

MARK WEST CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting Minutes, July 14, 2021, 6:00 pm  
Zoom Meeting  
Video available. Send request to [MarkWestCAC@gmail.com](mailto:MarkWestCAC@gmail.com)

**A) Call to Order:** Chair Fies called to order, the regular meeting of Mark West Citizens Advisory Council (MWCAC) at 6:02 pm.

1. Roll Call:

Members present: Brad Sherwood, Roni Berg, Willie Lamberson, Pete Lescure, Chair Karen Fies

Others: Jen Mendoza, Field Representative Representing Supervisor James Gore, 4th District, County of Sonoma; Aggie Maggio, Secretary MWCAC; Cyndi Foreman, Sonoma County Fire Division Chief-Prevention/Fire Marshal

2. Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Lamberson, second by Berg, the minutes of the regular MWCAC meeting, June 9, 2021, were approved. The motion carried on a voice vote. (5-0)

**B) Presentations:** Information Only

Procedure: 1. Presentation 2. Questions by council members 3. Questions/comments from the public

1. Ortiz Plaza II, 5360 Old Redwood Hwy: Santino Garcia, Chief Operating Officer, CA Human Development

Also supporting the presentation:

- Thomas Stuebner, CEO of California Human Development
- Isaiah Antoine, Community Impact Director, California Human Development
- Warren Hedgpeth, Hedgpeth Architects
- Ingrid Anderson, Hedgpeth Architects

The name of Ortiz Plaza is in honor of one of the founding fathers and the long-time executive directors of California Human Development, George L Ortiz.

Ortiz Plaza II will provide 38 units of affordable housing for farmworker families in Sonoma County. The project is the second phase following the adjacent existing 30-unit Ortiz Plaza farmworker housing development.

The project consists of one 2-story and one 3-story building. Ortiz II will share the existing Community Center facilities and support services with the existing apartments, situated within the Ortiz Plaza development.

The development is currently securing entitlements and environmental clearances with the goal of acquiring planning approvals in late summer/early fall of 2021.

The buildings will be wood construction and will be Cal Green compliant. The project will provide 100% of its own electrical needs and is all electric.

They are asking for Council support of the development. There will be a community meeting on July 29 at 6:00 pm.

Conversation followed:

Council Chair Fies stated that she had worked with George Ortiz in the past and has great respect for him.

One concern was about the overflow parking on Old Redwood Hwy. One potential solution is the use of ride share programs for those working for the same employer in the same location. They have very effectively used them in other facilities. They've reduced the need for parking by about 50%.

Positive comments were about the architecture, design, location and the successful Phase I of Ortiz Plaza.

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Sherwood also asked for their support in making the whole community more walkable. Particularly the bridge over Mark West Creek on Old Redwood. Residents will be using this bridge to get to the shopping center.

All council members expressed full support for the project.

A written copy of the presentation and flyer for the community meeting is attached to these minutes.

2. Wikiup Commons / Former Wikiup Golf Course: Tony Korman, Lead Person representing Jackson Family Korman turned the presentation over to Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist, Open Space District and Brad Sherwood, Sonoma Water for an overview of what is planned collectively.

The Ag and Open Space District and Sonoma Water are working on creating a conservation easement and agreement. It is a multiple-step process. Once they have an agreed upon conservation easement with all parties, they can get it appraised with an MAI appraiser (Member, Appraisal Institute) to determine the value. That goes to their fiscal oversight committee for review and approval. Then they can create an offer letter for Kendal Jackson. If the offer is accepted, it goes before the Board of Supervisors for approval.

There is a 35-day CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) period for acquisition. Then on to escrow and closing.

The current project structure is that Sonoma Water will own the property and Ag and Open Space will retain a conservation easement over the property. They hope to complete this quickly, knowing that there may likely be delays due to emergency situations where the County employees could be switched to disaster service.

In the end, the outcome will be a great blend of fisheries restoration, flood control, recreational trail and water educational programs.

Sonoma Water is very excited about all the educational and garden possibilities, the ground water replenishment programs and wild life passage. They are envisioning a natural wild life preserve, focusing on creek restoration and schools using it for fishery recovery education for kids.

Discussion Points:

When talking about Open Space, the bridge over the creek should be part of the discussion. The Council needs to partner on this property to leverage grant funding for project property improvements.

Community gardens means potentially individual garden plots for community members.

Bottom line: This property is rare and the community is lucky to have it. The Coho recovery program started in this creek. It was the last Coho to be saved and that is why we have a Coho rootstock program up at Warm Springs Dam. Supervisor Gore is excited about getting this done.

