

Sonoma Coast Municipal Advisory Council
Scott Farmer, Chair
January 20, 2021, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Online Zoom/Facebook Meeting

Meeting Called to Order at 5:30 p.m.

Cindy Culcasi

Pledge of Allegiance

All

Roll Call – Present

Scott Farmer – Chair

Marti Campbell – Vice Chair

Paul Plakos

Che Casul

Wanda Swenson

Brooks Rooney

Cathy Beck

Abreanna Gomes

Elizabeth Gallaher (alternate) – did not vote

Ann Yager (alternate)

Cal Ares was absent.

Approval of Agenda

Wanda Swenson moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Che Casul. The motion carried 8-0.

The following changes to the order of the agenda items were made prior to approving:

1. Randy England will immediately follow the approval of the agenda since he needs to leave at 5:45 p.m.
2. Mike Lair will start the Informational/Presentation part of the meeting since Supervisor Hopkins is in another meeting and will join this meeting late after the other meeting ends.
3. The rest of the meeting will flow as noted in the agenda.

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

None

Correspondence

None

Consent Calendar - Scott Farmer

1. Approval of November Minutes - Minutes were approved with the changes below. A motion was made by Wanda Swenson to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Marti Campbell. The motion carried 7-0 to approve the minutes with changes.
 - a. Per Brooks Rooney, in Public Comment (Tom Tucker) Shorttail Gulch Trail replaced Oyster Catch Loop Beach.
 - b. Per Cathy Beck, Elizabeth Gallagher was noted as a representative from Bodega Bay in error. Ms. Gallagher represents Jenner.
2. Approval of Annual Report 2020 – A motion was made by Brooks Rooney to approve the report. The motion was seconded by Marti Campbell. The motion carried 7-0 to approve the Annual Report 2020.

2021 Representatives and Call for more Alternates - Elise VanDyne

In October, a call was held for representatives. When the MAC was founded, the terms were staggered so some representatives still have another year to go. These representatives are Marti Campbell, Scott Farmer, Cal Ares, and Brooks Rooney. We opened up the process for new representatives and most of the representatives stuck with the MAC. Ms. VanDyne stated the MAC has hit its stride and it is good to have this level of commitment.

- Dibby Tyler (Sea Ranch) isn't returning, and Paul Plakos is replacing her.
- Ann Yager is the new Sea Ranch alternate

The swearing in of the new MAC members will occur during the March MAC meeting. The official appointing of members will occur during the January 26 County Supervisor Meeting.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair 2021/2022 – Elise VanDyne

Ms. VanDyne asked for nominations for Chair.

- Che Casul nominated Scott Farmer for a second term and Cathy Beck seconded the nomination.
- Scott Farmer noted that in order to grow the group, the Chair role needs to be rotated amongst the members. He accepted the nomination and added that all members, including alternates, need to become members of AdHoc Committees. He reminded members to bring up issues. The issues may warrant an AdHoc Committee and they need to lead or participate on the AdHocs. He expects members to volunteer for the next Chair opening. Ms. VanDyne is very supportive, and all of the MAC members are capable to be the Chair. He stated that it isn't difficult and is very enthralling.

Ms. VanDyne thanked Scott Farmer for his excellent work and leadership.

The motion to elect Scott Farmer as Chair was approved 6-0 with one abstention (Scott Farmer).

Paul Plakos nominated Marti Campbell for a second term as Vice Chair and Brooks Rooney seconded the nomination.

Marti Campbell accepted the nomination and is happy to serve again.

The motion to elect Marti Campbell as Vice Chair was approved 7-0.

Elise VanDyne agreed with Chair Farmer in regard to alternates. One of their main jobs is to be a voice for their communities. This involves not only expressing what the community wants, but also includes doing outreach and developing talent within the Council so as to create sustainability. Ms. VanDyne said there were still a few alternate positions open. Please let her know if you are interested. The positions open are:

- Fort Ross
- Bodega Bay
- Bodega/Valley Ford

Although in the early MAC the alternates were not involved since we were still learning how to work with our regular representatives, alternates are now involved in AdHoc Committees and getting much more participatory. Ms. VanDyne said that as the existing members sunset out, it is important to have others ready to participate. Representatives need to reach out to their communities for people interested in participating.

Cathy Beck added that with the vaccine available, hopefully this year we can socialize in the near future. This will make it easier to get community input which has been difficult with the pandemic.

Wanda Swenson asked if alternates need to join for a full term. Ms. VanDyne responded that alternates can join at any time. This is an appointed Council and if anyone drops out, that member can be replaced at any time.

