

**Sonoma Coast Municipal Advisory Council**  
**Marti Campbell, Chair**  
**March 17, 2022, 5:30 – 7:30**  
**Online Zoom/Facebook Meeting**

**Meeting Called to Order**

Cindy Culcasi

**Pledge of Allegiance**

All

**Roll Call – Present**

Marti Campbell - Chair

Brian Leubitz

Scott Farmer

Ginny Nichols (arrived at 5:52)

Paul Plakos

Abreanna Gomes

Wanda Swenson

Jill Lippitt

Caroline Madden (alternate)

**Absent**

Beth Bruzzone

Che Casul (alternate)

Liz Gallagher (alternate)

Carl Osier (alternate)

Annie Cresswell (alternate)

**Approval of Agenda**

Scott Farmer moved to approve the agenda and Paul Plakos seconded. The motion carried 7-0.

**Statements of Conflict of Interest:** if any, from Council members

Clerk Cindy Culcasi asked if there were any conflicts of interest. There were none.

**Correspondence**

Chair Campbell asked if there was any correspondence. There was none

**Consent Calendar**

Chair Campbell removed the minutes from the Consent Calendar since there were corrections to be made. The approval of the 2021 Annual Report was the only item left in the Calendar. A motion was made by Paul Plakos to approve the 2021 Annual Report and seconded by Brian Leubitz. The motion carried 7-0.

A motion was made by Paul Plakos and seconded by Brian Leubitz to discuss the minutes. Wanda Swenson had two corrections noted below:

- In Public Comment on page 2, the spelling of “Damien Bonet” was corrected to Damian Boune
- On page 12, within the comment by Wanda Swenson, a “local non-profit” was changed to the Coast Ridge Forest Council.

The motion carried 7-0.

**Public Comment – Chair Campbell asked for public comments.**

There were no public comments.

**Chair Report – Marti Campbell**

Ms. Campbell thanked everyone for attending the MAC Meeting. She announced some personnel changes:

- Ann Yager resigned from the MAC and is moving out of the County. She thanked Ms. Yager for her work on the MAC for the past year and wished her well. Elise Weiland will post the opening. Ms. Campbell said they are hoping to attract someone from the Annapolis area.
- Paul Plakos will chair the Water AdHoc Committee.
- Ms. Campbell has joined the Land Use Committee which is now fully staffed.

Since the last MAC Meeting, Ms. Weiland and Chair Campbell have met and discussed how best to proceed with encouraging residents to file requests for road repairs in their areas so we can have more timely repairs from County Transportation and Public Works. In the Committee Reports, she will propose a new AdHoc to address this issue. Ms. Campbell thanked Jill Lippitt for attending the March 17, Planning Commission Sonoma Vacation Rental Ordinance Update for the inland regions of the County so she can report to the MAC.

**Regular Calendar Items**

**Supervisor Lynda Hopkins –**

Supervisor Hopkins reported on a number of meetings she attended:

- Meeting with Beth Bruzzone and Che Casul regarding traffic concerns in and around the town of Bodega
- Meeting with Brian Leubitz (Bodega) to discuss some of the Bodega Bay needs
- Supervisor Hopkins would like to meet with Jenner and revisit the North Coast, and every community represented on the MAC to discuss their needs. The meeting would bring together some community leaders to discuss issues in real time and come up with solutions. One of the common threads Ms. Hopkins hears is about affordable housing. She hopes everyone can work together on affordable housing in the Coastal Plan and opportunities for federal and state funding.

Supervisor Hopkins acknowledged the frustration on the Coast regarding vacation rentals and that there is still no policy even though the inland area has a vacation rental policy, albeit ineffective. She understands the need to move forward and not punt the issue to yet another planning process. Ms.

Hopkins will work with the LCP (Local Coastal Plan) and vacation rentals to move the issue forward to the Coastal Commission for a conversation.

One of the issues discussed in Supervisor Hopkins's meetings with Bodega Bay and the North Coast are liaison opportunities with Senator McGuire's office. Supervisor Hopkins noted that they are partnering very closely with CHP on traffic speed and speed enforcement and the need for local fire services funding. Senator McGuire is a champion for fire funding in general. Most fire funds go to Calfire, and she and Senator McGuire are working to get some of the funds to go to local fire districts.

