

MARK WEST AREA MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES

July 10, 2024, 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 Area Municipal Advisory Council (MWAMAC), 6:00 pm.

1. Roll Call

Members present: Chair Karen Fies, Stephanie Bisordi, Ron Calloway, Haley Skerrett

Members absent: Heidi Would, Becky Menzel

Others Present: Keith Roberts, Community Relations Specialist for Supervisor James Gore, County of Sonoma

2. On a motion by Bisordi second by Skerrett, the Minutes of the regular MWAMAC meeting of June 12, 2024, 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. Update: Mark West Area Community Park, 4614 Old Redwood Hwy. Property - Chair Karen Fies

Chair Fies and Brad Sherwood met with archeologists and a member of the Graton Tribe, who are doing a Cultural Resource Management Study. They said all looks good so far.

- Cal Am showed up to connect to the main connector at the park site today. Need to return to install a meter.
- L.J. Construction is under contract from Sonoma Land Trust (SLT) to do the septic tank inspection. It is supposed to happen next week.
- Lescure will have the grading plan study within a month or so. Then we will apply for permits.
- We are applying for a second round of matching grant dollars from Ag and Open Space.
- Chair Fies proposed this MAC supply a letter of support for it, as was done the first round. No money would come from the MAC this time.

On a motion by Calloway, second by Skerrett, a letter of support, from this MAC, for an application for a second round of matching grant dollars from Ag and Open Space was approved. The motion carried on a voice vote. (4-0)

Council/Community Discussion

- In that letter can we state how much money has been raised?
 - Response: Yes, and it will also be in the application.
- SLT is the applicant, like last year, because they technically still own the property. Ag and Open Space need to reimburse SLT who will then transfer the property over to the non-profit.
- Make sure the leach lines are inspected, along with the septic system.
- Not looking to have a bathroom; too costly.

1.a. Also, the Mark West Area Community Fund (MWACF) is submitting an application for NIFP dollars.

The Fund is requesting an annual appropriation of \$5,000 yearly from the NIFP to help pay for ongoing maintenance and operation costs of the park.

- A one-time approval would be more efficient than coming back every year for project approvals.
- The MWACF currently has no maintenance funding support.

Chair Fies:

This request does not follow the existing criteria of the one-time funding for an individual project vs ongoing funding.

Also, there is a severe conflict of interest across this MAC and the MWACF.

She proposed a straw vote, as an indicator of whether or not there is support for this request.

- If there is support for this request, the Council would need to take it before the Board of Supervisors (BOS), for:
 - approval of the one-time exemption to the rules for an ongoing \$5,000 annual amount and
 - Approval for the funds by the BOS, due to the conflict of interest on the MAC.
- The BOS process will take some time. They will make the final decision.

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Council Discussion

- Your request is for whatever comes up? And if nothing comes up?
 - Response: Estimating water bill to be from \$300 to \$600 monthly, Utility bill to be a minimum of \$200 monthly. Those alone could use up the \$5,000.
 - And yes. If there is money left over on annual basis, it would be used for other ongoing maintenance for the park. There are no administration costs, salaries, or benefits. All those are directly part of operations.
- Would it be possible to start it out with funding for one year to learn what actual costs are?
 - Response: If the straw vote indicates support, we will put in the application that this is revocable at the discretion of the MWAMAC. The language will be such that it could be revoked or changed. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Community Discussion

- What percentage of the annual Funds is this asking for?
 - Response: Roughly 14%.
- If there's any groundwork to be done, who will ensure the people doing the work on the ground?
 - Response: Right now, SLT holds any liability as they are the current owners. Once it transfers to the nonprofit, it will hold the liability and have liability insurance.
- Could we maybe ask Cal Am to give us the water for free, with a sign stating so?
 - Response: The funds come from the Cal Am franchise fees that the local customers pay with their water bills. They have not been used much in the past few years. That's why there was so much available for the acquisition of the park. It would be nice if it were used up yearly for some neighborhood need. It may be, as it gets more and more known.
 - We can ask, but already they:
 - didn't charge the application fee
 - waived the deposit
 - provided a grant from their parent company for a water feature or drinking fountain
 - some irrigation
 - a cash donation.
- Pete Lescure voiced his support of an exemption to allow carry over of any unspent funds from year to year. And also that it could be revocable. He pointed out that when the rules were put together, while he was on the Council, they kept in mind to not let all the funds be eaten up, by overreach in any individual application, in case a great opportunity came along; there would be funds available. That rule accomplished its goal. Now it is appropriate to have an exemption for just this purpose.
- How much is rolled over typically?
 - Response: Typically, all of it.
- Do you have to go to the Supervisors every time an application comes before the Council?
 - Summary of Response: If there is no conflict of interest between the applicant and the Council (e.g. board members overlapping on both sides), the Council can approve or decline the application, independently of the BOS. If a conflict, or any other deviation from the rules exists, the application must go before the BOS.