Public Comment (2 minutes)

Eric Fraser - Mr. Fraser heads up an organization that is relatively new called Truth in Tourism. The organization was started because when there were discussions about tourism, he thought that tourism was a poor word to use. Visitors is a better word since the coast belongs to all of us. He said that information is often distorted in order to stoke emotional responses. The word tourism is used frequently in government reports and we definitely see the use in discussions about vacation rental management. He said that quite often there are distortions regarding the number of people who come to the coast and the details of where they came from. Mr. Fraser wanted to remind people that during the past few months a lot of the people are from the county or adjacent counties. He reminded people about the Coastal Commission and the revised Coastal Plan that will be coming up in the next few months. He was distressed to see the lack of outreach to people who have a vested interest in the coastal resources. He hopes as an organization that MAC does pledge to have verifiable and wholehearted outreach to the community at large. Chair Farmer asked for Eric Fraser's contact information. Shared via Zoom chat: truthintourism@gmail.com

Cea Higgins - Ms. Higgins wanted to focus on the safety of the visitors to our coast. She referred to the loss of a father and his two children and just how dangerous our coast can be. Last Saturday, she went into the surf and was pretty beat down and ended up about 500 yards or so from where she had started. As she walked up the beach on her way back, she stated there was no visibility and large swells were

present. She stopped and talked to 3 families (2 of which had young toddlers playing unattended at the water line) and warned them about the dangers of the coast. She then went to the ranger station and asked them to patrol this part of the beach. She noted that people don't understand there are sneaker waves and don't know what they are and how they work (they are a set of waves). She would like to see an education program maybe in the inland schools and brochures at all our vacation rentals to help educate people so we can avoid more tragedy. Chair Farmer responded this is something the MAC has been talking about. Elise VanDyne stated they are working designing signage and other working pieces.

Vesta Copestakes - Ms. Copestakes also had the same experience as Cea Higgins. While she was at the beach, she reminded some visitors that they were too deep in the surf and had no clue regarding the danger. She suggested maybe some articles from the newspaper regarding drownings could be laminated and posted. She noted that signage isn't enough. She suggested there must be something that can be done, although she doesn't have a suggestion at this point.

David Wabel - Mr. Wabel is the owner of a small vacation rental cabin. He wanted to thank the MAC for the discussion tonight, the information regarding visitors, and a committee that was recently formed. Mr. Wabel wanted to share information regarding a special committee that was formed by business owners, workers, and parents to oppose Measure B. Not only the big hotels, but many of the small businesses are struggling, have laid off their workers, and many are closed. We are opposing this measure and we hope you will spread the word. The committee is opposing the measure for various reasons:

- The timing of this measure due to COVID
- The myth that the measure won't impact hospitality long term. We believe it will. It will also give us the highest TOT in the state.
- We didn't get a lot of time to understand how this measure will impact the rest of the Sonoma County economy. We felt the creation of the measure was rushed.
- We believe there are better funding measures for the school's long term

David Wabel asked that people visit the website: savesonomajobs.org. They are currently looking for volunteers and donations.

Informational/Presentation Items

Captain Randy England (named new CHP Commander of Sonoma County starting January 4)

Captain England shared his experience and background in the MAC Meeting. He grew up in Fort Bragg (his wife grew up in Fort Bragg also) and went to college in Sonoma County. He was assigned to San Francisco out of the CHP Academy. He spent a couple of years in San Francisco and then transferred to Ukiah in December of 1998. He performed a number of different jobs over the first 4 years. His duties included working in a task force for over 3 years. Captain England then changed positions and worked special duty as the Public Information Officer, a position he really enjoyed.

In 2012, England was promoted to the Sergeant in the Garberville area and was in the position for a little over 4 years until he took over the Lieutenant Commander position in 2016. He transferred to Lake County in 2018. He feels very fortunate that he did well on the Captain's Test and was able to replace

Captain Aristotle Wolfe (who was recently promoted to Chief) as the Commander. England said he has known Wolfe for a number of years, and this was a win win for both of them.

Captain England added he is looking forward to his new position, working with the community, officers, and 2 of the best lieutenants he has ever worked with. He said he is very blessed and doesn't plan on leaving anytime soon.

Comments: MAC Members

Chair Scott Farmer noted that he has been extraordinarily impressed with the quality of the CHP and how they interact with the community.

Che Casul welcomed Captain England to the community. He added the Bodega/Valley Ford area relies on CHP help and appreciates what they do. England responded that he hoped to be making a visit soon and do a ride around the area with CHP Officer Quintin Shawk.

Cathy Beck said Officer Shawk is her neighbor. She appreciates that he lives in the community and has a good understanding of the issues. Captain England responded that he had filled him in on some issues.

Chair Farmer explained that MAC is a county council, but at the coast we are very dependent upon services and we want to develop a strong relationship with all state agencies, and he welcomes Captain England.

Captain England said this was the easiest transition of his career since the prior Captain Wolfe made it easy.

Brooks Rooney asked about the size of his territory and what it covers. Captain England responded that his territory includes most of Sonoma County excluding a small piece in Sonoma that the Napa CHP covers.

Comments (Public)

Eric Fraser noticed that there is an agenda item for parking and asked if CHP has any jurisdiction over parking on the coast? Captain England stated there is no county ordinance for parking and if there are no parking signs, the CHP has no authority in those areas. Chairman Farmer stated that we will cover this later in the meeting during the AdHoc Parking Committee update.