She is also working to get State Parks to chip in and pay for service calls when responding on state park land. She was happy to announce a Tourism Impact Fund grant which should provide some pretty immediate funds for community needs. Some of the funds are going to Waves of Compassion (Bodega Bay), Circuit Riders, River Arts and Media, Coastal Hills Community, collaboration with Fort Ross School, Russian River Alliance, Timber Cove Volunteer Fire, Cazadero GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service) Project. The funds for Wave of Compassion support food pantry efforts and other funds went to Timber Cove Fire Department, one of our first responders.

There are challenges with the Fisherman's Festival this year. The large parking lot that was used for many years is off limits this year. State Parks is going through a cultural resource study project because the parking lot is on tribal land. They are looking at supporting the Festival in different ways such as using a shuttle. There are ongoing conversations between the Festival and the Federated Indians of Graton and the Rancheria about alternate locations for parking.

The LCP is still moving forward. If Supervisor Hopkins receives an update, she will share the information with the entire MAC. She has been hearing that many don't think their issues are being addressed and she will be meeting with Gary Helfrich and County Counsel Matt Byrne.

### **Questions/Comments**

**Scott Farmer (MAC)** - Mr. Farmer spoke about the LCP. When the Coast began to develop, schooners came up and down the Coast and there were Post Offices along the Coast and communities started to develop. There are rules in the current version of the LCP that specifically speak to Timber Cove businesses that were added in the beginning. After initial discussions about the LCP, it was decided to remove the special rules for Timber Cove and allow the regular permitting since all businesses should be treated the same. At the Planning Commission Meeting it was determined that the rules would be left in the LCP which would retain the bias. Permit Sonoma agrees the special rules should be eliminated. For example, the LCP envisioned public stables in the Timber Cove area, when no one else envisioned having public stables. The LCP was trying to guide things, and this became an added difficulty whether pro or con in the permitting process. Mr. Farmer wanted to highlight this issue since all the businesses should be treated the same.

**Wanda Swenson (MAC)** - Ms. Swenson asked Supervisor Hopkins to talk about redistricting. She thought the redistricting was very close to what Eric Koenigshofer's (Planning Commissioner, District 5) suggested map, but wasn't sure.

- **Supervisor Hopkins** - Essentially the rural nature of the 5<sup>th</sup> District was preserved since Rohnert Park was not included. There is actually more rural area than previously was included

(incorporated vs. nonincorporated balance). Some new communities are included from Northwest Santa Rosa near the railroad tracks. Ms. Hopkins is happy to talk about the Brown Act issue when the BOS went into closed session to discuss redistricting. What the DA found is that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) should have provided advanced notice as to why they were going into closed session. The BOS has always done it that way. As a result of this issue, big scale policy changes are being made moving forward. Additionally, Staff sent out a memo to the full Board that they shouldn't have sent out since it created a hub and spoke meeting. Brown Act Training will be given to the BOS and the Staff. The training will be made available to the MAC if they want to take it as a refresher. The training also includes electronic communications and social media where the rules are evolving.

**Paul Plakos (MAC)** - Mr. Plakos mentioned there is a food bank at the Starcross Monastic Community on Annapolis Road. The food comes from the Redwood Empire Food Bank. The food bank helps out 40 families on the first and third Friday of the month. **Supervisor Hopkins** added if they use additional funding, this is definitely a potential grant from the Tourism Impact Fund (TIF). Paul Plakos will contact Sister Julie and Elise.

**Chair Marti Campbell (MAC)** - Chair Campbell asked if the grants are still open this year from TIF? **Supervisor Hopkins** noted the deadlines for this year have ended, however, they still have money so please keep sending in applications and they will take them as they come and find a time on the Board Calendar to move them forward. A small grant of \$5,000 will go a long way for the smaller needs of an organization.

**Chair Marti Campbell (MAC)** – Chair Campbell had a comment on the LCP. She wasn't sure if Jennifer Merchant (Sea Ranch Community Manager) sent a copy of the final letter she wrote about the LCP and affordable housing. Sea Ranch has a concern about families in the area finding affordable housing. The letter was addressed to Tennis Wick (PRMD). Ms. Campbell will make sure that a copy of the letter is sent to Supervisor Hopkins immediately. She pointed out that this is a concern along the entire Coast and the LCP is very unfriendly to affordable housing.

**Jill Lippitt (MAC)** - Ms. Lippitt asked about COP26 (annual climate summit convened by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a climate body of the UN) that Supervisor Hopkins recently attended. She noted that this wasn't the appropriate time to discuss but if the Supervisor wrote a report about what she thought of the experience or had something to share she would love to read it. **Supervisor Hopkins** will share at a future meeting. She learned some important lessons that will be valuable for Sonoma County.

