

MARK WEST AREA MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
MINUTES, NOTES, NOT APPROVED

02/12/2025, 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, Becky Menzel, Heidi Would, Steve Klick

Members absent: Haley Skerrett

Jenny Chamberlain, District 4 Director representing Supervisor James Gore, County of Sonoma

Aggie Maggio, Secretary, MWAMAC

2. On a motion by Menzel second by Would, the Minutes of the regular MWAMAC meeting of January 8, 2025, were approved. The motion carried on a voice vote. (6-0--1)

B) Presentations: ACTION ITEMS

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

1. Airport Area Specific Plan Update – Claudette Diaz, Permit Sonoma; Tom Ford, Project Manager; and Po Johnson, Sonoma County Planner

- Some drafts of the Safety and Development of Environmental Justice Element should be available to the public within the upcoming weeks.
- Permit Sonoma is beginning the engagement process for a comprehensive update to their general plan.
 - Meeting updates are on the Permit Sonoma website. <https://permitsonoma.org>
 - There is an upcoming virtual workshop next Wednesday.

Airport Area Specific Plan (AASP) Presentation (The presentation is attached to the Minutes.)

AASP helps guide development for about 810 acres near, but not including the airport. It borders the MWAMAC.

- We received a grant from Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to update the existing Plan.
- Purpose: reflect what is within the area.
- Goal:
 - protect industrial
 - promote business growth
 - improve circulation networks
 - encourage transit-oriented development

Questions Proposed by Presenters for Discussion

Q. Your thoughts on the mix of land uses proposed? Does it align with the community's needs and long-term goals?

Q. Any concerns or challenges you foresee with this plan?

Q. Anything overlooked?

Council Discussion

Q. Isn't the area just east of the tracks already in use industrially? How do zoning changes affect the businesses?

A. If the zoning changes, it doesn't mean they can't continue to operate with existing operations.

Q. How do you determine the housing demand in relation to location? And what you are proposing?

A. MTC established minimum and maximum residential densities and they are required to be within a half mile. The plan proposes to keep residential where existing; and try to keep it from encroaching into other industrial areas.

There's existing residential, the Mobile Home Park and Windsor Creek Apartments. Keeping residential within that area, kind of creates community and opportunities to focus on residential just there; where there is walking distance to the SMART station and commercial, instead of placing it elsewhere. It would create the buffer between industrial and residential, thus protecting the industrial use.

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Q. How does this event, if it does at all, align or coordinate with the housing element?

A. There were no housing sites identified in this area. It doesn't necessarily affect this specific plan area.

Q. But would it help the housing element in this area, long term?

A. discussion followed about the pros and cons, the challenges and possibilities of the proposed plan. It ended with a suggestion to remember that day care and preschools should be built into the facilities.

Community Discussion

Agree that Brickway Blvd. would be a great place for housing.

Q. What consideration is there to SMART Connect with the roving van that connects throughout the business park?

Too many units with one parking space per unit; parking all over the streets.

- Solution: Expand the SMART Connect.

A. Yes, it's working in that area. And the Technical Advisory Committee has representatives from Parks and SMART.

- Comment: Bring SMART Connect to Molsberry's.

Q. How are you dealing with adjacencies, such as Town of Windsor and the Airport, as to how this affects them?

A. John Stout, Airport Manager, will be a part of our Technical Advisory Committee. and we've asked the Director of Community Development, Windsor, to join. They've both been involved throughout the process for the last 10 years.

Q. Concern: Industrial property is disappearing. Projections for industrial demand and a buffer between residential industrial is important. Not good if industrial eventually fades.

A. Yes, this is a unique area in the County. Creating policy emphasizing protection and buffers between industrial and residential will be explored throughout the process.

- It's also a MTC priority. While residential is needed, we also look for ways to limit encroachment. We explore policy ideas and other jurisdictions.
- The market study and community assessment will be available on the website.

