



**Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council**  
**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**September 14, 2023 05:30 PM**  
**Fife Creek Commons - 16376 5th Street, Guerneville, CA 95446**  
<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/lrrmac>

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 pm by Forestville Representative Vesta Copestakes.

Chair Pip Marquez de la Plata arrived at 5:35

**A. Pledge of Allegiance**

Lead by Forestville Representative Vesta Copestakes

**B. Roll Call**

Present: Chair - Rio Nido Representative Pip Marquez de la Plata, Guerneville Representative Nic Pereira, Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Betsy Van Dyke, Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative Cynthia Strecker, Hacienda Representative Vicki Clewes, Forestville Representative Vesta Copestakes, Guerneville Alternate Kathy Dahl, Forestville Alternate Lucy Hardcastle, Cazadero / Duncans Mills Alternate Tony Goodwin

Staff Present: Debbie Ramirez, District 5; Lupe Catalan, District 5; Robert Aguaro, Permit Sonoma,

**2. Approval of Agenda, Chair Pip Marquez de la Plata** Forestville Representative Vesta Copestakes motioned to approve. A second was made by Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Betsy Van Dyke. The roll call vote:

Aye **Chair - Rio Nido Representative Pip Marquez de la Plata** Aye **Guerneville Representative Nic Pereira** Aye **Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Betsy Van Dyke**  
Aye **Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative Cynthia Strecker** Aye **Hacienda Representative Vicki Clewes** Aye **Forestville Representative Vesta Copestakes**  
Aye **Guerneville Alternate Kathy Dahl** Aye **Forestville Alternate Lucy Hardcastle**  
Aye **Cazadero / Duncans Mills Alternate Tony Goodwin**

**3. Statement of Conflict of Interest**

none

**4. Consent Agenda**

**A. August 24, 2023 Joint River & Coast MAC Minutes**

Forestville Representative Vesta Copestakes motioned to approve. A second was made by Hacienda Representative Vicki Clewes. The roll call vote:

Aye **Chair - Rio Nido Representative Pip Marquez de la Plata** Aye **Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Betsy Van Dyke** Aye **Hacienda Representative Vicki Clewes**  
Aye **Forestville Representative Vesta Copestakes** Aye **Guerneville Alternate Kathy Dahl**  
Aye **Forestville Alternate Lucy Hardcastle** Abstained **Guerneville Representative Nic Pereira** Abstained **Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative Cynthia Strecker**  
Abstained **Cazadero / Duncans Mills Alternate Tony Goodwin**

**5. County Report**

Debbie Ramirez updated the council on the vacancies for the River MAC. There are two vacancies in Forestville for one representative and one alternate, with four applicants in the running. Guerneville also has a vacancy for a representative with four applicants. Bilingual flyers are being developed as well as an

upcoming Zoom applicant forum scheduled for October 1st at 10 a.m. This forum will allow applicants to discuss their reasons for running and will be open to public questions. Debbie clarified that the selection process involves community voting but is technically an appointment by the Board of Supervisors.

Business cards and email addresses are in the works for all representatives and alternates. Feedback was invited on the design of the business cards. These email addresses will be distribution lists, forwarded to both the representative(s) and the alternate. The email addresses are intended to facilitate communication when council members are tabling at events or engaging with the community.

## **6. Council Member Comment: On matters not listed on the agenda**

Cynthia gave an update on the Monte Rio Bridge. She reported that at the Rec & Park meeting last week the senior engineer on the project said that once the project begins, there will be a year of construction and they are hoping that it will be able to stay open continuously, but if closures are necessary, they will work with the community on solutions. She spoke about scouring erosion and how it can be dangerous when branches gather in the holes and can also weaken a bridge. CalTrans notes that the current scouring is notable but not critical. They inspect every two years. Early to mid next summer Dutch Bill Creek bridge repairs will begin and it will take one month to repair. In the mean time, a light is being installed to allow safe one-way traffic on the bridge.

Tony reported on the 100-Year Austin Creek Road anniversary celebration, which included a pancake breakfast and was well-attended. The local park was reopened with updated equipment. There was also a commemoration of a Veteran. He also commended the roadwork the county has been doing. Now that the roads are so smooth people are driving faster.

Vesta thanks county roads for all the impressive work they have been doing and it is happening all over the county. She encouraged community members to check the [Pavement Preservation Program \(PPP\)](#) website and let Public Infrastructure know which roads need paving. She also mentioned Safer West County and their chipper program, funding for vegetation management, and home hardening programs. [Saferwestcounty.org](#)

Betsy reported that the Neeley Road paving is going well. The Argonaut contractors have been very kind and accommodating. The Gay Pride committee has raised nearly \$60,000 and are looking forward to providing grants to community organizations and have some funds left for next year. October 13-15. The parade is at noon Sunday followed by a party on Johnson's Beach.

Pip added more information about how to connect with the MAC to help create the annual PPP road list. Forgotten Felines is having an adoption event on Saturday they have 55-60 kittens that need homes.

Tony added that he is the chief radio officer for neighborhood auxiliary communication. They have a robust system in place in Cazadero. Also participants in Guerneville, Forestville, Santa Rosa, Cloverdale, Rohnert Park, and Windsor. He encourages people to look into this communication service using walkie talkies in the event other comms don't work. It's all volunteer work. They have a repeater in Guerneville and it isn't used as much as it could. He encourages people to learn more about using this during emergencies.

## **7. Public Comments**

There was a question via Zoom asking about when the Neeley Road paving would resume.

