

Sonoma Coast Municipal Advisory Council
Scott Farmer Chair
July 15, 2020, 5:30 – 7:30
Online Zoom/Facebook Meeting

Meeting Called to Order

Scott Farmer

Pledge of Allegiance

All

Roll Call – Present

Scott Farmer - Chair
Che Casul
Cal Ares
Dibby Tyler
Wanda Swenson
Brooks Rooney
Marti Campbell
Cathy Beck
Abreanna Gomes

Absent

None

Announcements – Scott Farmer

Scott Farmer thanked MAC Secretary Nance Jones as a volunteer and for her great work. She recently stepped down as Secretary. He also introduced Cindy Culcasi who is the new MAC Secretary replacing Nance Jones.

Adjustments to the Agenda

Dr. Sundari Mase will replace Lynda Hopkins on the agenda. She will give an update on the Corona virus. Ms. Hopkins is on a well-deserved vacation.

Representing the Sheriff's Department will be Sergeant Brian Parks and Deputy Jason Pacero along with their Community Outreach Officer Misti Wood.

Scott Farmer directed the participants to the Sonoma County MAC website if they want to download the meeting packet <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Coastal-Municipal-Advisory-Council/Calendar/> .

At the end of the meeting, future agenda items may be presented.

Approval of the May 20, 2020 Agenda

Brooks Rooney would like to update section H to make it clear that Council Members have the opportunity to comment. Scott Farmer stated that is implied, but we can make it clearer.

Brooks Rooney moved to approve the agenda. Motion seconded by Cathy Beck. The motion carried 9-0-0

Statement(s) of Conflict of Interest

None

Correspondence

None

Consent Calendar**Approval of Minutes**

Based upon correction made, Cathy Beck moved to approve the minutes. Motion seconded by Che Casul. The motion carried 9-0-0.

Public Comment

None

Information/Presentation

Scott Farmer introduced Misti Wood (Community Outreach Manager) of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. Ms. Wood thanked everyone on behalf of the Sheriff's Office for the invitation and the opportunity to speak. Sergeant Brian Parks and Deputy Jason Pacero are here this evening with Ms. Woods to discuss the burglaries and crime along the coast and answer questions.

Deputy Pacero gave an update on crime along the coast that included residential and commercial burglaries.

- Deputy Pacero (Resident Deputy Bodega Bay) and two colleagues, Deputy Greg Myers (Gualala area of north coast) and Jeremy Lyle (Resident Deputy Timber Cove, central coast) are part of the Guerneville Substation. The three deputies cover approximately 508 square miles along the coast.
- Residential Coast Statistics (includes a 5-mile radius along the coastline)
 - 2017 - 25 burglaries
 - 2018 – 16 burglaries
 - 2019 – 16 burglaries
 - 2020 - 20 burglaries so far this year
- Residential Entire County Statistics
 - 2017 - 209 burglaries
 - 2018 – 181 burglaries
 - 2019 – 105 burglaries
 - 2020 – 95 burglaries so far this year
- Commercial Coast Statistics
 - 2017 – 17 burglaries
 - 2018 – 11 burglaries
 - 2019 – 8 burglaries
 - 2020 – 7 burglaries so far this year
- Commercial Entire County Statistics
 - 2017 – 174 burglaries
 - 2018 – 151 burglaries
 - 2019 – 161 burglaries
 - 2020 – 101 burglaries so far this year
- Statistics - Four Month Window for COVID 19 – March through June

- Coast Residential – 13 burglaries
- Coast Commercial – 6 burglaries
- The last big spike in crime was during the fires in 2017
- The spike in crime is a result of:
 - The restriction in travel thus people are not able to visit their second home, vacation property had certain restrictions regarding renting. There are many vacant homes.
 - The County began releasing many non-violent offenders due to COVID-19. Many of these inmates were residential burglars or potential burglars. Many of these offenders upon release have nowhere to go, no families, and no job.
 - One of the issues is the response time on the coast. Setting up a Neighborhood Watch Group is beneficial. The Sheriff's Office will train you to look for suspicious activity and report it. There is signage so that people know you are organized and watching.
- Deputy Pacero discussed the value of camera systems in your home. This is a great tool for law enforcement since it only takes a minute or so to break down a door to get into a home.
- Community Outreach Manager Misti Wood discussed the value of social media and the ability to post videos/pictures from security cameras to help catch the person who broke into a home. People have called in with the name of a person they recognized who broke into a home. Ms. Wood told of an incident where the person who committed the crime turned themselves in because their picture was all over social media.
- Make sure the information posted on social media is accurate and consider the source when reading any social media posts.
- Deputy Pacero stressed when you see something, say something. There are incidents that have been posted to Nextdoor, but never reported to the Sheriff's Department. Citizens can email or call the Coast Deputies. They can also call the non-emergency number 707-565-2121 to report non-emergency issues. To report a crime happening, call 911.
- Locals can contact the Coast Deputies via email or their cell number. This is not something that is available to other areas and they should take advantage of it.
- The Resident Deputies will cater their patrol needs to address the current situation, e.g. patrolling at night if there have been burglaries during the night, etc.
- The Resident Deputies are on call and many times work long hours to address the current situation. Depending on the situation, a Resident Deputy may be called even if off duty. When response time is delayed, security cameras are a valuable tool.
- Evacuation Key Points. It is currently fire season
 - Don't hesitate evacuating because of COVID-19. If there is an evacuation notice, you must leave. If you are worried about staying in a shelter, leave immediately anyway. Don't wait.
 - Sign up for SoCo (<https://socoemergency.org/socoalert/>) and Nixle (<https://local.nixle.com/county/ca/sonoma/>) alerts.
 - All Sonoma County patrol cars have a high/low siren. The high/low siren is only used during an evacuation
 - If you are under an evacuation warning, it is ok to evacuate early. Some people have medical needs or perhaps large animals they need to get out. Go ahead and leave early.

Questions:

1. Che Casul - What is the average response time in Valley Ford? Response time can vary greatly. It depends upon the workload, the Deputy's location, traffic along the coast, etc. Deputy Pacero doesn't have an average response time.
2. Che Casul - In these days of COVID there are many people who come to the coast on weekends, is there more availability for the Sheriff's Department on weekends? Deputy Pacero said they try to bring in more

Deputies if possible. They also work with the Park System, and Highway Patrol when needed. Sometimes Deputies are pulled from the River Substation, but the river area is busy as well so that is not always possible. The Sheriff's Department tries to be as present as possible.

3. Cathy Beck commented that she lives at Salmon Creek Beach. Her neighbor took his kids to the hot dog stand in Bodega on Sunday and it took him 45 minutes because the traffic was so heavy. The hot dog stand is about 2 miles away. This indicates how heavy the traffic can be on weekends.
4. Sandra Gustafson stated that last Sunday someone dumped 16 sheep heads on Fitzpatrick Lane in Bodega near where she lives. Does anyone know who was responsible? Deputy Pacero did get some calls and contacted Fish and Game. He will follow up for a response at the end of the week.
5. Kate Fenton - On the morning of June 12, Ms. Fenton's home was burglarized. They kicked in the door, went through cabinets and drawers, and stole a jewelry chest with family heirlooms and family silver pieces. Some jewelry was found on the road. Deputy Pacero came, he was great (hard working and dedicated), and took fingerprints. Ms. Fenton wanted to give a shout out to Deputy Pacero for coming back and helping place a security camera on the premises. He also let Ms. Fenton know of his availability and encouraged her and a neighbor to reach out if needed. Ms. Fenton added that she would like to see a mini substation in Jenner, perhaps during the summer. The people in Jenner feel unsafe in this now commercialized town.

Scott Farmer thanked Misti Wood, Deputy Pacero, and Sergeant Parks for their presentation.