Chair Fies asked for a straw vote to support, or not support, the application from the Mark West Area Community Fund being presented to the BOS for approval. The straw vote passed for support. (4-0)

3. Update on the Koi Tribe's Casino - Fies

Referring to the James Gore's newsletter:

- It is surprising how little attention is given as to how the proposed casino would affect the Mark West Area.
- One example is most of the Mark West Area homes are on the same evacuation zone as the proposed Casino.
- The roads were very congested while trying to evacuate during the Tubbs Fire.

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- The BIA is asking for individuals to write comments, or sit in on their upcoming webinar.
- Please limit your comments in response to the subject at hand. Encourage friends to write their comments.

She reiterates that this MAC is an advisory council to the BOS, so cannot take a stand as an independent entity.

Community Discussion

Catherine Dodd went through the environmental impact document in detail. She suggests everyone pay special attention to page 217 and 218. The Windsor COPE preparedness document has the same evacuation routes as are proposed in this document.

There are 5,000 parking spaces on the ground level, on the grounds of the casino property, plus a 4-story parking garage. They also plan to use busses to bring more people in. There is no traffic plan for getting people out of there.

Catherine is hoping we can have a public forum so people can learn about this. The document is too complicated for people to take the time and pull the facts out. We need bullet points.

If someone were to host a meeting, maybe we could have someone from the County walk folks through it.

Catherine's suggestions:

- Send Supervisor Gore's most recent newsletter to everyone on the MWAMAC mailing list, giving them notice.
- Have a public informational meeting to help people craft their comments.
- Post informational facts on our website, request it also be in the Mark West Chamber Newsletter, as a heads up.
- Keep and open item on our agenda so that, when something comes up, we can talk about it during the meeting, even if it comes up after the agenda is posted.
- This is more than just a Windsor issue.

Pete Lescure also agrees that a community forum is a good idea.

- Like any campaign, probably hit different places.
- Letters to the editor. Just start picking out points, with narrowly focused comments.
- It could be a coordinated effort, so no competitiveness and cover all the issues.

Keith Roberts will pass these comments on to Supervisor Gore.

Ron Calloway says that in the end it all comes down to the BIA, as to how this will all pan out. The Governor can make a statement to them.

Various Comments:

- We can be a strong supportive front presenting our position to the BIA.
- We need to work with the supervisors.
- We should request the supervisors get data from Rohnert Park on all things like crime, child and social welfare, drunk drivers and other traffic issues.
- This is not a local tribe.
- It is being financed entirely by the Chickasaw gambling monopoly in Oklahoma.
- We can join in support of the other tribes who are against this casino.

Chair Fies Final thoughts: Please do read the document, especially pay attention to pages 217 and 218. Please reach out on your own and submit comments directly to the BIA. She and Keith Roberts will follow up with Supervisor Gore. We'll leave this on the agenda for next month.

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C) Presentations of Referrals from Permit Sonoma: ACTION ITEM None

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) Jenny Chamberlain's Announcements/Reports/Discussions: Information only, unless stated

Keith Roberts is standing in for Jenny Chamberlain.

1. Press Release: Windsor Water District and Sonoma Water approved an operational agreement for wastewater treatment of Airport Park Sanitation Zone

Under the agreement:

- Windsor assumes treatment of wastewater from the Sanitation Zone Service area which includes Airport Business Center and the Mark West Area, east of Highway 101.
- Windsor gains access to about 300 million gallons of Sonoma Water's recycled water storage ponds.
- Sonoma Water benefits from avoided capital investments in the magnitude to \$50 million to rehabilitate infrastructure at its wastewater treatment plant.
- This will result in:
 - higher efficiency
 - a greater volume of recycled water stored in the winter.
 - The additional stored recycled water can then be used for irrigation by
 - residents
 - commercial businesses
 - agriculture during the dry season

Brad Sherwood, Sonoma Water:

Essentially, this is Phase 1 of the effort. They're operating under our Plant Service Agreement. The long-term goal is full consolidation, which would mean a process through LAFCO where the Windsor Water Special District would consolidate the system and own the system full outright.

