



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

AGENDA

Regular Meeting

July 11, 2024 05:30 PM

Fife Creek Commons Community Room - 16376 5th Street, Guerneville, CA 95446

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/lrrmac>

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/97748276562?pwd=GDMhBVYoljFIGGZ55y6vzSsZwNNQ1.1>

Chair & Rio Nido Representative: Pip Marquez de la Plata • Vice Chair & Cazadero / Duncan Mills Representative: Mike Nicholls • Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff • Guerneville Representative: Spencer R. Scott • Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke • Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative: Cynthia Strecker • Hacienda Representative: Vicki Clewes • Forestville Representative: Lonnie Lazar • Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council will make reasonable accommodations for persons having special needs due to disabilities. Please contact the Fifth District Field Representative at 707-565-1219 during regular business hours at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to ensure necessary accommodations are made.

1. Call to Order

- A. Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Roll Call

2. Approval of Agenda

Discussion **Possible Action**

This approval process ensures that the agenda accurately reflects the items to be discussed and decided upon. Members may request adjustments to the agenda, including reordering or deletion of items at this time. Any changes must comply with the Brown Act requirements for public notice and agenda setting. The agenda must be finalized before the Council proceeds with other meeting items.

3. Statement of Conflict of Interest

Discussion

This is the time for the Chair, Vice Chair and Council Members to indicate any statements of conflict of interest for any item listed on this agenda. The River MAC bylaws state that members will not involve themselves in official River MAC activities that could materially benefit them personally, their business interests, or the interests of organizations that they represent. In a conflict of interest, the member will abstain from voting, and the abstention will be recorded in the minutes.

4. Consent Agenda

Discussion Possible Action

These items are expected to be routine and non-controversial. The Lower Russian River MAC will act upon them at one time without discussion. Any Representatives, staff member or interested party may request that an item be removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

A. June 13 Minutes

5. Councilmember comment on matters not listed on the agenda

Discussion

Comments are restricted to matters within the Board’s jurisdiction. Please be brief and limit spoken comments to one minute. Due to Brown Act regulations, this is not a time for discussion of any item, however a brief dialogue about considering an item for a future agenda is permitted during this time.

6. Public Comments

On Matters not listed on the agenda: Comments are restricted to matters within the Lower Russian River MAC’s jurisdiction. Please be brief and limit spoken comments to two minutes.

7. County Update from Supervisor Lynda Hopkins / Staff

Discussion

The staff update will include an overview of the recruitment and appointment process for River MAC terms beginning in January 2025.

8. Discussion regarding Pavement Preservation Program timeline and process

Discussion

Janice Thompson, Deputy Director of Sonoma County Public Infrastructure will provide a Roads update, an overview of the [Pavement Preservation Program](#) and explain the role of the MAC in the [prioritization](#) process.

9. Committee & Community Project Reports

Discussion Possible Action

Written reports are included for review. Committee chair or delegate may briefly highlight parts of the update, respond to councilmember questions, and receive public comment.

A. Guerneville Plaza Infrastructure Recommendations Ad Hoc - Final Report

B. Community Stewardship Project

10. Adjournment



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council
Minutes

Regular Meeting

June 13, 2024 05:30 PM

Guerneville School Community Room, 14630 Armstrong Woods Road Guerneville, CA 95466

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/lrrmac>

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Chair & Rio Nido Representative: Pip Marquez de la Plata.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Vice Chair & Cazadero / Duncan Mills Representative: Mike Nicholls

B. Roll Call

Present: Chair & Rio Nido Representative: Pip Marquez de la Plata, Vice Chair & Cazadero / Duncan Mills Representative: Mike Nicholls, Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff, Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke, Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative: Cynthia Strecker, Hacienda Representative: Vicki Clewes, Forestville Representative: Lonnie Lazar, Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton, Guerneville Alternate Kathy Dahl

Absent: Guerneville Representative: Spencer R. Scott

Staff Present: Debbie Ramirez Mia Pedrazzetti

- 2. Approval of Agenda** Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke motioned to approve. A second was made by Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative: Cynthia Strecker.