<https://permitsonoma.org/regulationsandlongrangeplans/longrangeplans/airportareaspacificplanupdate>

Q. How did broadband get measured? Will you be planning for fiber optic being underground, for new wires?

A. There are locations the Federal Government identified as eligible for a grant, for improving their broadband service. The determination and reasoning for that inclusion was a location, previously identified, within the plan area. The specific plan can include parcels with policies that facilitate better implementation of broadband and internet use.

Q. Will you be planning for senior friendly, low-income housing? Especially near the transit connections?

A. Senior housing is similar to the daycare issue. We can't mandate it but we can have policies that make it easier, or that call for housing developments, with X number of units, that should have an onsite childcare facility; policies that make it easier, or cause people to think about it and realize that there is a great transit connection right there.

SMART is expensive.

- Many, in this area, are in the agriculture/wine grape industry, commuting to Dry Creek, Healdsburg or Sonoma. They can't take SMART.
- Sonoma County public transportation is one of the biggest problems in this area. Using SMART for services means SMART to downtown Santa Rosa; then take a bus.
- It's great to have accessibility to SMART. But many people can't afford it. Not cheap or feasible.

One car per household is not sufficient for a rural community.

Back to Claudette

We will take these issues into consideration.

We are going to create a Community Advisory Council that will consist of any community member.

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- Six to eight folks that: will be involved, will help inform the planning process, review draft materials.
- Meet minimum of three times over the next 10 to 12 months, via zoom for maximum of 1.5 hours.
- Ideally: members living/working in the surrounding community or nearby area.
- Chair Fies: Somebody from this Council would be great since we're adjoining.
- Prefer to receive applications within the next two weeks or so.
- Goal: Publish Notice of Preparation - March; then schedule scoping meeting for Environmental Impact Report.
- This is a tentative schedule. Planning Commission will ultimately go before the BOS.
- Sign up for updates via our website.
<https://permitsonoma.org/regulationsandlongrangeplans/longrangeplans/airportareaspecificplanupdate>

2. Update: Mark West Area Community Park

Chair Fies: The Use Permit for the park is approved. We put in request for the grading permit.

Calloway: We are moving ahead on design of the play structure and some landscaping.

- It will be before the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on 2/25. We expect the park will be transferred from Sonoma Land Trust to the Mark West Area Community Fund (MWACF) in April.
- There will be grass and compost; no plastic grass.

3. Update: Koi Tribe's Casino - Jenny Chamberlain:

- We're hoping to get Supervisor Gore here next month.
- He did a video update. It's on the Supervisors page.
- A rumor that the BOS was going to negotiate is not true. They announced that they're not going to negotiate, at this point, with KOI Nation. They're still standing on the side of invasion. At the end of the update, he shared, where they said, "It's too early." There's a lot more going on. Please watch the video.
- There is a survey by the Emergency Departments requesting feedback on their responses to emergencies.

C) Presentations of Referrals from Permit Sonoma: ACTION ITEMS (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 Announcements/Reports/Discussions: Information only, unless stated

Jenny Chamberlain announced the weather conditions and flood warnings for the next few days.

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

1. There is an all MAC Conference, Saturday, 2/22/25, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm, Saralee Barn, Sonoma County Fairgrounds, bringing all the MACs from Sonoma County together. Lunch will be provided. Chair Fies asked for RSVPs from Council members.

2. Sonoma County General Plan Update Virtual Meeting, Weds, 2/19/25, 12-2:00 pm. Register for Zoom at permitsonoma.org

F) Subcommittee Reports & Discussions: ACTION ITEMS

1. Discussion: Firewise and if we should create a committee (Calloway)
 - I met with Marika Ramston from Firewise, Cindy Foreman and a few others.
 - Goal: create a holistic community, with separate communities inside, each one being separate, having to create a Firewise.
 - Fire chiefs divided our community into separate sections, based on unique needs.