**Supervisor Hopkins** - The Supervisor wanted to share some information regarding the Water District. The Water District has been looking for a number of years to find a location for radar that would assist with weather forecasting. This would help determine when there is an atmospheric river, how much rain it would dump and where, in addition to predicting fire weather and floods. Supervisor Hopkins requested that they not use an area that would dramatically change the landscape. There will be a special meeting and tour to discuss the location which appears to be in the Sea Ranch area around the pond and fairly out of sight. The meeting will include North Coast leaders and the MAC, keeping in mind not to violate the Brown Act.

**Chair Campbell** thanked Supervisor Hopkins for what she is doing and said we really appreciate how energetic she is. We look forward to seeing Supervisor Hopkins more often now that she is no longer the Chair of the BOS.

## Friends of the Gualala River – Chris Poehlmann

Website - <https://gualalariver.org/press/our-local-watershed-protection-organization-friends-of-gualala-river/>

Chair Campbell introduced Mr. Poehlmann and welcomed him to the meeting. She mentioned that many MAC members didn't know that the Gualala River ran through Sonoma County. Mr. Poehlmann thanked Chair Campbell for the opportunity to speak and said he is happy to talk about Friends of the Gualala River or FOGR as they refer to it.

FOGR has been around for a while and is central to coastal issues since they are an advocacy group for environmental concerns about our watershed. This should be a focus for not only coastal residents, but maybe the whole county since we are finding out now the central role that forests play in saving us as far as global warming goes. It's been difficult to get together with COVID doing virtual meetings, but we are making progress with face-to-face meetings. FOGR has been a 501(c)3 since 2019. Check out their website [Gualalariver.org](https://gualalariver.org). The mission is to protect the Gualala River and all the species within it.

- The organization started in 1992 over a harvest plan by Gualala near a campground
- There was a water bag issue in 2002 where a Canadian entrepreneur wanted to fill up large water bladders and float them down to San Diego for sale. This issue reinvigorated the organization. FOGR started out as a small scrappy group.
- Timber harvests are a focus, as is the rules systems by which they are managed. Issues about water and sediments and helping out folks like the Mill Bend Preserve. The Mill Bend Preserve raised a large sum of money so they could purchase and preserve a large chunk of land near the river's mouth.
- FOGR is a science-based organization. A lot of their efforts are geared toward putting experts' comments letters together, hiring experts, using the science, and putting them together for the management of applications like THPs (timber harvest plans) in the watershed and Preservation Ranch that was converted to vineyards in the middle of the water shed.
- Mr. Poehlmann shared a map of the Gualala River and Coastal Drainage watersheds. (Located at 36:19 minutes on Zoom <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-DdwfRYZ9w>)
  - The watershed is 300 square miles and located in both Mendocino and Sonoma Counties
  - A number of large timberland owners. FOGR has been at odds with many of them over their THPs.
  - Map of Dogwood THP (located at 37:46 minutes on Zoom <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-DdwfRYZ9w>)
  - FOGR is appealing the Dogwood Plan and they have attorneys working on it
  - There are many lawsuits in progress.
  - Mr. Poehlmann thanked the many donors who make this possible.
- Currently, some of the issues that FOGR is working are the following: watershed issues; legal cases; watershed education; a project to install an interactive exhibit at Gualala Point Park; reforming the Forestry Practices Act and the Board of Forestry to get to the source of problems which they believe to be management related and not very well done on a regulatory basis.

Also, they are trying to divorce CalFire from being a fire protection agency and administering the Forest Practices Act since they believe it to be a conflict.

Chris Poehlmann looks forward to the future and helping the Coastal area and the County. He thanked the MAC

Chair Campbell thanked Mr. Poehlmann for the presentation.