The motion passed with the following vote:

 9 **In Favor** 0 **Opposed**
 Abstained **Absent** **Recused**

3. Statement of Conflict of Interest

No Conflicts

4. Consent Agenda

A. May 9 Minutes

Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff motioned to approve. A second was made by Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke.

The motion passed with the following vote:

 9 **In Favor** 0 **Opposed**

Abstained **Absent** **Recused**

5. Councilmember comment on matters not listed on the agenda

Mike Nicholls expressed disappointment in the low turnout from the Lower Russian River community for the emergency awareness event, noting there were more presenters than attendees. Presenters had prepared extensively and traveled from various locations, only to find a nearly empty room. He attributed the poor attendance to inadequate advertising and suggested that the Community Engagement ad hoc committee should study and recommend more effective communication strategies for future events and urged that community outreach be added as a topic for discussion in an upcoming meeting.

Cynthia Strecker gave a reminder about Rio Fest that took place June 15th from 12-6pm in Monte Rio.

6. Public Comments

There were no public comments on items not listed on the agenda.

7. County Update from Supervisor Lynda Hopkins / Staff

Supervisor Hopkins provided an update on recent budget hearings and funding allocations, emphasizing the focus on fiscal responsibility this year, unlike previous years with significant windfalls. She highlighted major investments, including one-time funding and an ongoing analyst position for the Sheriff's Office to improve telecommunications technology. The Community Development Commission received funding for an assistant manager to support projects like Georgia's Hideway and Elderberry Commons. Additionally, a new position in the Office of Equity will analyze and improve the recruitment and relevance of boards and commissions.

Hopkins announced that Los Cien received a substantial outside grant to promote diversity in board and commission leadership within the Latinx community, with potential partnerships with the County Office of Equity.

A two-year pilot program, funded with \$600,000, will enhance community services and navigation in West and East County. The Family Resource Center in Rohnert Park received support to serve over 240 families with comprehensive services.

Legal aid and community services also saw significant funding allocations. An elder advocacy position was restored, and \$500,000 was allocated for tenant and small landlord representation services. Additional funding was provided for COAD and Promotoras to support community health information and disaster preparedness. The Russian Riverkeeper received \$125,000 for environmental cleanup efforts, and the first Black Community Service Center in Santa Rosa was funded to support volunteer case management and services through the NAACP.

Over \$4 million was allocated to the Sheriff's Office to extend the inmate services contract with Solano County, with plans to reallocate funds to establish a narcotics unit.

There are also plans to create a Parks Division within the Sheriff's Office, providing additional deputies for regional park security and mutual aid. This initiative involves shifting Ranger status

from peace officers to public officers. There has been some misinformation about this shift, but Hopkins clarified that the change aims to improve operational efficiency and focus. The Parks Division will bring a new full-time deputy to West County, specifically to patrol regional parks. This deputy will be fully deputized, part of the dispatch system, and able to respond to emergencies and provide mutual aid. This initiative addresses the long response times currently experienced in rural areas due to the vast distances between deputies. The addition of a parks-focused deputy is expected to enhance both park security and overall public safety in these regions. Hopkins mentioned that the Sheriff's Office is working on a memorandum of understanding with Regional Parks to formalize the establishment of this division. This collaboration is intended to ensure that the deputies will primarily focus on regional parks but will also be available for broader law enforcement duties when needed. The goal is to have this Parks Division operational soon, providing a significant boost to the resources available for park safety and general law enforcement in West County.

Hopkins addressed animal services, noting discussions on facility fund needs and the expansion of spay/neuter services through programs like "Love Me, Fix Me" and "Silver Paws for Love." She mentioned efforts to open the Bank of America building for public services, despite delays and challenges, and announced an upcoming community meeting for the Monte Rio Wastewater Solutions Pilot Project.