Captain England said he looks forward to working with the MAC and asked that no one should hesitate to contact him going forward with any questions.

Mike Lair – Sector Superintendent State Parks

Mr. Lair stated that he was asked about trash, restrooms, and parking.

Trash - Since COVID hit, there has been a lot of trash. Every day is like a summer day when it comes to the trash problem. Our typical trash pickups are every day for trash cans, with dumpster pickups occurring on Fridays and Mondays. Additional pickups are now required for dumpsters because of the large number of visitors on a daily basis. Because of limited staff during the off season, some cans may be overflowing, and Mr. Lair has asked the maintenance staff to go around and take a look at the

situation. They are also seeing some of the 11-gallon garbage bags in the garbage cans which says that some rental occupants are taking their trash to the State Parks to dump their garbage. Mr. Lair stated that he is aware of the issues and they are working on addressing it. Also, another issue is mowing and the microscopic debris, plastic (water bottles, etc.) and such that gets chewed up by the mowers. A visitor asked that someone walk in front of the mowers and pick up water bottles, etc. Park maintenance does not mow the sides of the highway, Caltrans takes care of that. Mike Lair referred the issue to Caltrans and can't speak to how it will be resolved.

Bathrooms - Mike Lair isn't aware of the specific comments for the bathrooms. All bathrooms are open when staff is onsite. If there is a day that is short staffed, they might close half the bathrooms. Because of COVID restrictions, the bathroom cleaning has to be enhanced and it takes more time to clean. Sometimes one stall may be closed because of the enhanced cleaning. Vista Point, Jenner, and Bodega Head are basically way points and visitors use the bathrooms and throw away trash and move on. If bathrooms are not clean, Mr. Lair needs to know about that.

Parking - Parking is difficult as stated by Captain England. There is a lack of capacity and the number of parking lots cannot accommodate all the traffic. There isn't much that Park Services can do about cars parked on the side of the road if they are not blocking traffic and behind the white line. The County would need to give Park Services the authority to cite cars parked in no parking zones. The same issue applies to Armstrong Woods. State Parks needs to work with Caltrans on these issues. If parking capacity could be increased, that would help eliminate some of the parking problems. People like to park on the side of the road so they can walk straight down to the beach. This isn't helpful since it hurts vegetation and trails are created by the walkers. When parking areas were closed, visitors still drove between the cones and parked anyway. Closing the parking lots during the earlier COVID closures was mandated by the Governor and not the State Parks. State Parks did push back on the request but were told to close the parking lots. It resulted in visitors parking in the neighborhoods and other areas.

Comments (MAC)

- Chair Farmer - He believes there are quite a few restrooms scattered along the coast. It seems the concern is that many people choose not to use a restroom. He thought perhaps if there were signs indicating there were restrooms, people would use them. Regarding sneaker waves, even when people read the signs or listen to the news, it doesn't seem to make a difference. Chair Farmer asked if it would be possible to have a shift of lifeguards and rangers available to talk to people when an advisory is issued. Mike Lair responded there will be a couple of extra staff starting this week to help with this issue. He added when wave action is really bad, typically Goat Rock State Park is closed when an advisory is issued. During the closure, there is a motor patrol who patrols the area, however, people still walk in and get near the water. Even when these visitors are warned, many don't listen and still stay near or in the water. The State Park and County Park lifeguards are currently working together and talking about signage. Permanent signage would be located in parking lots and roads. Salmon Creek already has a large sign that shows the waves and danger.
- Cathy Beck - Ms. Beck lives at Salmon Creek south. She said she noticed the people did pay attention to the little signs that were posted when there was the blue/green algae problem at Salmon Creek. Neighbors asked, what is blue/green algae? Ms. Beck said the little temporary

signs are noticed by people. She suggested that perhaps the signs could be ready to be tacked up when needed and removed when no longer needed. Mike Lair responded that was a good idea. When there are too many “no” signs, many visitors stop reading the signs. The seasonal lifeguard staff is being increased by 2 people and they will work until May or June. There are no lifeguard towers, but roving lifeguards are used for the coast. They are working on signage also. Ms. Beck stated there used to be 9 park rangers. Is State Parks underfunded? She asked if we need to contact Mike McGuire to discuss this issue. Mr. Lair said they have definitely downsized over the years. Currently there are 8 rangers and 2 supervisors along the coast (in years past Salt Point had 4 rangers and 2 lifeguards in addition to additional staff in the south). The same budget has been in place for at least the past 7 years that Mr. Lair has worked along the coast. It is difficult to manage since other costs have increased, and with the current situation the campgrounds aren’t bringing in any revenue.