### Questions/Comments

- **Scott Farmer (MAC)** - Are you able to speak to the Herald Richardson Grove and how it is going and fits in? **Chris Poehlmann** responded this is a 730-acre grove that has been put aside. There are issues about public access which will involve money so not much progress has been made. He noted that public acquisition of the forest is the only way to protect it since the larger trees are the ones cut when forests are managed for profit. Science points to keeping the larger trees is the better approach, e.g., large trees are less fire prone than small trees and don't sequester carbon dioxide as much.
- **Scott Farmer (MAC)** – Do you think there is a place for Public Works and Transportation when traffic comes to Herald Richardson Grove. It seems they need to be aware of the new destination and prepare for it. **Chris Poehlmann** agreed and noted that there are a lot of elements in our area. Our roads aren't extensive here, e.g., access to roads, and roads that get smaller, and turn to dirt roads that need to be developed into something decent. Supervisor Hopkins did a great job getting Annapolis and Skaggs Springs Roads resurfaced.
- **Wanda Swenson (MAC)** - Ms. Swenson thanked Chris Poehlmann. She asked him to speak to the conflict of interest to CalFire. **Chris Poehlmann** responded that CalFire has a lot of industry people that go there and get jobs after being in the industry. The RPFs (Registered Professional Foresters) mostly know each other, and their tendencies are not to cooperate with some of the more science-based knowledge that's out there. There needs to be a dedicated department within government to manage the forest with lots of science interjected vs. ex-industry folks calling the shots.

### LCP Next Steps – Chair Marti Campbell

The Planning Commission has been reviewing each section of the LCP. The last time to submit comments is in the March 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting. The Planning Commission will consider the LCP at their final meeting on April 7. Comments on any section can be provided at any of the meetings. The meeting dates tend to move and if there is a revision to the schedule, we'll let all MAC Members know. It appears the LCP will be considered during the Board of Supervisors (BOS) Meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>. The same pertains to the BOS Meetings regarding meeting date changes. Depending upon business to be discussed, the date could change, but it should be around May. Comments will also be taken at the BOS Meeting so there could be further change to the LCP prior to going to the Coastal Commission for consideration.

Chair Campbell noted it is frustrating when looking for LCP Meetings on their website since they are hard to find, and you have to look at past minutes to find when the special and subsequent meetings are scheduled. Chair Campbell will take it upon herself to update MAC Members about future meetings.

Scott Farmer (MAC) noted that there is an opportunity during the BOS Meeting to make changes. Supervisor Hopkins added that there is still an opportunity at the Coastal Commission to comment regarding changes/updates. Supervisor Hopkins will follow-up with the LCP to express the frustration about finding a schedule for future meetings and she will share what she learns with the MAC.

### Questions/Comments

- **Chris Poehlmann** - Mr. Poehlmann shared a comment he made at a past LCP Meeting regarding page LU22 and LU23, C-LU-S6 about expansion and business serving uses from Annapolis Road, Ocean Cove to Stillwater Cove. He would be interested to hear what is proposed as visual and commercial services go.
- **Brian Leubitz (MAC)** - Mr. Leubitz agreed with Chair Campbell that it is difficult to find what you are looking for on the LCP website. He suggested that people look through the Planning Commission website. Regarding Vacation Rentals, he knows that this has to go through the Coastal Commission, but wanted to confirm this doesn't have to go through the Coastal Plan? **Chair Campbell** responded we are waiting for the County. We know the County will have an effort to talk about vacation rentals in the coastal areas. There will be a report later by Jill Lippitt (MAC) who attended a Planning Commission hearing earlier today about inland vacation rentals programs. Chair Campbell asked Supervisor Hopkins if the County will have a Coastal area vacation rental policy discussion? **Supervisor Hopkins** stated "allegedly" the County will have a discussion. She asked if the MAC believes the inland policy should be added to the LCP so there is something or do you want to let it slide and go back to the LCP and provide a coastal policy later?
- **Brian Leubitz (MAC)** - He is concerned that Permit Sonoma doesn't seem to be concerned with people along the Coast. Maybe because it is more work because Permit Sonoma needs to go to the Coastal Commission. The Coast has some of the most dense vacation rentals in the County. Mr. Leubitz pointed out that the population in Bodega has gone down from 2010 to 2020 by 40%. This doesn't include all vacation rentals, but it is increasingly hard to find a long-term rental. Bodega Bay is a small community with different concerns than Sea Ranch. If the number of residents continues to slide, at some point Bodega Bay will cease to be a community at all but will just be a community that services tourists.
- **Jill Lippitt (MAC)** - Ms. Lippitt responded to the Supervisor's question regarding how best to pursue the best vacation rental policy. She noted she didn't drill deeply into the issue, but it appeared to her that the Coastal Commission has a history of allowing density requirements along the Coast. The requirements she looked at revolve around accepting the LCP and it appeared to her they were adopted for certain communities by the Coastal Commission. It looked like that in the past the Coastal Commission ruled on exemptions or exclusions in the LCP so it appears that we should be looking at the LCP. She added that this is her preliminary idea.
- **Paul Plakos (MAC)** - Mr. Plakos stated that Jill Lippitt may be right, but if he had a preference, he would like the LCP and vacation rental policy to be separate since we'd be waiting for whichever was slowest to be approved.
- **Chair Marti Campbell (MAC)** – Ms. Campbell pointed out that the vacation rental policy was a very controversial topic in Sea Ranch for the past couple of years. She compared Sea Ranch to Bodega Bay. The number of vacation rentals in Sea Ranch appears to have remained pretty constant as the number of homes in Sea Ranch has increased. The percentage of rentals over