Public participation included questions about the timing of budget implementation for the narcotics unit and the opening of the Bank of America building. Hopkins concluded by highlighting the focus on fiscal responsibility and addressing critical community needs through targeted funding and strategic investments.

8. Discussion regarding community concerns around law enforcement in the Lower Russian River

John Alden, Director of IOLERO, provided an overview of the agency's activities and recent initiatives. He emphasized the importance of clear communication and ensured that everyone could hear the presentation, addressing previous issues with audio clarity.

Alden introduced himself and his background in law enforcement oversight. He began his career as a prosecutor in Sonoma County and has been involved in oversight since 2009, starting with the Internal Affairs Division of the San Francisco Police Department. His experience includes prosecuting administrative cases against police officers and continuous involvement in civilian oversight of law enforcement.

IOLERO is part of a larger network, including the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) and the Association of Inspectors General. The agency adheres to strict certification requirements and continuous training to maintain high standards.

Alden highlighted key focus areas for IOLERO:

1. **Community Advisory Council:** IOLERO operates with a council representing each supervisorial district, providing feedback on law enforcement practices and community needs. The council ensures ongoing communication and input from the community.
2. **Racial and Identity Profiling Disparities:** Data from the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) shows that Black and Latino individuals are disproportionately stopped by law enforcement across California. IOLERO is working to understand and address these disparities in Sonoma County.
3. **Eviction Process Support:** Although the Sheriff's Office enforces court-ordered evictions, IOLERO is exploring ways to provide additional support to individuals at risk of homelessness,

connecting them to relevant services during the eviction process.

4. Recruitment and Retention: IOLERO collaborates with the Sheriff's Office to diversify the workforce and improve language and cultural fluency. Recent state law changes allow non-citizens to become deputies, expanding the pool of candidates.

5. K9 Unit Policies: IOLERO is reviewing the use of police dogs, ensuring compliance with the law and reducing unnecessary injuries. Revised policies and training are being implemented.

6. Community-Oriented Policing Study: Partnering with Sonoma State University, IOLERO is conducting a study to understand community expectations and improve relationships between law enforcement and the public. Surveys and small group discussions are being held, focusing on areas primarily served by the Sheriff's Office.

7. Internal Processes and Reporting: IOLERO is expanding its team and improving internal processes to handle the increasing workload. Public reports on significant cases will be released to provide transparency and accountability.

Alden expressed gratitude for the community's input and welcomed questions. The meeting concluded with a discussion on various topics, including response times, community engagement, and the importance of adequate staffing for effective community policing. Alden emphasized the role of public feedback and ongoing communication in shaping IOLERO's efforts and policies.

9. Discussion around the history and tending of the year-round Pride Flag raising at the Guerneville Plaza.

Beth Streets was invited to give a brief history of the pride flag. On June 12, 2016, the largest mass shooting in the country's history occurred at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Forty-nine people were killed, and fifty-three were wounded, marking it as the second-largest mass shooting in U.S. history and the largest targeted at a specific population. That night, Beth was with her sisters, preparing for a cabaret show at Main Street. After waking up to the tragic news, a candlelight vigil was organized in response to the events. The vigil procession went from Main Street to Safeway and back to the plaza. At the end of the vigil, Sister Wilma asked why there wasn't a permanent pride flag at the plaza, which deeply moved Beth.

Beth shared that she is a straight white woman who used her privilege to advocate for a permanent pride flag in a town that thrives off the LGBTQ+ community. On June 13, 2017, with Lynda Hopkins, the Russian River Sisters, and a significant portion of the community, they raised the permanent pride flag for the first time. That flag has been flying for seven years.

Beth also highlighted an article in the current issue of the Russian River Historical Society, which discusses gay history and culture in Lower Russian River, dating back a hundred years. Photographs from this period have been preserved and passed down, providing a remarkable glimpse into the past.