Pole Mountain Project – Marshall Turbeville

Scott Farmer introduced Marshall Turbeville. He is the Geyserville Fire Chief, Cal Fire Battalion Chief, and President of the Board of Directors for Pole Mountain Lookout. Chief Turbeville is here for two topics: To discuss Pole Mountain Lookout and give an update on Cal Fire and answer any questions regarding the upcoming fire season.

Pole Mountain is unique in the state. It is privately funded and not funded by Cal Fire. The Board, of which Chief Turbeville is President, is comprised of local residents.

In 1981, the outlook was moved by residents from Red Oak (north of Cazadero) to the current location of Pole Mountain. The lookout was staffed until 2017 when the major fires occurred. The outpost has views from Bodega all the way down the coast to Point Reyes (in the distance). The outlook is at 2000 feet above sea level and provides a great view of the coast. This outlook is a critical link to help reduce the amount of time it takes for fire fighters to respond. When the lookout is staffed with a person it has a great view to determine if the smoke is building and other critical information. Chief Turbeville stated that they would like a person to staff the outlook during the summers.

<http://www.alertwildfire.org/northbay/index.html> - Anyone can use the alert wildfire website to look at the current views from any of the cameras. The cameras can see about 20 miles.

The current Pole Mountain Outlook building is getting old, starting to sag, and needs to be replaced. Local architect, "Zippy" Michael Singer designed a new building. The old building would be demolished and replaced with a new building. The new building is very similar to the existing building. The new building would allow someone to stand under the building, in the shade, and have a 360-degree view. The building is a 10x10 foot size with solar power (there is no other power available). There would also be cameras on the building. There is an easement from Sonoma Land Trust to drive to the outlook. The new building would cost a total of about \$200,000 including the demolition of the current building. The new building will be mostly steel. The new outlook will last at least 50 years minimum and will provide a safety link for fire protection.

Chief Turbeville stated they would be looking to the MAC for funding or future partnership on the project.

Questions:

Scott Farmer asked if the cameras would all be networked. Chief Turbeville referred Mr. Farmer to Alertwildfire.org as noted earlier in the minutes. If there is a fire, the cameras will be aimed at the fires directly. Therefore, it is a good reason to staff the outlook or have more than one camera so another view from the outlook is available.

Scott Farmer asked how to donate to the Pole Mountain Outlook. Residents may go to <https://polemountainlookout.org/> to donate and also keep updated on the status of the project.

A participant asked how volunteers could access the lookout. Volunteers would drive to the summit below the lookout and hike up the rest of the way. Generally, volunteers worked about 10 hours a day (historically roughly July 1 through September) from 9:30 a.m. to 30 minutes before sunset. The paid shift day was about 8 – 10 hours.

Facebook - How do you find staff? Staff is mostly found by word of mouth. It takes a special person to work in solitude all day and be diligent all day long. We may partner with the Forest Fire Lookout Association. Some of the previous staff may be interested in coming back. Local volunteers are great because they know the landmarks and people and have contacts, they can rely on when needed.

Cal Fire Update/Q&A - Marshall Turbeville

Cal Fire is at their peak fire season staffing (historically mid-June through mid-September). More recently fire season has been mid-June through the end of October. Fire seasons have been longer in the past few years.

Cal Fire Staffing/Engines (State Level):

- One engine at Sea Ranch Station
- One engine in Cazadero
- Two engines at Korb and Guerneville
- One engine at Occidental
- Call upon Marin County, Petaluma, and Point Arena for backup

Cal Fire depends on many organizations that appear as one although some are volunteer, and some are paid. When a fire is fought, they appear as one organization fighting the fires.

Local Level Engines and Fire Fighters

- Sonoma County Fire District
- Fort Ross
- Bodega Bay
- Timber Cove
- Occidental
- Camp Meeker
- Cazadero

Aircraft comes out of the Sonoma County Airport

- Two S2 aircraft
- The Blackhawk helicopter which won't appear at the airport until the fall

Generally, fire fighters weren't needed after September however for 2017, 2018, and 2019 that wasn't the case. The rain has not been sufficient enough to lessen the fire danger. Firemen look at grass scientifically using the Fire Index. The wind comes up in late fall and the vegetation is dry. That is how 2019 ended. Expect more power shut offs this year. PG&E has refined the process and the shut offs should be shorter and in smaller areas. We are technically in a low-level drought right now.