the past seems to have dropped although these are not perfect numbers. Everyone in Sea Ranch is pretty much in favor of regulating and registering their vacation rental with the Sea Ranch Association and the County and pay a fee. The issue of density and how far apart vacation rental should be was very controversial and it was handled poorly by the Sea Ranch Board. If we want to slow down the LCP to incorporate the vacation rental policy, that will require the opportunity for the public to speak so it will be lengthy. At the same time, it will be targeted so it will go faster. It will probably take 6 to 9 months to allow people to express their opinions. It seems to be the right thing to do to slow down the LCP, but it will take a long time.

- **Paul Plakos (MAC)** – Mr. Plakos noted that Chair Campbell was absolutely accurate about the short-term rental issue in Sea Ranch and the process. He wanted Supervisor Hopkins to be aware that although the Sea Ranch Board sent a formal suggestion to the LCP, it was extremely concerning how the decision was made. The Board met, proposed a density requirement, listened to public comment of which about 90% were against it, and then moved forward and unanimously approved the density requirement without one word spoken about the past discussions. It appeared that the letter represented the Sea Ranch Community, but it did not. Now there is a group of about 300 Sea Ranch owners who have organized, and they are not going to let this go. He believes if this goes through, the issue will end up in court. Mr. Plakos wanted the Supervisor to know that the message that was sent did not represent the Sea Ranch owners.

### **Committee/Staff/AdHoc Reports**

#### **Water AdHoc Committee Report – Paul Plakos**

Mr. Plakos thanked everyone for responding to the spreadsheet he sent out, with the help of Scott Farmer. He did receive a few edits and comments back. It was a spreadsheet of all the different water Companies along the Coast and the corrections that were made.

The next step is for the Committee to convene. He'll try to get it together within the next couple of weeks. They will put together a list of questions to ask the various water districts. Either the water districts could answer the questions, or they could comment and answer the questions during the next few MAC Meetings. Questions might include:

- Do you ever run low on water?
- Do you have contingency plans regarding water?
- What's involved in the contingency plans?

Paul Plakos asked if it was a violation of the Brown Act if he requested questions from all of the MAC Members? Elise Weiland responded procedural questions are ok as long as they are not discussed. Don't reply to all. She added that sometimes people forget and respond which can be considered a serial meeting. Ms. Weiland said she can send out the questions since she is staff. Brian Leubitz asked if using a form on Google docs would work since only the user can see it. Chair Campbell agreed that if Google docs was a table, it wouldn't lend itself to discussion.

Elise Weiland noted she found it fascinating looking at the patchwork of water districts and that there isn't much communication between the water districts. The water districts are excited about sharing information in the future. She mentioned that if a few of the smaller water districts collaborate to apply



for drought grant opportunities, it would be a stronger application and the MAC might be able to help with this. Paul Plakos noted that he read the drought grants and they appear to be for private property owners, but will keep an eye out for other drought opportunities.

### **Land Use Committee Report – Brian Leubitz**

There was a Committee Meeting last month, primarily to go over the Kings Ridge Bicycle Race. It appears the race is on March 27. The map has changed:

- The race no longer goes through the Willow Creek extension of the State Park.
- The bonus section goes through Annapolis, just south of Sea Ranch.
- The changes are a result of local feedback.
- They promised to place signs around where the race will be and communicate with Emergency Services as well.

There is a meeting planned next month. There will be one project on the agenda, but there may be others that come up.