- Brooks Rooney - Ms. Rooney asked if there were reliable numbers available for the number of visitors on the coast this past weekend. Per Mike Lair, there are no car counts. Ms. Rooney says reliable numbers are needed so the community has statistics and can ask for more resources from their senator or other sources when needed. Comments are made that 5 times more visitors than usual come over a weekend, but there is no actual proof to confirm. Mike Lair spoke with many visitors during COVID, and the majority were from Sacramento and Stockton. Ms. Rooney suggested that they may not live here, but they do visit and should help with the resource issues. Getting a more exact number to share with Caltrans, etc. would help others understand why we need more trash cans, porta-potties, etc. Mr. Lair can talk to Caltrans about a counter to keep track of the cars on the highways. There were counters in the state park parking lots to determine when people were coming in and leaving which help determine the peak times. There has been an issue of people stealing the counters and that has become a problem. Ms. Rooney asked if we could count on Mike Lair’s support. Mike Lair will talk to Caltrans and look into counters and other options.
- Wanda Swenson - Ms. Swenson asked about where additional parking would be located? Mike Lair said there is limited areas to add more parking capacity. If there is no additional parking, there is still the issue of visitors parking along the side of the road. During the week, parking capacity is sometimes at 80%. We budget for the peak season and during off season when it is very busy, there is a skeleton crew, and it can be difficult to keep up.
- Paul Plakos - Mr. Plakos spoke to the fact that when visitors park along side of the road and walk down to the beach that creates erosion and trails. He asked if visitors could be cited for walking down to the beach. That is possible, but hard to enforce if the issue goes to court. If there were no parking signs along the road, can State Parks enforce the no parking? Mr. Lair referred to Captain England’s comments regarding no parking along the roads sides and reiterated that if there are no “no parking” signs then parked cars cannot be cited. The County, Board of Supervisors, and CHP could work with the State Parks to address the issue. State Park Rangers have the same jurisdiction as CHP to cite cars inappropriately parked. Chair Farmer mentioned the Parking AdHoc Committee could work with the State Parks. Brooks Rooney would like to work with State Parks and Caltrans to address this issue.
- Liz Gallaher - Ms. Gallagher believes that leaving the counters out all year along numerous roads, park entrances, etc. would be more practical than the current practice of putting the counters out briefly. A year’s worth of data would be beneficial and show year long statistics.

Mike Lair agreed that getting Caltrans involved is a good idea and then they could help with the costs just as they do on Hwy 5 rest stops. This would also help Caltrans along the coast to plan for trash pickup.

Comments (Public)

- Eric Fraser - Mr. Fraser took exception to the trash being created by vacation rentals. He said the theory doesn't hold up since it doesn't make sense that a tenant of a vacation rental would take their trash to a state park to put in a trash receptacle. Trash is included with a vacation rental. It makes more sense that someone coming, for example, from Sacramento, which is quite a long road trip, would dump their accumulated trash in a state park receptacle. Mr. Fraser added he agreed with Cathy Beck regarding increasing the emergency type signage. We definitely need more signage. He also appreciated Brooks Rooney's comments regarding using the actual numbers. He doesn't believe that the numbers have increased as much as we think they have. If we look at the traffic over the past number of years, it probably hasn't increased that much.
- Steve Birdlebough - Mr. Birdlebough is with the Transportation and Land Use Coalition. The Coalition is looking at the Local Coastal Plan. They believe if the number of parking spaces is increased, the number of cars will increase, and the impact will also increase. He also spoke to parking along the side of the road, the impact to public safety, and the problem of emergency vehicles not able to pass on the roads. He said it does make sense to have no parking along the sides of the road and signage to enforce it.
- John Woodward - Mr. Woodward noted his appreciation of Mark Lair and how he is trying to balance everything with limited resources. He also spoke to Brooks Rooney and her comments regarding reliable statistics. He acknowledged new signage was needed on/near beaches, and no parking signs were also needed. He suggested that local government contact Hawaii and/or Southern California to find out how they handle these issues and growing pains that they have experienced during the past 30 years.
- George Flores - Question posted in Zoom - Does State Parks welcome questions regarding small children playing in the surf, not wearing masks, or social distancing? Mike Lair responded they welcome these questions and will help. People can call the office or stop by the Salmon Creek State Park Office. Cathy Beck (MAC) said she has called a couple of times about people camping on the beach and the State Parks is good about coming out and addressing the issue.
- Cea Higgins – Posted in Zoom - State Parks has a great brochure about where to take your dog which is very popular. Could there be a brochure on how to act in high surf made available at all our businesses, hotels, and vacation rentals? Mike Lair agreed a new brochure would be useful. He will bring up this suggestion to discuss as part of the current discussion with the regional lifeguards and State Parks.

Chair Farmer thanked Mike Lair for his presentation and added that since this is the Coast MAC and 70% of the coast is State Parks, he hopes we can work together to find solutions and support each other.

Mr. Lair stated he talked with Elise VanDyne earlier today and when we gather as a group, we will be much more successful. We work with Fire, CHP, and many others. He said that the State Parks keeps

statistics on calls for service (number of warnings, rescues, etc.). These statistics help justify various positions and back up issues with data.