The overall trend of air temperature is not good. We are about two weeks ahead in the fire season of where we usually are. Northern California Cal Fire works out of NorthOps in Redding. Currently we are in a normal fire season, but that may change in the fall. See the Cal Fire website for statistics and events. <https://www.fire.ca.gov/>

Questions

Facebook - Are there any defensible space inspections this year? There will be no Sonoma County Chapter 13a inspections this year. Cal Fire is only doing inspections required by state law code 4291 this year. If a resident would like to request an inspection, please contact your local Cal Fire Office. See the website for information: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/>

Scott Farmer asked what Cal Fire has learned about the COVID overlays for any fires where large crews were brought in? Is COVID changing the strategy? Chief Turbeville said they are taking extra precautions: wearing masks; no large gatherings for meals; keeping separate when possible; keep areas clean. There have been some COVID cases and it has had an impact.

A Council Member shared a story about 5 or 6 of houses in Jenner who put sprinklers on the roofs when being evacuated. Each house used about 30,000 gallons each. The average water tank holds 100,000 gallons. The use of the sprinklers drained 2 of the 3 water tanks in Healdsburg. If the water had been needed, this could have caused a dire situation. She asked that other spread the word that leaving the sprinklers on during a power shut off can have a negative impact on the entire community. Not only could the Fire Department not have enough water, you could cause your home and other homes around you to burn down because of the lack of water available.

Update on COVID-19 - Dr. Sundari Mase

Dr. Mase will give a general presentation regarding COVID-19. The State Medical Officer has motioned to close some of the settings that had opened in the past weeks. This includes indoor settings (restaurants, movie theaters, personal care, etc.). This was based upon the watch list and the statistics based upon our case rates, increase in hospitalizations, and ICU bed availability. Sonoma County was placed on the watch list as of last Monday.

We hope the mitigation measures help lower the number of cases. Most people are wearing masks, social distancing, and using general hygiene measures. The mitigation measures are only good when people observe them. It only takes a few people to ignore the mitigation measures to increase the cases of COVID. We're seeing our big outbreaks (besides in the skilled nursing facilities) because of gatherings of non-household members (large and small gatherings). Several of the events are a result of Father's Day, July 4th, and other gatherings.

Sonoma County is doing well with testing and is using their own lab to obtain the results. There is some shortage of testing supplies in other counties. Go to your own doctor if you need to be tested. Don't wait two weeks for an appointment with the County.

The State is aware of all events which is good for Sonoma County since the County may not be aware of the big picture.

Scott Farmer – Could there be more granularity in the numbers so people on the Coast can see the local statistics for their area? Dr. Mase asked Mr. Farmer to talk to Leo with his specific request. She believes there are enough numbers

available now to get specific numbers for the Coast. It appears the numbers could be broken down by zip code. The county is trying to hire three more epidemiologists to assist. Dr. Mase will also check with the county privacy officer.

Frank Bowe - The recent closures only impacted indoor activities, if the measures don't address the increase in cases, what might the next closures be? Is there any thought to reducing tourism or another stay at home order? Dr. Mase - This question has come up on many of the CDCH calls. They are waiting for the state to weigh in with their opinion. At this point, Dr. Mase has not heard anything about closing down tourism or another stay at home order.

Posted question - Is there still a need for contact tracers in Sonoma County? Dr. Mase - Yes, absolutely. The county will be posting contact tracers positions again and hiring every month. The state contact tracers covered for six months and will be leaving soon.

Chat question - Rodolfo Milito - When modeling the results of COVID cases listed as grave, it includes the number of tests, but it doesn't include the reason people were tested? Were the people tested as a result of contact testing, symptoms, or because they just asked to be tested? Dr. Mase - Yes, the data includes all people tested. Percentages include all people tested. 550 people a day are tested, but a majority of the people tested are not tested because of symptoms but for other reasons, e.g. for their jobs, etc. Mr. Milito would like more details so people can understand better.

Facebook Question - Can local cases be sorted by residents vs. visitors? Dr. Mase - Yes, it is possible to sort the local cases. A majority of the cases are residents.

Scott Farmer thanked Dr. Mase for participating.

Regular Calendar Items

Land Use/Events Permits

The Sonoma Coastal MAC will be included in the permit process very early in the process via email. The AdHoc Committee will review and discuss the permits. If the request rises to consideration, it will be considered public and there will later be a special meeting or part of the general meeting depending upon the turnaround time needed. The AdHoc Committee doesn't want to impede the process. The idea is to partnership on the permits. The process is included in the July 15 Meeting Packet.

A motion was made by Brooks Rooney and seconded by Che Casul to approve the process. The motion passed 9-0-0.

TIF Priorities and Process

Scott Farmer stated that the TIF Priorities and Process was reviewed and refined. The process is included in the July 15 Meeting Packet.

A motion was made by Marti Campbell and seconded by Che Casul. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Council Member and Staff Reports

Scott Farmer reminded residents to complete the Census

The TIF AdHoc Committee will be retired since the process was approved tonight.

Mr. Farmer wishes to create a committee to review the by-laws. He volunteered Cindy Culcasi. Marti Campbell, Brooks Rooney, and Scott Farmer volunteered to be members of the committee. The committee will include Scott Farmer, Marti Campbell, Brooks Rooney, and Cindy Culcasi.

Grand Fondo is advertising their 2021 Race. It impacts the river region on Memorial Day Weekend but does not impact our area.

Emergency Preparedness Committee - Paul Plakos

Paul Plakos is the chair of the committee. The Emergency Preparedness Committee was established at the last Coast MAC Meeting. There are 4 members, Wanda Swenson, Cathy Beck, Scott Farmer, and Paul Plakos. The committee has met twice since the last Coastal MAC Meeting. The first meeting was to establish a mission. The second meeting was to determine what needs to be looked at from an emergency preparedness perspective. Mr. Plakos shared a document with their mission, best practices, and they broke down issues based upon urgency. The list of issues will probably change over time. Mr. Plakos welcome comments and suggestions that fit within the mission of the committee.

Some of the issues:

- Fuel reduction (fire) issues. What is already in place? what is needed? For example, Sea Ranch mows a 6 – 8-foot width along the eastern edge of HWY1 to create a fuel break. Cal Trans also creates a fuel break along the highway.
- Identify gaps in cell tower coverage. What are the next steps to getting cell coverage?
- Encouraging more county support. This might mean for the county to encourage the need for donations, e.g. Pole Mountain Outlook.
- Regional Parking Policy. For example, cars parking along the road in Bodega Bay. Is there room for emergency access?
- Communicating along the coast for evacuation orders. What is in place currently? Are all areas communicating with each other when evacuation, e.g. is it ok to pass through? Encouraging and sharing evacuation strategies. Mr. Plakos learned today that the County and Law Enforcement are already working on this issue. They are developing maps to share with the community.
- Communicating micro gridding along the coast. Refining and communicating the current laws.
- Report on Fire District consolidation. What is the role of Cal Fire in those consolidated areas?
- Report on Ambulance coverage.

Scott Farmer stated he is interested in hearing about the grazers that Sea Ranch uses for fire mitigation. Mr. Plakos will contact Frank Bell regarding this issue.

Dibby Tyler asked why Pole Mountain isn't funded by a government agency? Marshall Turbeville had already left the call. The Land Trust donated the property. If the funding comes up short, Lynda Hopkins could be asked about the issue. The entire Board of Supervisors would need to agree. Scott Farmer stated Ms. Hopkins is very interested in Pole Mountain and may not be opposed to it. Grants are also being applied for to help cover the costs.