A member of the public asked for an update on the Governance Study. Staff shared how to find updates on the website.

## **8. Discussion on Scoping for Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR) for Canyon Rock Asphalt Facility (PLP22-0027)**

Robert Aguaro, Senior Environmental Specialist at Sonoma County's Planning Department, provided a detailed report on the process for the proposed asphalt plant in Forestville. He outlined the various permit applications involved, including:

A use permit for the installation and operation of the asphalt plant.

A use permit for a major Timberland conversion to accommodate the facility.

A zone change to add the Mineral Resources or MR combining district onto the project parcels.

A Reclamation Plan Amendment.

He clarified that the county has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be required for the project. The project is currently in the scoping period, which is the initial phase of planning where comments are gathered to determine the scope of the EIR. The scoping period ends on September 21st, but comments submitted after that date will still be included in the record.

The first hearing body for the project will be the Planning Commission, which will make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, the ultimate decision-making body.

Robert provided business cards for those who wanted to stay in direct contact for updates on the project, including providing input for the scoping of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Councilmember Vicki Clewes

- Raised concerns about traffic issues in her area, specifically the impact of truck traffic on Pocket Canyon Highway 116.
- Requested a comprehensive study on truck speed and their impact on roads.
- Highlighted the need to consider daily traffic and evacuation routes.

Chair Pip Marquez de la Plata

- Stressed the importance of considering broader regional traffic patterns rather than a limited geographical scope.

Councilmember Vesta Copestakes

- Discussed historical limits on quarry production and truck trips, questioning if current operations comply with those limits.
- Sought to understand the established truck trip levels in relation to current operations.
- Raised concerns about truck-induced road vibrations and air quality standards compliance by different trucking companies.
- Mentioned the noise impact of trucks, particularly the use of Jake brakes in residential areas.
- Discussed the potential impact of a new asphalt plant in Forestville on truck trips from Santa Rosa and road maintenance.
- Inquired about the possibility of multiple asphalt plants within a community and the enforcement of environmental regulations related to quarry expansions.

Councilmember Nic Pereira

- Noted the inclusion of recycled asphalt in the mix and questioned the lack of discussion on the additional truck traffic for bringing in materials.
- Raised concerns about off-gassing from conveyor belt operations.

Councilmember Lucy Hardcastle

- Expressed concerns about fire hazards.

Councilmember Cynthia Strecker

- Voiced concerns about the health of Green Valley Creek and the potential impact of the proposed plant on recent restoration efforts.
- Requested specific information on containment measures for runoff during rain and the details of reforestation plans.
- Asked for clarification on the conditions under which the plant would operate at night.

Councilmember Betsy Van Dyke

- Agreed with the concerns raised by other councilmembers, particularly about the environment.
- Pointed out discrepancies in the operating hours mentioned in the presentation materials.

Councilmember Tony Goodwin

- Questioned if the new operations would minimize traffic and emissions from Santa Rosa to the local area.

Councilmember Vesta Copestakes

- Praised Canyon Rock Quarry for their stewardship of Green Valley Creek and their environmental efforts.

Councilmember Betsy Van Dyke

- Discussed the potential increase in local emissions due to the processing of asphalt and the transfer of impact from truck traffic to the asphalt plant emissions.

Councilmember Vicky Clewes

- Clarified that there is no guarantee of reduced truck traffic from Santa Rosa without specific commitments, urging for this to be addressed in the environmental report.

Public comment included concerns about traffic, speed and road impact, regional traffic patterns, evacuation traffic, limit on number of truck trips, air quality standards for trucks, noise levels, Jake brakes in neighborhoods, comparison of truck trips from Santa Rosa, impact on community, and wear and tear on roads and questions about a previous project proposal.

After the public comment period, Robert Aguaro returned to the podium to offer additional clarifications on the asphalt plant proposal. He emphasized that even once the scoping period has officially ended, the public is still encouraged to send in comments, which will be included in the official record. The next significant phase for public engagement will be the publication of the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which will also be open for public review and comment. Aguaro also noted that there will be future opportunities for the public to voice their opinions during hearings at the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

He clarified that all aspects of the project, including zone changes and use permits, are bundled together as a single package to be presented to decision-makers. Regarding previous studies, Aguaro stated that the EIR from the 1997 permit application will soon be available online and that some of its still-relevant analysis will be included in the new EIR. However, the new EIR is essentially a subsequent document and not entirely based on the old one. He also mentioned that the history of the project, including older decisions such as the original application for the asphalt plant that was rejected over 20 years ago, will be included in the record for context. This information would be suitable for inclusion in the meeting minutes for a comprehensive overview of Aguaro's additional remarks following the public comment period.

## 9. **Committee Reports**

### A. Communications Ad Hoc, Report from Chair Joe Rogoff

Vicki gave a report from the Communications Committee. They would like to develop better ways to communicate with community members, especially for those who do not use Facebook. The committee suggested that the best way to provide feedback is through email, which is listed on a flyer they distributed. They emphasized the importance of self-organization within the community to improve communication.

### B. Community Clean Up Ad Hoc, Report from Chair Lisa Nahmanson delivered by Vicky Clewes

Vicki reported that the ad hoc is focusing on "micro cleanups" in small areas like park and rides and neighborhoods. They are also engaging with cleanup efforts before, during, and after the upcoming pride parade to help keep trash out of the waterways.

## 10. **Adjournment**

On a motion from Cynthia and seconded by Vicki the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM