

MARK WEST CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes (Notes), November 9, 2020, 6:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

(Video available. Send request to MarkWestCAC@gmail.com)

A) **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Molsberry called to order, the regular meeting of Mark West Citizens Advisory Council 6:00 pm.

1. Roll Call: Councilmembers present: Brian Molsberry, Roni Berg, Pete Lescure, Brad Sherwood, Tim Preston
2. Approval of Minutes:
 - 2.1. On a motion by Councilmember Preston, second by Council Vice Chair Berg, the minutes of the regular MWCAC meeting, October 12, 2020, were approved. The motion carried on a voice vote. (5-0)

B) **EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS:** None

C) **STANDING ITEMS:**

1. Utilities: None
2. Wikiup Commons: None
3. Sonoma County Plan for Mark West Area: None

D) **PENDING ISSUES:**

1. Speed limits on MWSR and ORH: None
3. "Hawk" light in front of Larkfield Shopping Center: None
4. List of unmet needs projects for Larkfield/Mark West/Wikiup: None

E) **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** This time is set aside for comments from the public regarding matters of general interest, not on the agenda, but related to MWCAC business. Pursuant to the Brown Act, however, the MWCAC cannot consider any issues or take action 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. Community member Joby Oft: He was invited to the meeting to speak with Senator McGuire. Mr. Oft represents What's Up Farm and Ag Program at the Redwood Adventist Academy on Mark West Springs Rd. (See "Discussion" after the Senator's presentation)

F) **CORRESPONDENCE:** None

G) **COUNCIL MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISCLOSURES:** Information only.

1. Councilmember Sherwood is taking Congressman Huffman on the first of Block Captains Tours of rebuild neighborhoods, 11/10, initiated to keep leaders up to date on the improvements. Assemblymember Woods will tour in the next few weeks.

H) **PRESENTATIONS, OTHER THAN REFERRALS FROM PRMD:** To proceed as follows: 1. Presentation 2. Questions by Councilmembers 3. Questions and comments from the public

1. Battalion Chief, Cyndi Foreman: PG&E, Funding Guidelines Overview
 - \$150 million of the PG&E settlement was awarded to Sonoma County (the general fund) for the Tubbs fire. Some of that went to help people without homes or struggling to find occupancy. \$129 million was left.
 - \$25 million of that, went for fuel management/fire recovery. \$10 million to road issues (not roadside fuel management).
 - Concepts for management being widely discussed are:
 - Full-time fuel management crews that are adaptable, going from fuel management to fire suppression during active fires.
 - Roadside fuel management, a huge immediate need. It tends to only happen when there is a line-of-site issue.
 - Goats and sheep are an amazing fuel management option, with multiple resources to pay for it.
 - Cyndi takes a very serious position on all this.

2. Senator Mike McGuire

Economy:

- California (CA) peaked in unemployment at 13.5%, now down to 11%.
- Sonoma County 7.2%. Expect minor uptake in winter.
- Financially speaking, CA will have a surplus by the end of the year. For example, one year ago, Sonoma County was at 2.3% unemployment. The state had to cut a little over \$50 billion since March. Now, businesses, with resources, are seeing significant profits. CA is anticipating the capital gains taxes, corporate and private will put us in a \$10 billion surplus.
- Schools: No money has been cut from schools. If they have to borrow money, the state will pay them back. Fully expect a stimulus bill moving in the first 20 to 30 days of the Biden administration.

Corona Virus

US has more cases per capita than any other nation. CA not so many, but seeing an uptake in the last 30 days.

Warning Signs:

- Over the last 14 days:
 - Hospitalizations are up 28% (coming from a low spot). Good that we are only using 4% of total hospital capacity right now.
 - We have a 27% increase of ICU usage.
 - Infection rate up 7.3%. Southern California rates rising faster than Bay Area Counties. There is concern about flu season.

Need to:

- Expand testing across the state:
 - Purchased 100,000 sf. lab space.
 - Bringing on a 3rd party contractor to run the lab at a fast pace.
 - Need approximately 200,000 to 250,000 tests daily, for an accurate read. Now testing 140,000–145,000 daily
 - Expect the lab to be fully operational performing about 250,000 test daily by the end of the first quarter of 2021.
 - Secure the specialty plastics and reagents (liquids that are in testing packets). Entered into a contract with Oregon and Washington, who are on the global markets, securing the ability to attain those items.
 - Expand testing in school sites. Economy will not be up and operational until schools are. Very significant focus.
- BOS is working with Department of Health and Human Services to get the county in the red tier.
- Vaccine: Will not see it widespread in this country till the first three to six months in 2021.

Climate Change

It's real. How it impacts the wild land fires situation in this state:

- Worse drought in 1200 years
- Wild fire season is 80 days longer than early 1970's.
- Hot weather temperatures are up 1.5 to 2.5 degrees in the fall and summer.
- Snow pack west of the Rockies has decreased 21% since 1915. Expect California to decrease another 30 to 60% by the turn of the century. Critical because:
 - expands acres that can burn
 - 75% of all agricultural water comes from snow pack.
 - 60% of all of southern CA water comes from snow pack.