Supervisor Hopkins read the words of Katrina Phillips, the current Human Rights Commission chair and worker with the unsheltered population through West County Community Services, from her recent comments at Board of Supervisors meeting adopting a Gold Resolution recognizing June 2024 as Pride Month. She spoke about the pride flag's significance, each color representing different aspects of life, and how it symbolizes love and acceptance. The presence of the pride flag not only celebrates diversity but also signifies safety and inclusion,

potentially saving lives, especially among trans youth who face high rates of suicidal ideation.

Beth concluded by noting the pride flag's resilience against hate crimes and its continued presence as a symbol of pride and acceptance in the community.

One council member expressed gratitude for the history shared and emphasized that the pride flag symbolizes being human and normal, fostering acceptance and inclusion in the community. The flag's presence is economically significant, attracting LGBTQ+ tourists. A community member shared a personal story about repeatedly replacing the stolen pride flag, demonstrating the ongoing struggle for acceptance and the importance of the flag's visibility for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Eric G., identifying as right of center, opposed the pride flag being displayed year-round, suggesting it be flown during Pride Month and other significant events. He advocated for the representation of other groups and expressed feeling marginalized for his political views. Mags, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, offered to collaborate on managing the flags, emphasizing the economic benefits of the pride flag for the community and advocating for its year-round presence. She welcomed the inclusion of other flags during specific events.

Another community member stressed that the pride flag represents allyship, advocacy, solidarity, and safety for the LGBTQ+ community, urging for its continued year-round display.

Dan Samson, co-chair of Russian River Pride, supported the year-round display of the pride flag and suggested additional flag poles for other flags. He emphasized the importance of the flag for youth struggling with their sexual orientation and identity.

A brief history of the pride flag was provided by a community member who grew up with rainbow flags on carnival rides, symbolizing happiness and fun. This history added to the flag's significance beyond the LGBTQ+ community.

Supervisor Hopkins clarified the regulations around lowering the flags to half-staff according to the U.S. Flag Code and the county contract. The pride flag and other flags are managed by the Russian River Sisters, ensuring compliance with the flag code.

Suggestions were made to amend the county contract to include other flags for specific days and events. There was a discussion about the practicality of managing multiple flag poles.

The discussion concluded with a note on the ongoing efforts to install a rainbow crosswalk and rainbow murals in the community, further celebrating LGBTQ+ pride and inclusivity. The establishment of the Rainbow Room in the West County Satellite Services office in the former Bank of America Building was also announced, reinforcing the community's commitment to inclusivity.

10. Correspondence: Ratification of Letter of Support to Senate Local Government Committee in regards to AB 817.

Field representative Debbie Ramirez explained that the letter was essentially identical to a

previous letter authorized by the MAC and that advocacy was needed prior to this meeting, so the Chair signed the letter and then it was brought to this agenda for awareness and ratification. Ramirez reported that AB 817 would address recruitment and retention issues in volunteer-run local advisory bodies by allowing more flexible remote meeting options.

However, after being passed by the Assembly, the bill was presented in the Senate Local Government Committee on June 5, 2024, where it failed to pass. However, the committee granted reconsideration, meaning the bill may still be discussed and potentially revised for future consideration.

Vicki Clewes was opposed because she would have liked to bring it to the MAC as a discussion prior to sending.

Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton motioned to approve. A second was made by Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff.

The motion passed with the following vote:

8 **In Favor** 1 **Opposed**
 Abstained **Absent** **Recused**

11. Committee & Community Project Reports

A. Community Engagement and Outreach Ad Hoc - 2024 Community Engagement and Outreach Plan adoption

Adopted the 2024 community outreach and engagement plan

Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke motioned to approve. A second was made by Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton.

The motion passed with the following vote:

9 **In Favor** 0 **Opposed**
 Abstained **Absent** **Recused**

B. Guerneville Plaza Infrastructure Recommendations Ad Hoc - Survey findings and discussion of committee work to date

Ad Hoc Chair Joe Rogoff reported: After engaging with the business community and conducting extensive outreach, the ad hoc committee generated a survey that received over 200 responses, now increased to at least 220. Debbie compiled a summary chart of these responses.