Some legalities are there, because a town cannot consolidate a certain percentage more than its current boundaries. Meaning that the town of Windsor's water district could consolidate, and annex the western portion of our area, the Airport Business Park, essentially; while still owning, operating the eastern side of the system.

- Now looking at other consolidation efforts throughout the County.
- Of the \$9 million Sonoma Water gets from the General Fund, \$4 million goes to subsidize the sanitation district. That's money that should be going into our water transmission system for 600,000 people. In 1995 we were consolidated to do sewer service.
- We're trying to be more efficient.
- Now we're looking to go into a Phase 2; then we actually provide them with direct raw sewage into their premium plant.
- Then Phase 3 is the full consolidation.
- We don't expect our bills to go down.

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

1. Subcommittee membership by MWAMAC members – Fies (ACTION ITEM)

Traditionally tenured members of the MAC have been on at least one subcommittee. Now there are three subcommittees. She asked the new members to think about which subcommittee they would like to join. It is better to have at least two members on each subcommittee

- Ron Calloway volunteered to be on the NIFP subcommittee.
- Haley Skerrett volunteered to be on the Communications and Outreach subcommittee.

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On a motion by Calloway, seconded by Bisordi, Ron Calloway was added to the NIFP and Haley Skerrett to the Communications and Outreach subcommittee. The motion passed on a voice vote. (4-0)

2. Skerrett: The BOS is anticipating that they will be approving a parks bureau unit, four deputies and two sergeants assigned to troll the County. Four deputies will be working with partners and community members to ensure the public safety at all county parks, using community-oriented policing and a problem-solving approach.

3. Brad Sherwood: Samantha Paul is the new president of the Mark West Chamber. The Chamber Fair is September 17, 3:00 to 8:00 pm.

4. Automatic Monthly Announcement: The Mark West Chamber Social is always the second Thursday of the month. See <https://markwest.org> for location and host.

F) Subcommittee Reports & Discussions: ACTION ITEMS

1. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP) Subcommittee (Fies/Calloway) See B.1.a.

2. Sonoma County General Plan for Mark West Area (Would)

Lori Barber announced that they have chosen a consultant. They went the quote route which was quicker than all other procurement versions. The company we chose is ETC Institute. They've been around since 1982. They've done thousands of surveys, working in 49 states with a staff varied backgrounds. Many aspects in their research should give us good insight into our community. The goal is to work through August and September and have the report by November 1.

Comment: Remember to work with the Communications and Outreach Committee on the survey.

3. Communications & Outreach Subcommittee (Bisordi/Skerrett)

Heidi Would was removed from this subcommittee.

Keith Roberts sent they subcommittee suggestions for social media. They will work with Roberts and put something together, hopefully by November.

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 MWAMAC business. Pursuant to the Brown Act, the MWAMAC 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. Brad Sherwood: Some members of the Mark West Chamber and the Mark West Area Community Fund are putting together a flag project for the Larkfield area for multiple flag posts/holders on Old Redwood Hwy. from about Cardinal Newman High School to the Mark West Creek Bridge. They would be installed throughout the year in support of various community projects, supporting veterans. etc. More to come on this subject.

2. Catherine Dodd: She would like the MAC to consider establishing a COPE subcommittee. Fies and Bisordi will look into existing efforts.

3. Brad Sherwood suggested looking into Fire Wise U.S.A. There is major money available in communities to do fire resilient projects that support COPE.

H) Future Agenda Items:

Potential projects and/or suggestions for future MWAMAC meetings

1. Community Services District (CSD)

2. Possibility of an update: COPE program (being prepared for emergencies) in Wikiup (or possibly Map Your Neighborhood - knowing where resources and/or community needs are) (TBD)

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3. Possible speaker on home hardening and vegetation management (TBD)
4. Possible community clean up? Maybe in partnership with the Chamber (TBD) – Bisordi to take the lead
5. List of unmet needs projects for Larkfield/Mark West/Wikiup (TBD)
6. Discussion: Impact on Mark West area concerning the consideration of a casino on Shiloh Rd. (TBD)
7. Presentations in August - Sonoma Clean Power: Geo Zones: Sonoma Water: Mark West Preserve

I) Adjournment: ACTION ITEM

There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Skerrett, seconded by Bisordi, the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 pm. The motion carried on a voice vote. (4-0)

Approved Date:

Chair

MWAMAC 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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