The ground water replenishment options on this property are so important because we need to be parking more of the atmospheric river water, in the ground, to percolate throughout the year; to keep tributaries and streams flowing when there isn't enough rainfall. It is part of our drought response plan.

Having the park open to the public is part of the recreation covenant requirement.

Much thanks and appreciation was expressed to all who have been working on this project so far.

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3. Community Outreach Specialist for Sonoma County Fire District. Cyndi Foreman introduced Jim Boggeri. Jim is now the face for the community for the Fire District. Cyndi is still here, working with him. Boggeri was with the Marin Fire Department for 34 years. He retired as Fire Captain, last month, due to injury. He is a 25-year Windsor resident.

Larkfield area: Recently consolidated with Forestville. Also increased level of staffing both fire stations including paramedics on the fire engines. They had their first save within a week. It a 16-year-old female volley ball player having cardiac arrest. It was amazing to be able to get a paramedic to her so fast and she was saved.

They are currently working diligently on vegetation management. They are really pressuring property owners to take care of their vegetation. There are multiple fires due to mowing. They will be coming out with a press release telling people not to mow in the heat of the day (only prior to 10:00 am), due to sparks and heat.

Fire season is now. Community members are encouraged to complete the home hardening around their homes and know their evacuation routes.

Direct line to office for public is (707) 892-2441

Foreman added that with the Forestville consolidation there is now a contiguous border all the way to the Russian River. Forestville also has a paramedic on fire engines.

Station 6, up in mountain area, is remodeled and now houses fire fighters during red flag fire situations.

Comments/Questions:

Funding additional resources: They are funded due to re-arrangement of resources. The mountain station comes out of general budget also. All is a result of good budgeting and help from the County.

Fees for mowing later in the day and late in the season: There is discussion about seeking reimbursement from property owners, if it is deemed, thru investigation, that negligence caused a fire. Aircraft alone is \$10,000 per hour.

If people don't create a defensible space; it is negligence. If reported. they will get a notice with a time line. If the fire department needs to, they will hire someone to manage the property and put a lien on the property, to pay for it.

What about riparian corridors? Challenging, due to so many restrictions. Foreman recommends people reach out to the Fire Department concerning any particular area (file it as a weed complaint). They will work with Fish and Game, HOAs, the County, etc. to decide how to handle individual situations.

4. Wilshire-Crystal-Heights Neighborhood Fire Risk Reduction Grant:  
Ann DuBay, Community & Government Affairs Manager, Sonoma Water, lifelong Mark West Springs Resident

A presentation about how her neighborhood applied for and received a grant through the vegetation management money that the County released. It was part of the PG&E settlement funds.

This neighborhood is in the hills off of Riebli Road, a combination of public and private roads. They applied for and received a grant to remove the overgrown vegetation within 15 to 20 feet of the pavement on both sides of the public and private roads. Goal: create a safer exit from the area, create a safer emergency egress, reduce roadside fire risk and to widen existing fire break.

Total project budget: appr. \$115,000 with a match of \$8,550 from the neighborhood and the county roads department.

Details are in the presentation which will be attached to the minutes of this meeting.

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Comments/Questions:

The public roads up there will not be repaved. Wilshire held up pretty well.

They used the Wilshire Heights Mutual Water District to be their required fiscal sponsor to apply for the grant.

There was an in-kind match. They calculated how much neighbors worked. The County Transportation and Public Works, supported the grant with a letter and work, providing a flag crew and waiving a normal fee. Total about \$8,000.

The Council thanked and congratulated DuBay, stating that hers is one of very few to receive a PG&E grant. What happens in the hills definitely affects the flat land.

Some property owners on the south side of Mark West Springs Road, before Riebli Rd. expressed interest in partnering with some entity, somehow, to apply for grants in the future.

Adjustment to Agenda: Jump to F2.

1. Update on Cal Am Water in Larkfield, Margaret DiGenova, Superintendent of Operations, Cal Am Water: Larkfield is currently in stage 1 of voluntary water conservation. Suggested watering schedule: Odd Addresses – Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday. Even addresses – Wednesday, Friday & Sunday. No watering on Monday.

Upcoming public meeting (virtual) – August 5 at 5:00 pm, to review Stage 2 of our Drought Contingency Plan.

Local office will re-open to the public on Thursday, August 5. Hours are 8:30 am to 4:00 pm (closed: noon – 1:00 pm). The local office can be reached at (707) 542-8329, ext. 0, during business hours. There is a link on the website for reporting water waste. The website is CaliforniaAmWater.com. The link is under “Conservation”.

Stage 2 is more formalized. It allows repeated water wasters to be fined. The goal is to help and educate people. Fines are the last resort. More info at the meeting.

As a whole, everyone has been doing quite well. This area has a 17% reduction. Aiming for about 20%.