### **Questions/Comments**

**Scott Farmer (MAC)** - Cea Higgins has challenged events that happen in the Coastal Zone. PRMD was relying on a very old memo and PRMD realized they need to modify their approach so they're trying to modify the LCP to accommodate events that occur on public ways in the Coastal Zone. Mr. Farmer doesn't understand how the event on the 27<sup>th</sup> can be approved when it is based upon a memo that doesn't carry any weight. The process is in midstream, and he doesn't understand how they can change things, but it is in the works. **Brian Leubitz** understanding is that they are working to change larger events permitting, and his hope is that they will take into consideration how much the Coastal Development Permits be taken into account. Mr. Leubitz's understanding is that is a very limited number of times that the Coastal Commission has gotten involved in special events. Balancing out these competing interests as to when a Coastal Development Permit needs to be taken into account and applied to coastal events is needed. Mr. Leubitz thinks Permit Sonoma is aware of the problem now and there needs to be a clear process for this.

**Scott Farmer (MAC)** - Mr. Farmer asked if we had received the application for the GranFondo Bike Race? **Brian Leubitz** has not seen the application. The route was discussed as it is posted on the Events website. It was noted that this event also impacts the lower Russian River. The date of the event is mid to late April.

**Wanda Swenson (MAC)** - Ms. Swenson was going to ask about the GranFondo also and pointed out that the route has been improved over the years. She noted the King Ridge Bike event is not a race. **Brian Leubitz** stated there are timed sections of the bike ride where everyone is timed. The timed section has prizes, but the other sections do not. There was additional discussion around the facts that the bikes are staggered when starting so they don't ride in one big group. Also, bikes have a right to the road, just as cars do.

**Brian Leubitz** responded to a question regarding the ministerial approval process. The ministerial process applies to rules of the roads bike events (bikes follow vehicle regulations) and the approval is generally automatic. Permit Sonoma was using a memo for reference dated 1998. Bradley Dunn (Permit Sonoma) spoke about ministerial approval of bike events in a previous MAC meeting. Scott Farmer brought up the ministerial approval in his comment earlier in this meeting when he talked about the old memo that didn't carry any weight. There are very specific requirements for Coastal

Development Permits, e.g., they have to be in the summer, have to be in sand, etc. With respect to beach events and bicycle events, Permit Sonoma needs to consider how permits are given in the Coastal Zone.

**Supervisor Hopkins** – The Supervisor did have a back and forth with PRMD about the King Ridge Bike Event.

- They reference permits on their website, but there were no permits for the race on the website.
- They were looking at speed zones along the County roadway and she did flag that. PRMD is reaching out to tell them they need permission for a one-day event like this.
- The event people put stickers on the roadway to give directions to bicyclists and she let them know that might end up as litter on the roadway and that was a concern.
- Supervisor Hopkins discussed with Permit Sonoma about the need for a permit. Just because you don't need a county permit, doesn't mean you won't need a Coastal Permit. She will follow up on this issue.

**Scott Farmer (MAC)** – Mr. Farmer suggested that when applicants are reviewing the roads and marking potholes with chalk, perhaps they could document the information and share it with the County. Elise Weiland (Staff) noted that this is already in the process and is coordinated with Transportation and Public Works when they run the course before the race so potholes can be repaired prior to the event. They aren't looking at changing the ministerial process but looking to add checklists so that applicants have done all the things that need to be completed. Ms. Weiland said they want to add requirements to the checklist, e.g., alert the Fire Department, alert the community. They are looking at rules such as you can't close a road for more than 4 hours on a weekend so there won't be multiple events on the same weekend and the road is closed for the entire weekend. The events will still be ministerial, but there would be rules that help our community

**Chair Campbell** would like to create a new AdHoc to address road repair. Elise Weiland (Staff) and Chair Campbell have been discussing this issue and due to insufficient funding of roads, there is a lot to catch up on. Roads funds used to be split equally throughout the districts. Supervisor Hopkins changed that and now District 5 gets 40% of the funds because they have 40% of the roads which means there is more money available for roads. To help with this, every 5 years the County would like the MACs to complete a survey of priority road's infrastructure that is needed so TPW (Transportation and Public Works) takes this into account when planning road work. Chair Campbell asked for volunteers to organize getting information from each region's MAC Representative on priority road work needed. Each region could use their own method of gathering the data and this may differ from region to region. This information would be submitted to TPW. Chair Campbell asked for volunteers to serve on the Committee. Scott Farmer suggested Annie Cresswell. Chair Farmer will contact Ms. Cresswell and ask if she is interested. Alternates may serve and Caroline Madden was suggested. Chair Campbell volunteered to be the coordinator. Elise Weiland suggested that the alternate from Jenner (Liz Gallagher) be contacted since she is quite concerned about the roads, and Jenner has submitted a number of complaints. Ms. Weiland and Chair Campbell will work to staff up the AdHoc. They'll come back with a report for the next meeting.