Supervisor Lynda Hopkins - Ms. Hopkins reminded everyone that she presented the West County TOT issue back in November. The proposal is known as Measure B and the initial ballot information will be sent out this week via snail mail. Q&A for Supervisor Hopkins:

- Cathy Beck (MAC) - Once the funds are raised for Bodega Bay Fire to consolidate with Sonoma County Fire, would the Bodega Bay Fire tax still be collected? Yes, the measure/tax would be collected until amended or repealed by voters. The need for emergency medical services does not go away. Because of the way the tax is set up, (especially in Bodega Bay) there is a delta that needs to be closed with respect to consolidating with Sonoma County Fire. The money will be used to address tourism along the coast. Supervisor Hopkins received many calls over the weekend by residents who are concerned about the influx of tourism. Some of the callers were firemen who said many of the ambulance calls they go on are the result of visitors. This issue is the reason why there was a nexus made between the TOT and emergency medical services.
- Chair Farmer (MAC) added that Measure B is targeted to the school district and Bodega Bay and is a broad regional path. It gives a sense of winners and losers. How will we move forward with other areas that have needs? – Response - There is broad eligibility the way the Measure is written particularly on the school side. Any school district within the West County TOT boundaries is eligible to apply for multi school grants. The education funds are broken into 2 phases. The first phase (during the unification study) will support existing programs and facilities. Once the unification study is complete, the support options will broaden, i.e. childcare, adult education, trade schools, training for vegetation management and firefighting. Any of these types of education will qualify for funds. Within the Bodega Bay area because there is a unique concern and pressure for emergency medical services, ambulance, and rescue response. Any of these entities within the district would be eligible for the funds.
- Paul Plakos (MAC) – Is the anticipated amount of taxes collected going to be sufficient according to fire and EMS (emergency medical services)? His main concern is that this was put into place to offset the cost of tourism, but he doesn't know how education comes into this except that he appreciates it is difficult for the County to find funds for education. It seems like a grab for funds to pay for education when the money was intended for fire and rescue. - Response - This initiative was modeled after the 2018 initiative that was successfully passed in West Marin. They chose to fund the impact of the first responder impact of tourism and the social services impact. In West Marin, 50% went to fire and social services, and 50% went to affordable housing. Sonoma County faces some challenges regarding affordable housing. There are many second homes and vacation rentals that are pricing families out of the market. This is one of the reasons that money was given to education which was negatively impacted by the loss of families and the work force. In the lower Russian River, there is one of the highest unemployment rates, highest homelessness rate per capita, highest opiate fatalities in the county. Supervisor Hopkins believes that funding education upstream will help improve these issues. There are a number of studies that state how well you read in the third grade determines if you will graduate from high school, if you will be incarcerated, and whether or not you may become homeless later in life. Hopefully, this should help support the community and at the end of the day save the taxpayers money.

- Paul Plakos - Does EMS in the area think they will get enough of the TOT to help them offset the impact of tourism? - Response - Currently Bodega Bay is meeting the minimum staffing standards. This will be a lifeline to help them add the personnel to meet these standards. It will not add enough to help the annexation in the long run, but it will allow mutual aid to cover a broader area when needed.
- Wanda Swenson (MAC) - TOT money is already at 16%. A lot of this money goes to the Tourism Board and when they met in November 2020, you (Supervisor Hopkins) attended the meeting and argued that a large amount of the money goes directly to the Tourism Board. The Board said the amount was challengeable. Also depending upon how the vote goes, there will be a renegotiation with the online travel agents. Ms. Swenson asked Supervisor Hopkins to comment on these issues. - Currently AirBNB and other online travel agents provide the County with a lump sum payment for the TOT, but the amount is not summarized. It is odd since the County doesn't know which vacation rentals are paying the tax. Passing this measure means the online travel agents would need to break out who is paying the TOT. Online agents do break down the funds regarding who is paying the TOT in West Marin, so we know it is possible. This is the brainchild of the late supervisor Mike Reilly, who in 2005 earmarked the TOT to go directly to a direct marketing organization (DMO). This was unprecedented at the time. There was a number of scandals at the time where County General Funds were paying for direct marketing. County Staff did some research and realized that this process was not the usual practice. The funds were used to drive more tourism to the area. Supervisor Hopkins had suggested that some of the funds be pulled back and given to EMS, however, the tourism group responded no, they need the money. This process remains. Sonoma County Tourism received about \$8 million annually between the General Fund TOT and BIA (Business Improvement Area) self-assessment. (The Treasurer-Tax Collector collects the 2% BIA assessment from qualifying entities in the unincorporated areas of the County and also remittances from the member cities. These funds are designated specifically to market overnight stays in the Business Improvement Area.) With the additional 4%, this would be split between EMS and the schools.
- Eric Fraser (Public) - Mr. Fraser questioned the facts that were being discussed. His understanding is that this money would go into the General Fund. He stated that research shows that TOT is best spent on affordable housing. The discussion regarding tourism seems to be an us vs. them. In addition to people on vacation, first responders, people traveling on business, and evacuees are also assessed the TOT. The people not on vacation would pay a high TOT since it was not removed by the current proposal. He hopes the County reconsiders this misappropriate use of the TOT. - Supervisor Hopkins clarified that the funds received for Measure B would not go to the General Fund and this can not be changed by the County Supervisors. It is written into the measure that the funds must be returned to the source. She suggested the public read through the measure itself. They did try to make a clear purpose for the funds, but with flexibility. The funds can be used for various education issues in West County which she described earlier in this discussion. There is also a citizens' committee that will provide oversight on the education side.
- Laurie Arnold (question in Zoom) - Please recap Measure B (description is also included above in earlier comments). - This is a 4% increase to the TOT within the geographic area. 50% would go to EMS and the other 50% to education. AirBNB, and hotels, etc. charge the tax.
- Anonymous (question in Zoom) - What is the difference between BIA and TOT? Explained above under Wanda Swenson's question. Are there any other counties who use TOT money on schools?