Comments/Questions

The 20% goal is an overall area goal, not for individuals or households.

A basic benchmark for water usage does exist, 55 gallons per person per day. It is not a rule, just something to shoot for. Not counting things like watering the lawn. Main thing is look at the graph of last year. In the summertime, most bills go up very high. A goal would be to try to lower that to match your winter bills.

New Rebates: Very limited cash for grass coming soon. Probably in next two or three weeks, along with others. Call the office; get a virtual house call. Someone will guide you with what kind of fixtures are in your house.

Sonoma Marin water saving partnership has buckets of conservation items to hand out. Cal Am also has them.

**C) Presentations of Referrals from Permit Sonoma: 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

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**D) Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items:** None

**E) Subcommittee Reports & Discussions:** ACTION ITEM

1. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP): (Berg/Lescure)

- Received a large application from Mark West Village. They will present in August.
- Berg and Council Chair Fies are working on the Community Soils application.
- Larkfield Resilience received a reimbursement check for \$24,000. The remaining \$7,026.12 is coming soon.

2. Rebuild/ Fire Mitigation Subcommittee (Sherwood/Fies)

- Council Chair Fies and Mark West School Superintendent Ron Calloway are meeting with TPW about the Mark West sidewalks.
- There are conversations about having ribbon cuttings for that, and on all the repaving projects.
- Johannes Hoevertsz, TPW, is talking about some type of remembrance event on the anniversary of the Tubbs fire remembering lives lost, celebrating accomplishments and thanking community and organizations that helped rebuild.
- Also looking at a banner for the sidewalks. Berg is working on creating that.

3. Community Services District (CSD) (Sherwood/Lamberson)

While collecting emails for neighborhood watch program Lamberson has been asking about a pedestrian bridge over the creek to the shopping center. Everyone is all for it. Need to support Sonoma Water in this endeavor.

4. Wikiup Open Space (Lamberson/Berg)

- Going to keep meeting and learning about the process.
- Supporting Sonoma Water and excited about Ag and Open Space project.
- Main thing is to keep the public informed.

5. Sonoma County General Plan for Mark West Area (Lescure/Lamberson).

Need to get ahold of Permit Sonoma for their schedule of workshops or townhalls. With the work that Lescure has been doing all along, they can enlighten the County about Mark West area. There will not be a specific plan for the Mark West area as there is a limited budget but they can at least make Mark West area needs known and direct the policies within the general plan.

Lescure announced the Mark West Chamber Community Event: See H.1.

**F) Pending Items:** Updates when available

1. Wikiup Commons: Question: Drop this item. No longer necessary. Open Space subcommittee fulfills this need.
2. Utilities & Water: See presentation above: F. 2.
3. Speed limits on Mark West Springs Road and Old Redwood Hwy. None
4. "HAWK" light in front of Larkfield Shopping Center: Mendoza reported: Still working on an easement agreement.
5. List of unmet needs projects for Larkfield/Mark West/Wikiup: Pending further discussion
6. Supervisorial Districts Redistricting: Lamberson: Main thing is to keep our area under one supervisor only.

**G) Correspondence:** Information Only

**H) Council Member Announcements and Disclosures:** Information Only

1. The Mark West Chamber will be having their Community Fair at LBC September 22. Event Planner Samantha Paul has volunteered her services. It will be held outside.

2. Beth Henry is now Executive Director of Windsor Chamber. This Council is looking for an Outreach Coordinator.

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**I) Future Agenda Items:** Potential projects for future meetings and suggestions for future MWCAC meetings.

1. Susan Sloan, COPE program in Wikiup (TBD)
2. Chamber presentation (TBD)
3. Presentation of Council Budget, Fies and Paul Hower, TPW, Finance Accounting Department (August)
4. Possible speaker on home hardening and vegetation management (TBD) Lisa Hullett
5. Discussion on Road Diets/Traffic Calming (Aug)
6. Possible presentation on redistricting supervisorial districts (TBD) Goal: Keep our district under one supervisor.
7. How about a community clean up? Maybe partnership with the Chamber.

Lamberson thanked Sherwood for all his work on maps and texts, etc. on all the preliminary work that had to be done. Berg thanked and congratulated all the team working on Wikiup.

**J) Adjournment:** ACTION ITEM

There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Lescure, seconded by Berg, the meeting was adjourned a 8:10 pm.

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Approved Date:

Chair

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

**Mark West School District Office, The Learning Center, 305 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa  
(NOTE: Location or time may change due to anticipated greater community participation.)**

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

[sonomacounty.ca.gov/Mark-West-Citizens-Advisory-Council](http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Mark-West-Citizens-Advisory-Council)

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