Paul Plakos will work with Chair Campbell to identify all the rough roads in their area.

## **Overview of the March 17 Permit Sonoma Vacation Rental Ordinance Update, Coastal Impact – Jill Lippitt**

Before Ms. Lippitt began, she clarified something that Chair Campbell said. It looks like this is a policy for inland and not for the Coast, but that is not actually true. They have created lots of procedures that apply to both the Coast and inland. The one exception that won't apply to the Coast is the density limit. They feel the Coastal Commission has superseded their authority to do that. Brian Leubitz and Jill Lippitt both posted comments during the meeting that the Coast Commission has accepted density and proximity requirements in the LCP in the past. The County is saying that the Coastal Commission doesn't allow for density restriction which is not true.

Gary Helfrich explained all the changes in the proposal. Ms. Lippitt won't go into all the details since there has been lots of journalism regarding the proposal. She will go into some of the interesting perspectives discussed during the meeting.

- There should be a distinction between second homeowners who rent out their place periodically when they aren't using it and people/investors/corporations that are buying homes and renting them out full time. Comments said if you buy a home and rent it out full time, it is a business and a hotel. The County does not consider houses rented full time as businesses currently, so they don't need to meet the restrictions for neighborhoods or residential areas that prohibit businesses from being in the neighborhood. This comment was made by a number of people.
- The number of vacation rentals is changing the character of the neighborhoods. The County when they were studying this issue commissioned an economic report. The only thing that they looked at was the impact of the value of vacation rentals and their conclusion was that it didn't impact property values, but it might impact rental prices. There was a number of tenant unions and community groups that represent housing, and their conclusion was that vacation rentals impacted affordable housing and just rentals in general. They take rentals off the market at all economic levels. Many were advocating for a moratorium on vacation rentals partly because the wildfires have eliminated so much of the housing stock. She noted there should be a moratorium for the people who want to live here, rent here and become residents of the County.
- There was a discussion vs. corporations and people who were buying houses to use as vacation rentals full time vs. personally, using the homes themselves. Gary Helfrich (PRMD) didn't think this could be legislated between regular people and people who bought homes they actually use, and corporations or investment groups who were just buying homes to profiteer.

Gary Helfrich shared the number of vacation homes vs. the number of houses in the various districts. He stated that the number of homes vs. vacation rentals along the Coast is 11%. Cea Higgins asked Ms. Lippitt to bring this issue to the MAC. Ms. Higgins believes that many vacation rentals do not have permits or licenses. There does not seem to be any policing of people who are doing vacation rentals under the table. Cea Higgins suggested, and Ms. Lippitt agrees, that the MAC should do a survey of vacation rentals, community by community. She noted that a density restriction can't be implemented unless you have adequate data. Ms. Lippitt advocated that the MAC should take inventory as Cea Higgins suggested.

Brian Leubitz, who also attended the meeting, added there was some disagreement with some of the aspects of the policy from people along the Coast. The comments he heard from the Lower Russian River, especially Monte Rio and Guerneville had a more outspoken take on the policy. The mood and common thread among participants were definitely more anti-rental and they wanted to see a larger reform. Mr. Leubitz would be interested in a survey also.

Elise Weiland noted that the River MAC did an extensive summary of vacation rentals and they worked hand in hand with Permit Sonoma. She is sure that the head of that committee would be happy to share information, data, tools, etc. with us. The committee was primarily staffed by volunteers for the first time. They felt they needed a number of people on the committee to do the work. CMAC should consider doing the same. They put up a website, did polling data, worked with Permit Sonoma and the Accounting Office in order to gather information.

### **Questions/Comments**

**Zoom Comment** - I'm in Guerneville and we have received at least 4 announcements of new short-term rentals that are coming online in the last 3 months. I thought that the county had accurate numbers of these rentals. Is this not true? **Elise Weiland** - In terms of Guerneville, many complaints are received regarding unpermitted vacation rentals. Someone mentioned that permits are still being given even though there is a cap. Ms. Weiland explained that people give up their licenses all the time and then there is an opening and new people come in.