She is not aware of any other counties that use the funds on schools. This is an out of the box solution.

- Anonymous (question in Zoom) Do you have the data that tell if the visitors causing the calls are county visitors or overnight visitors who would pay TOT? Yes, the County does have the audited data and it is publicly available by zip code. The data can be shared by the number of calls coming from out of the county. Cathy Beck (MAC) confirmed that Bodega Bay Fire District has kept track of who they serve since 2005 or 2006. She was on the Bodega Bay Fire District Board at one point in time. Supervisor Hopkins added State Parks keeps statistics and they show that roughly 2/3 of the visitors are from out of the county. A large percentage come from Sacramento, the Central Valley, and the Bay Area.
- David Wabel - Do you have the data that vacation rentals are impacting affordable housing stock? There was a study in 2015 or 2016 (prior to Supervisor Hopkins joining the Board) of the impact of vacation rentals to affordable housing. Some of the conclusions from the report were discussed during the deliberations regarding Measure B. - Response - Yes, the analysis did show that vacation rentals do impact affordable housing stock.
- David Wabel - Will the city of Sebastopol vote on Measure B? - Yes, they are within the geographic boundary and will vote. There is one hotel in Sebastopol, and they will not pay into the TOT since they have an independent form of government, however, Sebastopol will have access to the education side of the funds available via Measure B.
- David Wabel (Public) – Did the \$2.7 million estimate include how occupancy can be growing because of COVID and the fires? The \$2.7 million estimate was a result of working with staff to determine the amount using multiple years of data (averaged) from the TOT implementation and Tax Collectors Office.
- Eric Fraser - We asked for the data because of the fires but were never able to see it. - Response - We can absolutely share this data and get it out via a newsletter or social media.
- Question from Zoom - We are concerned that this measure is trying to address the consolidation of El Molino and Analy through TOT which affects your community and Forestville. Would you please address this issue? - We are working to maintain consistency as the unification study moves forward. The closure of El Molino High School will impact more than just Forestville. A lot of the concern comes from students along the north coast and further away. They already travel an hour to get to El Molino and now they will travel an additional ½ hour in traffic to get to Analy. There is a study that correlates increased commute time with increased high school dropouts. In the long term, education funding will include adult education, childcare, and a broader definition of what the funding includes. The unification study will take about 18 months to complete.

Supervisor Hopkins thanked everyone for the great questions. She made a correction regarding AirBNB and a lump sum TOT payment to the County. She stated VRBO does break down the payment made to the county to indicate a summary of what region the payments came from.

Ag and Open Space – Carrington Ranch Acquisition – Elise VanDyne

- In December, Sonoma County Regional Parks took control of the Carrington Ranch. This is the large land space directly across from Salmon Creek. Next meeting there will be a presentation by either Ag and Open Space or the Regional Parks to show what is being done with the land. Ms.

VanDyne met with some of the MAC members to look at some of the roads and issues. One of the parking issues will be the parking for Carrington Ranch. There is a safety issue with visitors parking at Salmon Creek and crossing Hwy 1 to get to Carrington Ranch. What will it look like with parking across the street? Caltrans will be included to discuss how people can safely cross Hwy 1 to get to Carrington Ranch.

- Carrington Ranch offers a diversity of natural habitat including coastal prairie, coastal scrubs, fresh water and saltwater wetlands, and tidal marsh. There are special species on the land: big eared bats, red legged frogs, and the American badger. This property has been a homestead since 1860. This is a wonderful asset in the Sonoma Coast jewel of parks.

Regular Calendar Items

E-Bikes in Regional Parks

Some neighbors of Cathy Beck complained about e-bikes on trails in Bodega Bay. Ms. Beck has personally seen e-bikes on the Coastal Trail near Salmon Beach. If bikes aren't allowed there, there needs to be specific signage. Signs do say no motor bikes, but there is nothing said about e-bikes. Ms. Beck would like the MAC to request that the County prohibit e-bikes in certain areas and put-up signage to address the issue. The signs should be in numerous areas; State Parks (bulletin board at the campground), bike shops (to educate), and vacation rentals. Che Casul spoke to the e-bike issue since he likes e-bikes and has ridden them. They are considered motor bikes. Scott Farmer added that the State Parks website states that e-bikes are only allowed on paved surfaces. Mike Lair (Superintendent State Parks) will look into the e-bike issue. It has been discussed in the past within the State Parks. He can't speak directly to the issue but will check and get back to the MAC.