What we are doing about it:

- Entered into agreement with the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Starting forest thinning on a million acres of US owned and managed forest land around communities under biggest threat. There are about 120 to 150 million dead or dying trees between the Sierras and the coastal range.
- Investing \$200 million annually on vegetation management. Need to double it.
 - Need the US Forest service to dedicate \$300 million annually, just for their CA forest lands.
 - Need \$500 to \$800 million annually to catch up, just on the US forest lands.
- Hiring firefighters: 172 new and 350 seasonal this year. 100 new and 150 seasonal last year.
- Purchased seven C130 planes, new to us, from US coast guards.
 - Will be outfitted with bladders becoming the largest fire bombers in the sky.
 - Have the Black Hawks, night flying helicopters.
- Local Conservation Core to expand and replace inmate crews, fighting fires, and adapting to vegetation management.
- Expand the community college certificate courses for tree trimmers and vegetation management.
- Significant focus on easing the CA Air Resources Board liabilities and air regulations on prescribed burning.
 - Amount of carbon released by this year's fires will outpace 10 years of green house gas emissions reductions.

PG&E:

This year they have been forced to:

- Base all their executive bonuses on their safety record, for both the gas and electrical divisions.
- Equip the 62 top substations that went out in 2019 with back up commercial generators.
- Deployed a few hundred sectionalization devices that allows them to better target where they are going to cut power.
- Developed a strategy for turning off transmission lines.
- Improved weather predictability, in their meteorology department.
- Finally connected with Technosylva, a firm with software that can tell if a wire touches the ground, how many acres will burn, how quickly, how many crews needed, how many homes threatened.

Senator McGuire thanked all leaders and especially recognized Councilmember Sherwood for all his work on the rebuild situation and Cyndi Foreman and her crew for their unending work on the fires.

Discussion:

Joby Oft. Redwood Adventist School, explained the challenge getting a new well permit in spite of the well testing good. Senator McGuire will explore the issue and respond to Joby.

Answers to questions:

Why not money spent on transmission lines?

- lack of investment in vegetation control and mismanagement
- Public Utilities has not held them accountable. Now have new CPUC Chair, Maribel Batcher, holding them accountable.
- Antiquated systems. Will take 12 to 14 years clean up mismanaged vegetation.

Why not underground wiring?

- It is happening mostly in dense communities. All cost driven. Upper 100's of millions of dollars and in challenging terrains.
- State is requiring advancing modernization and grid hardening, wrapping wire in hard plastic to prevent sparks, if falling etc.
- Bottom line all is expensive and will be put on to rate payers.

Cyndi Foreman: Infrastructure is underground on Mark West Springs Rd. Thereby shut-offs have been less widespread.

Community Member Rick Hall: Thanks to great leadership, MW Estates: 95% rebuild, 178 destroyed, 165 either built, under construction or in plan review.

Sonoma County still needs help:

- In reduction of fuels
- Why not able to get everyone tested for Covid?
- Keep the pressure on insurance companies and the California State Insurance Commissioner.
- We treasure the relationship with you in Sonoma County.

Response:

- Have to get federal government on vegetation management.
- Covid testing is top priority. First convalescent facilities, then Latinx communities (Latinx: a gender-neutral term for a Latino/Latina person). They are front line workers, hit the hardest in our communities. Supervisor Gore has been a leader on this.
- Focusing on the challenges of gatherings.
- Insurance: They beat us in legislation. Need a new proposition to insure that they will write in high fire areas. Fighting hard.
 - Cyndi Foreman: Insurance is putting immense pressure on fire districts. Getting five to 10 calls per day; Insurance companies are looking for a burden of proof from fire departments, that they can protect the homes. Also from real estate agents needing immediate answers so potential buyers can get insurance. A nearly impossible situation!

MWCAC read and presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Senator McGuire.

I) **REFERRALS FROM SONOMA COUNTY PRMD W/OUT PRESENTATIONS REQUIRED** None

J) **REFERRALS FROM SONOMA COUNTY PRMD WITH PRESENTATIONS:** Action Item. Consideration of proposed projects will proceed as follows: 1. Presentation by project applicant 2. Questions by Councilmembers 3. Questions and comments from the public 4. Response by applicant, if required 5. Comments by Council members 6. Resolution (Action) if indicated None

K) **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSIONS:** Action if indicated

1. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP) Subcommittee: None
2. Rebuild Subcommittee: None
3. Community Services District (CSD) Subcommittee: None

L) **OTHER REPORTS:** Discussion may follow: Action if indicated

1. Jen Mendoza announced a Covid test site in Windsor, at the Bluebird Community Center for all community members.
 - Intention is to have asymptomatic people test.
 - The site is currently underutilized. If it does not get more use, it could be moved or closed. More testing will lead to more sites for employer use. As the county opens, employers will want to send employees for testing.
 - No cost.
 - Objective: Improve numbers. Due to supply chain issues, doctors only test if one is showing symptoms. If only sick people get tested, the numbers look worse. This site will test anybody and show a more accurate picture of the general community.

Joby Oft: Tested there; very easy. Used LHI.Care. They gave him a list of available centers and he chose that one.

M) **DISCUSSIONS: ACTION ITEMS** Action if indicated None

N) **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** Potential future projects and suggestions for the next meet

1. Presentation of examples of proposed logo for the MWCAC, created by MWUSD students

O) **ADJOURNMENT: ACTION ITEM** There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Council Vice Chair Berg, seconded by Councilmember Lescure, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm.

Approved Date:

Brian Molsberry, Chair

**MWCAC MEETINGS: 6:00 PM—SECOND MONDAY OF THE MONTH
Zoom Meetings Until Further Notice**

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