

MARK WEST CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes, FEBRUARY 8, 2023, 6:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting

Video Available Send request to MarkWestCAC@gmail.com

A) Call to Order: Chair Fies called to order, the regular meeting of Mark West Citizens Advisory Council at 6:05 pm.

1. Roll Call

Members present: Chair Karen Fies, Willie Lamberson, Heidi Would, Victor McKnight, Stephanie Bisordi

Others present: Jen Mendoza, Field Representative Representing Supervisor James Gore, 4th District, County of Sonoma; Aggie Maggio, Council Secretary. Note: Mr. McKnight has not been sworn in yet as a council member and will not be able to vote at this time. Expect that he will be sworn in at March meeting.

2. On a motion by Would, second by Bisordi, the Minutes of the regular MWCAC meetings of January 11, 2022, were approved.

The motion carried on a voice vote. (4-0)

B) Presentations: Action Items

To proceed as follows: 1. Presentation 2. Council Member Questions 3. Public Questions

1. Dr. Rachael Valenzuela, Superintendent, Mark West Union School District – Santa Rosa City Schools Proposal to Consolidate School Districts

The Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools and the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) provide statutory oversight of districts' budgets to make sure they can meet their financial obligations. They do not have jurisdiction but can provide support and resources, etc.

The Santa Rosa City Schools (SRCS) Board has had to submit and implement a plan with the County Superintendent for the next five years. Multiple school districts are proposing major budget reductions, totaling over \$20 million.

As part of an economic recovery plan, SRCS are considering district consolidation.

SCOE facilitated, along with a consultant, a study of three scenarios:

- ⇒ ONE: Full unification of Santa Rosa High School District (SRHSD) with all nine feeder elementary districts.
- ⇒ TWO: Create two school districts:
 - Santa Rosa Unified, with a Common Administration, being either
 - Rincon Valley Area Elementary and High School District
 - or Rincon Valley Unified, with three independent feeder elementary districts.
- ⇒ THREE: Create two large elementary school districts under a common administration with SRHSD.

The study focuses on one of the nine state criteria for school district reorganization - the financial component.

- Will it continue to promote sound fiscal management while not causing a substantial negative effect on the fiscal status of the existing, or proposed, districts?

It also considered changes in race/ethnicity and school housing, in developing the scenarios.

SRCS chose Option One. Now they will look at

- Educational components (i.e. Title I, Title III, Special Ed, etc.)
- Governance/transition between old/new district
- Employment within the new district

It will take several months to analyze everything.

See the attached printout of the Presentation for details of the three options and "What's the Next Step?"

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Council/Community Discussion - Valenzuela and McKnight Responses to comments/questions

- There was no prior communication with the Mark West Unified School District (MWUSD) Board or the Superintendent. It is improving now.
- The MWUSD is financially sound and fortunate. It has supplemental basic aid funding, allowing us to have core values, great technologies and provide programs that we would lose if we merge with the SRCS.
- The MWUSD is waiting for the study to be completed.
- One option, if SRSC chooses to consolidate and Mark West does not want to join them is to opt out, which would require a MWUSD board resolution.
- Superintendents from other impacted school districts are not interested in consolidation. They do not see the benefits for their students.
- Valenzuela does not think there will be any push back for those that may opt out. SCOE's main responsibility is to provide the study and support the districts the support them. They want the best for all. All the administrations work well together. This is the first challenge and all are still working well together.
- If consolidation should include us, taxes would adjust accordingly and these school district boundaries would adjust.
- If merged the taxes would merge also, much like the fire department did.
- Time for support from the Council would be when and if it goes to being put on a ballot.
- Since after Covid, the number of students have declined from prior years but not significantly. There are still many students here from many other districts.

2. 4614 Old Redwood Hwy. Property - Chair Fies

This is about the property next to the Old Cricklewood restaurant, where the preschool stood before the Tubbs Fire.

There was a proposal that came to this Council for comments for a large apartment complex. Now the property is up for sale for \$2 million. The Mark West Chamber and the Council are looking at the possibility of purchasing the land knowing it is a long shot. They are thinking about using it for community benefit. The property owner is willing to entertain such a proposal.

What we know so far:

- The Council is not an entity that can buy property.
- Ag and Open space has a matching funds program.
 - The application would be due in March.
- Sonoma Land Trust has expressed some interest in purchasing the property as a joint cooperative exercise with the Chamber and the Council.
- Jen Mendoza, Karen Fies and Willie Lamberson are meeting with Sonoma Land Trust next week at the property. Many situations would have to line up for it to happen.
- The Ag District said it would have to be open space. Maybe there would be grants available later and it could be improved upon. If by some far reach this could happen, then the Council would reach out to the community to see what they would want, whether it be a park, community garden, learning experience for kids, amphitheater or whatever.

Chair Fies wanted to bring this before the Council for input and maybe for a straw vote to see if they are going in the right direction. Neighborhood Improvement Fund Program (NIFP) money would have to be used to help purchase the land along with in-kind matches. It would be a lot of work and there would be negotiations.

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Council Discussion

- We would need an entity to be able to take the funds. It's probably another good argument to have a community services district. Lots of possibilities and lots of costs.
- There is currently an understandable need for housing and this Council supports housing development. Do you think there would be Board support for land rather than housing?
 - Response - Mendoza: It is not zoned for housing. The push in this area is to be more walkable and "busable". A park would help. The County is working on the general plan and this area wants a specific plan. There is a housing element component in it and there is a requirement from the state to rezone certain parcels to fit that housing element. She doesn't think this parcel is one of those.
- It would be difficult to put 40 units in there (too much money to build them).
- Also not currently hooked up to sewer line.
- Past council member Pete Lescure was said to have said that it would help calm traffic, vs. add to the traffic.
- Discussions about the apartments going in, was about too much traffic and not enough parking spaces.
- Is there an entity that would maintain the park?
 - Response - Mendoza: The non-profit that would be doing this sort of thing is in formation right now, possibly working with the Chamber of Commerce. The County is reaching out to Sonoma Land Trust to be the fiscal agent. At some point, once it's purchased, it would go to another fiscal agency of some sort, possibly a community services district or maybe the Mark West Chamber's proposed non-profit.
- That spot has terrible ingress and egress. The park situation in Wikiup is not yet resolved.
 - Response - Mendoza: They are two very different and separate processes, coincidentally, happening at the same time and can proceed concurrently. Two different entities are involved; but no competition for any part of them, including funds.
- David Hansen offered his services, having done a couple of matching grants.
 - Chair Fies accepted and appreciated his offer to help and give feedback.
- Matches could be in-kind not necessarily in cash; can be services.

A motion by Lamberson, seconded by Would, that the Council should continue to help pursue the acquisition of the property at 4614 Old Redwood Hwy in Larkfield, in partnership with the MW Chamber and Sonoma Land Trust, passed on a straw vote. (4-0)

C) Presentations of Referrals from Permit Sonoma: ACTION ITEM No Presentation.

See Council Member Announcements E) 1.

Consideration of proposed projects will proceed as follows: 1. Presentation by project applicant 2. Questions by Council Members 3. Questions and comments from the public 4. Response by applicant, if required 5. Comments by Council Members 6. Resolution, ACTION, if indicated.

D) Jen Mendoza Announcements/Reports/Discussions: Information only, unless stated

1. Infrastructure Updates

a. Sidewalks on Mark West Springs Road - Still working on them. Some neighbors complained about the rumble strips being very loud. Mendoza is trying to find a way to mitigate that. Maybe the neighbors will apply for NIPF to get some vegetation put in, as a sound barrier.

b. Wikiup sidewalks - She will be walking with Janice at the Public Infrastructure Department to see the section and get that going in the spring.

c. Sewer hook ups: The water agency has been doing studies on the issue. A meeting is scheduled next week.

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Background: When utility companies have to cut the roads for repair, they are required to fix the roads when done. After the Tubbs fire, a lot of the roads were cut up. The County collected those funds to use for the Pave Program. Some were eventually used for some paving and the rest is left to be used after the sewers are hooked up so the residents don't have to pay for the paving. They are getting price quotes.

d. Review traffic issues:

- It's been a year and a half since the walkabout. Nothing done yet; just looking for funding.
 - For now, the traffic calming project will just be making the area more walkable.
- An apartment project being developed off of Airport and Old Redwood area, across from Ace Hardware, is in the application process. Permit Sonoma is helping the applicants understand the current permitting process.
- Director of Permit Sonoma, questioned why not talking about getting this area more walkable and rideable as part of the housing situation. Mendoza's response was "That's what we're trying to do here."
- She talked to Supervisor Gore about having a presence on the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC).
 - Supervisor Gore wants to have a roundtable with the MWCAC, the MW Chamber, PG&E, Permit Sonoma and the ALUC to talk about what happening there. There will be lots of building going on.

Lamberson reported that the ALUC requested that they have a representative be on the MW Chamber Board. The Chamber responded with "OK" to that and they also wanted a representative on the ALUC Board. Still waiting on a response to that.

He requested to add a discussion about the MWCAC writing a letter to the California Highway Patrol (CHP), requesting more presence in the downtown area of Larkfield, to a future agenda.

E) Council Member Announcements/Information/Discussions/Disclosures: Information only, unless stated

1. Proposed Laundromat at 5503 Old Redwood Hwy.

The Council received an application for review and recommendation for a proposed laundromat at the property.

Chair Fies reviewed it and brought it up for discussion. It was received after the agenda was posted and the recommendation deadline was before the next meeting.

The application is to put a self-serve laundromat in an existing commercial space and she saw no red flags. There is a mobile home park (32 homes), 13 apartments and two commercial spaces on the property.

Community Discussion

- What would be the hours of operation? Response: 7 am to 10 pm
- Suggestion: Require filters to filter out plastic and micro plastics in all their washing machines.

It was agreed that the secretary would write a letter to Permit Sonoma stating that the Council found no red flags and one suggestion was to require filters to filter out plastic and micro plastics in all their washing machines.