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- Individually, communities are still unique to their own Firewise. If we become a collective with other Firewise communities, we can get larger grants. More people being a Firewise community, equals broader ability for grants and a benefit on your insurance.
 - They're doing a different kind of survey about your home, how ready it is, and about your defensible space.
 - There will be an important Firewise meeting, to learn, in depth, about the community, March 5, in the Learning Center, 6:00 pm. This is a really critical time to inform people about Firewise.
 - Calloway shared a map of the community divisions for Firewise purposes. It is attached to the Minutes.
 - Marika Ramston also volunteered to present to this MAC.
2. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP) Subcommittee (Fies/Calloway) -- No new applications.
- We have a few funds and we get an annual influx of revenue of about \$30,000 - \$35,000.

3. Sonoma County General Plan for Mark West Area (Would/Klick)

Heidi Would addressing Claudette Diaz:

We've been working with a survey company to develop an intensive list of questions for our community, what they feel the needs are. It would be helpful to collaborate with you. We will impact each other.

- The County did a survey recently for the general plan update.
- We could compile all the surveys to get a better feel for the communities.
- Claudette will talk to the program manager to be able to share information.

Chair Fies: It is protocol that because this is a committee of the MAC, somebody has to review the committee's survey before it goes out.

On a motion by Calloway, second by Klick, it was approved that when the draft letter and survey is completed, it will go to Chair Fies, to review, before it is disseminated. The motion passed on a voice vote. (6-0-1)

Catherine Dodd: Consider adding questions about the Casino. (those living close, school there, stop signs)

Lori Barber: We probably have maxed out the number of questions that we can add. We do have an open-ended question where someone can add any kind of concern that they'd like.

4. Communications and Outreach (Bisordi/Skerrett)

We will put the Firewise information on the Community Outreach postcard and get it to you.

On a motion by Bisordi, seconded by Would, the Council delegated authority to the Chair to review the postcard for community outreach. The motion carried on a voice vote. (6-0-1)

G) Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items - None

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. Pete Lescure: Would like to invite Kerry Bennefield, Press Democrat reporter to a meeting to gather information.

Also, speaking about the General Plan, he discovered that communities like Cloverdale, etc. get millions of dollars through the Sonoma County Transfer Authority. He is encouraged that there is a way for Mark West to get funding for Old Redwood Hwy. in Larkfield. He hopes to get support from the MAC when it's time for lobbying for it.

3. Catherine Dodd: What does the Council being "just advisory" mean? The issue of plastic grass has come up

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many times, for years. It's a serious health and environmental issue. It's not taken seriously and objections failed.

4 Chair Fies: The Ag and Open Space did approve a matching grant for a new soccer field of plastic grass at Tom Schopflin Fields. There was great controversy at the Ag and Open Space meetings. When it became an equity issue, (soccer fields create a place for everyone to play), Ag and Open Space took it to the BOS. The same discussion happened there. It moved forward because there was nothing that banned applications of plastic grass in the Ag and Open Space matching grant program.

It is on the BOS Significant Issue Calendar, to discuss a policy for plastic grass, sometime this spring. There is a movement here, especially with Catherine and Bob Cipola. Karen continues to advocate for their cause with Jenny Chamberlain, keeping her aware and bringing it to Supervisor Gore. Even though his office is aware of the issue, it's for the entire BOS to solve.

As far as advisory goes, Karen meets regularly with Jenny and Keith Roberts, bringing the issues of Mark West to them. Also, Jenny or Keith attend every meeting. That is how the MAC, being an advisory council, is the voice of the community to the BOS.

5. Bisordi: The Mark West Chamber social is on the second Thursday of every month at 5:30 pm. This month it is at Peak Wellness. See the Chamber website for details. RSVP is appreciated.

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)
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. Supervisor Gore to attend a future MWAMAC meeting

I) Adjournment: ACTION ITEM

There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Would and seconded by Bisordi the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 pm. The motion carried on a voice vote. (6-0)

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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