Bodega Bay members report on letter sent in January – Brooks Rooney/Cathy Beck

The letter is included in the July Meeting packet. Ms. Rooney and Ms. Beck wanted the letter to be on the record. The issue was discussed in the previous Coastal MAC Meeting.

Staff Reports

Letter from Jenner Resident

Elise VanDyne spoke to a letter that was sent by a resident regarding a Cal Trans truck taking water from a fire hydrant in Jenner. The resident was concerned why during high fire season that a truck was taking the water. Ms. VanDyne inquired about the water issue with RRUC. She found that water is diverted from Jenner Creek and goes through a water treatment system and is sold. Water is not sold if there is not sufficient water available. If the water is not used, the water is returned back to the creek. There is a 100,000-gallon tank in Jenner and the water is kept at a minimum 85,000 to 90,000 gallons at all times. The resident asked how the water can be tracked. There is a water meter on the hydrant to keep track of the water. Last year during a power outage, an operator drove to the site and checked to ensure there were no issues. During the last period of mandatory evacuation, many residents stayed and did not evacuate and continued to use water. Ms. Vandyne reminded residents that during a mandatory evacuation, you need to listen and evacuate. There are portable generators available if water needs to be pumped to fill the tanks and there is a power outage.

Michelle Irwin (a Jenner resident) wanted to thank Cal Ares and Elise VanDyne for getting the water concerns in front of the MAC. It is essential that we know where our water is going and when. The issue of the water truck that took water on June 24, 2020 from the Jenner hydrant was brought up to the Jenner Water Board. That Board was cancelled through a supervisor meeting that didn't seem to fit the protocol for closing a committee. Ms. Irwin would like to reinstate the Jenner Water Board. In October of 2019, Cal Trans was asked to find water elsewhere and to stop getting water from Jenner. She also added that Cal Trans is supposed to use 50% non-potable water. Ms. Irwin looks forward to working with Cal Ares as the Jenner representative and addressing this issue with Russian River Utilities and other agencies. She also thanked the MAC for their work.

Elise VanDyne asked that Cal Ares schedule a call to discuss the issue.

A participant asked if there were laws against having a sprinkler on your roof in Jenner? Ms. VanDyne will research the question.

Cathy Beck added that it takes 30,000 gallons of water to fight a house fire. Using sprinklers on your roof is not a good option since it uses a large volume of water.

A participant asked where the houses were located who watered their roof. The homes were located in Fitch Mountain in Healdsburg.

Lower Coastal Plan - Elise VanDyne

Comments are still being reviewed and discussed. There will be a provision for public comment. Supervisor Hopkins advocated for an additional review period. The updated draft plan will be available in September for review and will be discussed at a Board of Supervisor Meeting. Ms. VanDyne will keep everyone up to date on the status of the plan.

Additional Topics

Scott Farmer said he was hearing quite a bit about EDUs and the LCP and bringing EDU's on their property

Cathy Beck asked if the MAC has a procedure or a committee to review the final draft of the LCP? Scott Farmer said there is no committee currently. It was suggested that a special MAC Meeting be scheduled for public comment.

Elise VanDyne discussed the question from residents regarding parking permits in towns or areas where there are numerous tourists. Ms. VanDyne is working on a policy for resident permit parking and is close to finalizing it. Cathy Beck talked about illegal parking on the coast. This is a big issue in Bodega Bay. Illegal parking has a negative impact on emergency vehicles access.

The Russian River Watershed Project has been reignited. Previously there was a similar project in 2016. This project addresses the water quality of the Russian River to make the water swimmable, drinkable, and fishable. The project was dropped after the fires. Ms. VanDyne will discuss further in future meetings.

Dibby Tyler thanked Elise VanDyne for doing a great job.

Call for Future Agenda Items

Michelle Irwin (Jenner resident) asked to add an agenda item on water quality and use

Brooks Rooney would like to add an agenda item regarding traffic on the coast and in the neighborhoods.

The next Coastal MAC Meeting will be on September 16, 2020.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Brooks Rooney and seconded by Che Casul to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Culcasi, Clerk