Elise VanDyne suggested the Bodega Bay MAC Representatives write a letter. Chair Farmer asked if all agreed and there was no disagreement. Cathy Beck said the Coastal Trail is maintained by the County and not the State. Brooks Rooney and Cathy Beck will write a letter addressing the e-bike issue to be shared with the Regional and State Parks.

Regional Parking Permit Discussion – Program Overview – Elise VanDyne

This issue came out of a community request for a regional parking permit process. This is a fairly narrowly focused concept. The focus is on regional neighborhoods that are close to the beach and vacation homes where cars jam into the neighborhood and can block emergency vehicles for getting through at times or at a party house with numerous cars and you can't get through. In order to put a regional parking permit process in place, we need a county wide program. Neighborhoods would need to opt in and then purchase a parking permit. Each neighborhood would need a volunteer to organize the permit process for their neighborhood. 67% of the residents of the neighborhood would need to vote on the permit process to approve it.

Parking AdHoc Committee Survey and Input – Brooks Rooney

Ms. Rooney said it is important that the Committee hear from the neighborhoods. The survey has been released and it went out last week. To follow is the survey link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5HKM8CW?fbclid=IwAR3yBt1mBVdoRMjLTaeykl24vFFUw7BIVeji02OSdM79iFFFAb79vGY>

The survey is available on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and will be available on the Sonoma Coast MAC website, in addition to through different community communications. Please take the time to respond. If we don't have a heavy response, we probably won't proceed with this issue. Ms. Rooney hopes that people from the community will volunteer. She is also interested in not only the neighborhoods, but information about the commercial areas. It is up to the community to give direction to the parking issue and let us know how to proceed.

Public Comments

- John Doolittle – He has only seen one communication and isn't sure what is going on. Brooks Rooney asked Mr. Doolittle to check his spam folder since the communication went out on Monday. He said Ms. Rooney should check if other people received the survey. In Bodega Bay, the survey is posted at the Post Office and Pelican Market. There are tear tabs with the link printed on them. Chair Farmer said the Harbor email should be resent just in case it wasn't received.
- Question in Zoom - Will the parks have any parking? Elise VanDyne responded yes, there will be parking.
- Steve Burdlebough – The Coastal Commission needs to make the coast available to everyone. We need to have a conversation with the Coast Commission what sort of parking regulations are available and admissible. He has heard that they step in when neighborhoods try to regulate parking and have problems with prohibitions of parking on shoulders.
- Eric Fraser - When it comes to the Coastal Commission, we are trying to harmonize the approach to the FDR's (relief, recovery, and reform) along with the Coastal Commission's research. The Coastal Commission tends to run on a factual basis and has a broader multi jurisdiction point of view. By understanding the Coastal Commission, we can look at best practices. Another key is working with organizations like managers and vacation homeowners can help solve the problem. The parking issues can be created by neighbors and sometimes vacation homeowners. Vacation homeowners want to solve the problem, provide affordable vacation homes, and also can be part of the solution. Ms. VanDyne said they are welcome to participate in the survey. The survey link:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5HKM8CW?fbclid=IwAR3yBt1mBVdoRMjLTaeykl24vFFUw7BIVeji02OSdM79iFFFAb79vGY>

Council and Staff Reports

- Chair Farmer said it is time to get into the forest and reduce the fuel load. Che Casul - We need to explore both manual clearing, prescribed burns, and prescribed grazing in West County.
- **District 5 Report** – Elise VanDyne

- **LCP Update** - The latest LCP review draft was published in September 2019. There was a series of public workshops in November 2019 and engagement with a number of organizations and stakeholder groups. The next steps include Permit Sonoma holding a number of weekly workshops with topics (identified in public comments/issues identified in last year's workshops that include climate change, wildfires, sea level rise; coastal access, emergency response (EMS and Fire), vacation rentals, accessory dwelling units and affordable housing; pesticide restrictions; vineyards and timberland conversions; wineries, tasting rooms, and event centers; and natural resource protection. Beginning on Friday, January 22, there will be preliminary 1-hour workshops on Friday afternoons. The details are posted on <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/prmd/long-range-plans/local-coastal-program/proposed/>
 - The plan will be updated to include resource materials and the status of the plan and resource materials as they become available. The LCP is under development and will be available in early spring 2021. The Plan will be reorganized to improve consistency and readability and the policy options will be updated with public and agency input. To make the changes easy to track, the policy will include a side-by-side comparison of the current review LCP, public response, and recommended policy.
 - The mapping of environmentally sensitive habitat areas will be updated to show the best available science on natural resources, sea level rise, and existing development. The maps will be available on the local coastal plan page as they are developed.
 - The pages that Ms. VanDyne referenced when presenting this information will be available in the minutes.
 - Marti Campbell (MAC) added that she checked the LCP website a couple of days ago and none of this information was showing. Since the LCP workshops are scheduled to start in 2 days, she thought that the information should have been posted earlier to give time for people to review. Elise VanDyne will post the link in Zoom for reference and also contact Permit Sonoma to make sure that all information is posted timely. Chair Farmer also suggested that this information be posted in Supervisor Hopkins Newsletter.
- **PG&E Settlement Update** - A request was received to discuss vegetation management. The Board approved a \$25 million grant fund from the PG&E settlement for vegetation management and a fuel management support tool for \$1.6 million. Through the use of the grants, the County will be providing funds for vegetation management. The grant process is not completed yet, but the goal is to have the grants available in March so vegetation management projects can begin.
- **Signage** - Ms. VanDyne talked about the need for better signage along the coast. Supervisor Hopkins because of the deaths due to the sneaker waves and high surf has pushed hard to better educate people around the risks. Regional Parks is working with State Parks to address signage along with Caltrans. Generally, with the

