

MARK WEST CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes, August 11, 2021, 6:00 pm
Zoom Meeting
Video available. Send request to MarkWestCAC@gmail.com

A) Call to Order: Chair Fies called to order, the regular meeting of Mark West Citizens Advisory Council (MWCAC) at 6:00 pm.

1. Roll Call: Members present: Roni Berg, Willie Lamberson, Chair Karen Fies, Pete Lescure

Others: Jen Mendoza, Field Representative Representing Supervisor James Gore, 4th District, County of Sonoma; Aggie Maggio, Secretary MWCAC

2. Approval of Minutes:

On a motion by Berg, second by Lamberson, the minutes of the regular MWCAC meeting, July 14, 2021, were approved. The motion carried on a voice vote. (3-0) Lescure arrived after approval.

B) Presentations: Information Only

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

Adjustments to the Agenda

1. NIFP Application from Mark West Village asked to be removed from the agenda. They will present in the future.

Moved #3 up, in the agenda, due to technical difficulties with the #2 presentation.

3. Presentation of Council Budget, Chair Karen Fies and Paul Hower, Transportation & Public Works (Sonoma County TPW, Finance Department)

The Cal Am Water Franchise Fee is for use in the area served by Cal American Water. In 2016, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) assigned the MWCAC to manage it.

- September, 2017, a separate account was created for these funds. About \$34,000, plus interest, was added yearly. Other than staff, no expenses.
- Fiscal year 2018/19, Mark West Estates Owner's Association expense for tree removal, after the Tubbs fire.
- Fiscal year 2020/21, some staff, etc, expenses, Larkfield Resilience Fund Inc. (Landscaping) and Cinquini & Passarino, Inc. (Surveying for the sidewalk to Reibli school).
- Fiscal year 2021/22, staff and other contract services. Larkfield Resilience Fund paid in full. Place holder created for office supplies.
- Fiscal year 2022/23, budget requests are due to the County the first week of January via email. The County has to start formulating the budget in January.

Council Discussion:

Hower provides a yearly detail report with a running balance to the Council. The system is the County Enterprise Financial System, so no public access is available.

Lescure provided more history: The MWCAC and NIFP started back when Larkfield had a water committee and then Supervisor Mike McGuire created a franchise fee on Cal American Water (Cal Am) customers, to pay for administrative services for the Community Services District (CSD) that the committee was working to establish. The CSD was approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), but did not materialize because voters turned down a rate increase from \$30 to \$60 per year, for street lighting. The franchise money paid the LAFCO fees to establish the CSD. That was about \$3,500.

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The first NIFP project paid for the Fulton signage improvements. Those costs are unknown to the Council as it was handled by McGuire, before the Council was formed.

When Supervisor Gore was elected, Lescure reminded him that the money belonged to the community served by Cal Am. Supervisor Gore created the MWCAC, with one of its responsibilities being management of the franchise fees for the benefit of the Mark West Community.

This year was started with almost \$259,000, due to carryover funds. It is important to keep the money local and use it for improvements in the Mark West, Larkfield, Wikiup, Fulton area, however the Board of Supervisors may not always agree that it belongs to the MWCAC community.

The Council took a few minutes to appreciate how difficult it's been, working within the system, to get projects funded. Supervisor Gore wanted this money available for local projects. Jen Mendoza has worked, tirelessly and with total frustration, along with Roni Berg. Paul Hower has tackled the budget and streamlined the process for funding. The Council appreciates Hower, Mendoza and Roni Berg for their never-ending efforts and for never giving up.

Hower's Power Point presentation will be attached to the minutes.

2. NIPF Application Presentation: Mark West Estate's neighborhood, to include "common" and "riparian" areas, Robert Torre

The goal of this project is to create a fire break in the riparian area and a 10 to 15 feet barrier removing all the dead trees/vegetation and hazardous situations in the park, left from the Tubbs fire. Cost: \$34,000 for both areas.

