm pretty confident that will happen because they decided to go ahead with it. They want to talk to the community before the RFP deadline on September 9th, so next month would be the time.

Councilmember Newhouser, I think Vicki mentioned earlier in the meeting a discussion about the community projects development ad hoc committee and I would really like to get some input from others to discuss proposed plans for this master planning process we're proposing and also for contacts, people to reach out.

10. Adjourned at 6:45pm

Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the North Valley Municipal Advisory Council after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Board of Supervisors' Office located at 575 Administration Drive, Room 100-A, Santa Rosa, CA, during normal business hours.

Note: Consideration of agenda items will proceed as follows:

1. Presentation
2. Questions by Councilmembers
3. Questions and comments from the public
4. Response by presenter, if required
5. Comments by Councilmembers
6. Resolution, if indicated

Web Links: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/North-Valley-Municipal-Advisory-Council/>