**Chris via Zoom** - We live in Vacation Beach which is WELL over 10% short term rentals. I heard that they are not issuing new ST rental permits, but this is not true. Within the past 2 months we have 2 large rentals that just got permitted from houses that sold a few months ago. There are more houses on the market right now--is there any freeze on the permits for our area or are we just going to watch the whole neighborhood turn into rentals? I am not opposed to having rentals for tourists, but I think we have done our part in this area--it feels completely hollowed out most of the time. If we can't stop the permitting process, can we at least limit the number of people who can stay per night. There is a huge difference between a family of 4 staying for the weekend and a party house of 8-12. **Elise Weiland** stated she was trying to remember what the cap is and if it applies to Vacation Beach. **Supervisor Hopkins** noted that Vacation Beach is part of the cap. There is also a cap on the number of people who can occupy a vacation rental, but it isn't easy to enforce. The Permit Sonoma website states to call the property manager and if that doesn't work, you are supposed to contact Code Enforcement via email, and they'll respond when they are able. The current reporting mechanism is broken, and this is why the new policy will include real time reporting and a 24-hour hotline where you could place complaints to the government

### **Wildfire Risk and Insurance Town Hall – Chair Marti Campbell**

Supervisor Hopkins sponsored this town hall, and it is well worth watching. The recording is available at <https://www.facebook.com/supervisorlyndahopkins>  
Chair Campbell said she has seen so many house hardening presentations that she didn't expect to learn anything, but she did. Included in the forum is a detailed description of the new fire hardening recommendations:

- The recommendations covering the first 5 feet around the perimeter of the home are quite a bit more restrictive than previous recommendations.

- The recommendations covering the area further from the home are similar to what was recommended in the past 4291 regulations.
- CalFire is already performing inspections and doing disclosures associated with sales of homes. These inspections will be required in new home construction in 2024. It wasn't clear what the practical implications will be to new homes and if this will be included by Permit Sonoma as a requirement for new homes during the permit process.
- A consulting firm working with the insurance industry also discussed a rating system for homes, but it wasn't clear what the practical implications will be.

Chair Campbell has shared this information locally with the local fire district, with the local Battalion Chief Marshall Turbeville and with the Sea Ranch Association. She recommends that everyone watch this presentation. Any requests for more information should be directed to Chair Campbell and Elise Weiland.

### **Staff Reports – Elise Weiland**

Ms. Weiland followed up on tourist impact and what is being done. Last year there was work on electronic signs that would guide people away from the Coast when the area gets too crowded. Caltrans has given permission for us to put up messaging on 4 different signs on 101 and we will be working with them during the next couple of weeks regarding what can be said and how to change the wording. Bodega Bay Fire will be adding an electronic sign in their area, although that is a little late to turn people around so it's less of a priority. We also have to find funding of \$31,000 for the sign, but this is less of a priority.

We have been advocating with Senator Mike McGuire for more funding and greater support for CHP and State Park Rangers. There is a funded CHP parking enforcement contract in place specifically for the Coast and the River during the Memorial Day to Labor Day period when there are lots of parking enforcement problems. They are also working on speeding enforcement

We have hybrid technology. Ms. Weiland tested it out once and will test it out again at the end of the month at the Forestville Town Hall. Hopefully in May, there will be hybrid a CMAC Meeting.

Ms. Weiland recommended that broadband be added to the next CMAC Agenda.

Scott Farmer brought up a point that may rise to an agenda item in the next meeting. State Parks has dropped the ball in our area for many years. The Reef Campground has been closed for many years and is in disrepair. Mr. Farmer would like to talk about the Regional Campgrounds taking custody of the Reef Campground. At one point, he believes, State Parks asked the Regional Parks to take part of Bodega Head. He believes that the Reef Campground can be managed out of Stillwater Regional Park. The Reef Campground has coastal access for surfing and a beach. Perhaps the Regional Parks can manage it better. Chair Campbell suggested this be added to the agenda for the next meeting

### **Call for Agenda Items – Chair Marti Campbell**

If you have any agenda items you would like to share today, please do. Otherwise send an email to Elise Weiland and Chair Campbell and they will get the item on the agenda for the next meeting.

- Scott Farmer asked the Reef Campground discussion to be added to the agenda.

- Jill Lippitt asked that taking an inventory of vacation rentals along the coast be added to the agenda. She will also flush this issue out and determine if we need an AdHoc. Elise Weiland will connect Ms. Lippitt to the Russian River MAC contact for more information.

**Adjournment - Cindy Culcasi**

Scott Farmer moved the meeting be adjourned and Brian Leubitz seconded.  
The matter was approved 8-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Culcasi  
Clerk

DRAFT