bureaucracy surrounding this issue, it can take years to put up the signs. Regional Parks has found a faster way to get new signs up. About 20 years ago, signage was put up along the coast. They have mapped out location of all the signs and new signs will replace the old signs. Additionally, Ms. VanDyne said they are working on electronic signs. Caltrans has stated it may take 5 to 7 years to get the signs up because of various requirements, e.g., environmental studies, neighborhood surveys, etc. They don't see a way to rush the process. The MAC/County is also working with the Bodega Fire Department and may utilize one of their signs and other signs already in place. They are also looking at the mobile signs that can be placed as needed. They are focusing on options other than Caltrans so the signs can be placed soon without a long wait.

- Comments
 - Paul Plakos (MAC) suggested that they check with other volunteer fire departments regarding signage. Graton Volunteer Fire District has a large electronic sign on site as does Wilmar. It could just state deadly surf or a similar short message.
 - Cea Higgins (Public) commented on the Permit Sonoma website and stated there are no future events posted indicating that LCP workshops have been scheduled. Marti Campbell (MAC) confirmed her comment. Ms. VanDyne will follow up with Gary Helfrich (PRMD) regarding posting the information. She also will add this information and the parking survey to a newsletter that is going out this weekend from Supervisor Hopkins. Ms. VanDyne will also add the LCP workshop information to Facebook and other social media sites.

AdHoc Reports

Emergency Preparedness AdHoc Committee Report – Paul Plakos

- Paul Plakos noted that fuel reduction does play a part in the Sonoma County Strategic Plan. Chair Farmer and Mr. Plakos attended a recent Zoom call in December regarding the strategic plan. He is looking forward to seeing a draft of the review session.
- Mid-coast Salt Point/Timber Cove Cell Tower - The cell tower is complete, and we are awaiting activation of cell service.
- Fort Ross and Cazadero Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD) would like to move forward with the consolidation, but they haven't heard back from LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission). Mr. Plakos asked Ms. VanDyne if she had heard back from any fire chiefs. He would like to encourage the MAC to support LAFCO to complete their part of the process.
- Wanda Swenson (MAC Rep – Fort Ross) - Ms. Swenson confirmed that this is a merger between Fort Ross VFD and Cazadero VFD. This process would precede any consolidation. Elise VanDyne spoke with Mark Bramfitt (Executive Officer – Sonoma County LAFCO) regarding the consolidation of the VFDs. She didn't have her notes in front of her, and so she will speak to the details of her conversation at the next MAC.

Pole Mountain Lookout Update – Wanda Swenson

- All the permits for construction have been obtained. They continue to raise money for the construction. They are looking forward to receiving the check for the flood mitigation grant soon. If there are PG&E funds available for Pole Mountain, Ms. Swenson said they are interested in any funds available. Elise VanDyne said to call her next week if the flood mitigation check has not been received. She also added that she has been working with her technical department to tighten up the process for faster processing and check distribution. Three months is too long to wait for the check to be processed and mailed to recipients.

Land Use/Events AdHoc Report – Scott Farmer

- The application is still outstanding. Chair Farmer stated that AdHoc Committees are short term committees, and the Land Use/Events Committee will be continuing. At the next meeting, he will propose that this committee be made public so this change can be made along with any other similar AdHoc Committees.

Parking AdHoc - Brooks Rooney

- The parking issues were covered earlier in the meeting and she has nothing to add.

Call for Agenda Items – Scott Farmer

- Chair Farmer asked that any agenda items be submitted to Elise VanDyne or any MAC member.
- Marti Campbell would like to continue receiving LCP updates and updates on COVID. Ms. Campbell is getting questions from her community on COVID vaccines, and she is sure that will continue for a while. A short update in the Staff Report would be very helpful.

Adjournment – Scott Farmer

Cindy Culcasi asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Cathy Beck moved the meeting be adjourned and Marti Campbell seconded the motion. Ms. Culcasi asked if any members were opposed to adjournment and there was no member opposing the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Culcasi, Clerk