As anticipated, many concerns were less about the physical space and more about the environment. Approximately two-thirds of respondents indicated they don't use the plaza. The predominant reasons cited were feelings of insecurity due to the people present, unleashed dogs, drug use, and other similar issues.

The committee now has a poll that clearly states these concerns. Additionally, respondents were asked what they would like to see at the plaza, and a menu of options for events was provided. There was significant enthusiasm for various activities, including food trucks, music, educational classes, and children's activities. Furthermore, there was considerable commentary about the need for increased enforcement by the sheriff's department.

In summary, the committee's objective was to gather this input and provide it to D5. The next step is for D5 to develop some design options and present them to the community.

Joe extends his thanks to everyone for their hard work and for engaging with the community.

C. Community Stewardship Project -no report - did not meet in May

No Action

D. Land Use Standing Committee -no report

No Action

12. **Adjournment**

7:33pm Pip Marquez de la Plata

DRAFT

Final Report of the Guerneville Plaza Ad Hoc

Members: Betsy VanDyke, Spencer Scott, Chair Joe Rogoff. D1 Advisor Ché Casul. Community Advisors Herman J Hernandez, Mags Van Der Veen.

The Guerneville Plaza Ad Hoc's goal was to provide opportunities for the community to opine on a plaza rehabilitation. We strove to get input from as many community members as possible on what a refurbished plaza would look like and what its uses could be, and to pass this information on to D5 and the architect for the project, Praxis.

To that end we solicited input from our community advisors, who represent the history of the plaza and the business community, and are its closest neighbors. We attended a meeting of business owners who border the plaza, sponsored by the RR Chamber of Commerce, in which we gathered thoughts about its current state, challenges, physical change suggestions and usage ideas.

We used those suggestions to frame a survey for the general public. We asked about whether the respondent uses the plaza currently; if so how, and if not why not. We provided a list of potential activities and asked if they would support them. And we asked what should stay and what should go.

The survey was blasted on line in social media and by the county, was present at MAC tables at events, and was presented in person by community volunteers. We had over 220 responses.

The results were not surprising: a majority do not currently use the plaza and even those who do feel that it is not inviting due to dirty conditions, drug use, lack of law enforcement, unwelcome behavior by people there which makes them feel unsafe, and a lack of activities to draw them. There was overwhelming support for a variety of activities, from a relocation of the farmers market and vendor fairs to music and community events. While there were many opinions about what about its current state should be preserved, many said the trees, flagpole and memorial were important.

We're including the survey in our report. D5 has the summary. With that, we conclude our Ad Hoc.

Guerneville Plaza – your ideas are important!

The Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council has been asked by Sonoma County Supervisor Lynda Hopkins to look into ideas to refresh Guerneville Plaza.

The Plaza is the entry way to the pedestrian bridge, and really the entry way to Guerneville. We think it can be better utilized by residents and be a focal point for visitors, and want to hear your thoughts about how best to make that happen.

So please fill out this quick survey and be on the lookout for community meetings where potential changes will be presented.

1. Do you currently utilize the Plaza?

2. If so, how do you use the Plaza? What do you do there?

3. If you don't currently use the Plaza, why is that?

4. What kind of events would you like to see at the Plaza?
 - Music
 - Vendor Fairs
 - Food vendors/trucks
 - Activities such as yoga, hula hooping, tai chi
 - Farmers Market
 - Educational events
 - Kids activities
 - Other _____

5. If improvements were made to the plaza, do you have a group or activity you would bring to the plaza on a regular basis? If so, what and how often?

6. What physical changes do you think would make the Plaza more welcoming?

7. Is there anything about the current Plaza design that should be preserved?

8. What is your zip code?

9. Optional: Name _____ Email: _____
(So you can be notified of upcoming meetings and progress)

Thank you for your time. When we've collected the community's thoughts, we'll be in touch!