2. Information: Council Brown Act Issue: It is a Brown Act requirement that when there is a hybrid meeting and a council member is not present in person, and is joining in from another location, technically, that member needs to identify that location and, technically, the public is allowed to go there and provide comment. Jen Mendoza is checking with County Council for direction.

3. Fulton Day Labor Center - Bisordi read an announcement from California Human Development (CHD), provided to her by former Council member, Roni Berg

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CHD has recently completed renovations on the Fulton Day Labor Center (FDLC) in Santa Rosa.

- A safe/dignified space for laborers and employers to meet.
- Offers resources, i. e. emergency care, English language classes, job skills training.
- Funding from City of Santa Rosa Community Advisory Boards, Community Improvement Grant Program, Press Democrat, Celebrate Community Grant Program
- Renovation helpers: CHD staff and four contracted day labor participants.
- Hosted reopening: March 3rd @ 9:30 am at FDLC
 - Clients, stakeholders, community partners are invited.
 - State Senator Mike McGuire will attend.
- 707-328-9793, (located at 2nd Street-one block west of downtown).
- Hours: Monday-Friday 7 am- noon (as soon as staffing has been secured).

Bisordi reported that they will have porta-potties there for any day laborers. And the food bank brings food twice a week.

F) Subcommittee Reports & Discussions: ACTION ITEM

1. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP) Subcommittee (Fies) - **None**
2. Wikiup Open Space (Lamberson/Would) - Still working on a second appraisal.
3. Sonoma County General Plan for Mark West Area (Lamberson/Would) - Nothing new. Going to be a long haul.
4. Community Services District (CSD) Subcommittee (Lamberson) - Chair Fies and Mendoza are meeting with a county administrator on this subject; just getting information.

Council discussion on the need for existing and/or new subcommittees and amendments, as needed

On a motion by Would, seconded by Bisordi, to create a subcommittee for researching and responding to community comments and requests was passed on a voice vote. (4-0). Would and Bisordi will be on the subcommittee.

G) Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items:

This time is set aside to receive comments from the public regarding matters of general interest not on the agenda but related to MWCAC business. Pursuant to the Brown Act, the MWCAC cannot consider any issues or act on any requests during this comment period. Each person is usually granted three minutes to speak; time limitations are at the discretion of the Chair.

1. Lori Barber: Housing Elements deadline for comments is either near or past. She shared about Napa County transferring housing requirements to other areas where there is more infrastructure and amenities available.

2. Bob Cipolla met with Bert Whitaker that things that were done with the Schopflin Park are contrary to the documents of formation and that the field that was put in was not approved until after the fact. He presented to the Board of Supervisors with both the old and new plans and his summary. He also met with Supervisor Gore. More discussions will come from that.

3. Catherine Dodd:

- She is wondering if Bob Cipolla's and her concerns were communicated to the parks department.
- Where are bids on the field going?
- She is asking that the Council suggest to the park department to request in the bidding process the total cost, over the life time of the field.
- Note that there is no place in this country that recycles artificial grass.

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- She would like to have a clause in the bids that there be no PFOS in the product.
- and a description of how and where the covering will be recycled.

Chair Fies reported that the community's comments (including Cipolla's and Dodd's) were reported to the parks department when she met with Bert Whitaker. If the bids have not already been written, the Council can ask that Dodd's requests be included. She made note that the Council can only share information with Parks.

Mendoza will check to see if those requests for bids have already been written. She also stated that Supervisor Gore has received both sets of documents from Cipolla and Dodd.

4. Catherine Dodd thanked Jen Mendoza for being on top of potential flooding areas of Mark West area.

H) Pending Items: Updates when available:

1. Utilities & Water: Margaret DiGenova: - None

I) Correspondence: Information only, unless stated

1. See E) 1.

J) Future Agenda Items: Potential projects and/or suggestions for future MWCAC meetings

1. Possibility of an update on the COPE program (being prepared for emergencies) in Wikiup (Or possibly Map Your Neighborhood (knowing where resources and/or community needs are)) (TBD)
2. Possible speaker on home hardening and vegetation management (TBD)
3. Possible community clean up? Maybe in partnership with the Chamber. (TBD)
4. List of unmet needs projects for Larkfield/Mark West/Wikiup (TBD)
5. Discussion: Impact on Mark West area concerning the consideration of a casino on Shiloh Rd. (TBD)
6. Explore the franchise fees of Comcast and AT&T (TBD)
7. Sewer Meeting
8. MWCAC writing a letter to the CHP about having more presence in the downtown area of Larkfield.

K) Adjournment: ACTION ITEM

There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Lamberson, seconded by Bisorodi, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm (4-0)

Approved Date:

Chair

MWCAC MEETINGS: 6:00 PM—SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

Hybrid Meetings until further notice

Mark West School District Office, The Learning Center, 305 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa

(NOTE: Location or time may change due to anticipated greater community participation.)

Be sure to check the MWCAC website for meeting agenda, location & time

sonomacounty.ca.gov/Mark-West-Citizens-Advisory-Council

<https://markwestcac.org>

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