The Mark West Estates were the first application funded by the MWCAC franchise fees, in August of 2018. It took until June of 2019 to get funded. It was \$18,000 to clean the area adjacent to some homes and some of the lots in transition at that time, following the Tubbs Fire.

About 15 feet along the creek along Londonberry, Pacific Heights and Aptos Ct. still needs clean up. There are dead trees and falling limbs, 10 feet of vegetation, as well as trees with dead wood in the community park. They want a fire break with canopies cleaned up. Pictures show oak trees over back fences, dead trees and a split rail fence with overgrowth growing through and behind it.

There will be no intrusion on Fish and Wild Life area. Grasses are cleaned out twice a year.

All HOA reserves were spent replacing trees, after the fires. Homeowners were asked to pay a special assessment, post fire, to clean up trees and common grounds. Still not enough funds.

Council Discussion:

HOA owns the property to the center of the creek.

The issues are safety and fuel. It is a very responsible HOA. The project has a broader application. It will not be a fuel line along the creek to burn the rest of the community.

Lastly, the County just got about \$37 million from FEMA for wildfire and additional grant funding. The question is: Could the Council find a way to fund the project now and be recouped from those funds? It is fire vegetation management. Or could the Mark West HOA apply for funding directly?

Torre said he tried that avenue. It appears possible in the future. The need is urgent and necessary now.

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Mendoza will look into ways the Council can formally request money that is in the County's hands now. Many others are requesting money now.

Lamberson: He doesn't think he can vote as he lives within 500 feet of the project, per a conflict of interest rules for spending public money. This is a little rich for the Council. County monies are available. He gave the information to Torre.

Berg: Any new projects, funded by MWCAC, have to be approved by the BOS. There is a placeholder of \$50,000 for approved projects this year.

The CAC already approved Community Soils. They will be coming back with more estimates as the County is now requiring three bids for every application.

Need four council members to approve an application. It may be an issue for this project, as chair Fies is a member of the Mark West HOA.

Community Input and Discussion with Council Members:

Catherine Dodd:

- Did not know the MW Springs existed until recently.
- Is willing to take a poll to see if most people don't know that the website exists or that the Council exists.
- It is irresponsible to spend money without an environmental scan. Money should be spent on public, not private property.
- Does not want to spend money, hoping to get it back.
- Does not like the system to be first come, first serve. It needs to be spread equally.

Council Response: The Council does not give out money first come, first serve. It has turned down several projects.

Torre: Any funding amount would be helpful.

This can be approved with the stipulation that they will get more bids. You can get it started but not cut a check until the board approves one of the bids.

Mendoza: She and Robynn Swan, Vegetation Management person at Cal Fish and Wildlife walked the Russian River, in Cloverdale along with other interested parties, in order to say what can and cannot be done creating a work plan within the parameters of environmental regulations. She can tell you for what you do, and do not, need a permit.

Ryan Osbourn, a fire marshal, did basically the same thing for MW Estates.

With no quorum, the Council asked Torre to get additional bids and bring it back to the September meeting.

4. Presentation on Redistricting Efforts, Mike Martini

Examining redistricting is required by law every 10 years. Martini is one of 19 members of the advisory committee to do so this year. This year the census data will not be available till mid-September. They are working with estimates now. County is still required by law to adopt the final map by December 15.

August 23 will be the first official hearing for public input.

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Redistricting is purely a mathematics game. All districts have to have equal population (# of people). Also, there are federal and California laws that need to be followed. For instance:

- Neighborhoods and/or cities cannot be divided. The City of SR is too large to be in one district, so it has to, at least, be contiguous. Cannot set political lines.
- Currently, the districts fit all the rules.
- The committee is looking for public input: things like divided neighborhoods or a need to be recognized.
- The MWCAC group represents a classic neighborhood. All should have conversations about what they want.

There are five different tools on the website. All input, no matter what, is welcome. Make issues known.

Resources/tools: Sonomacounty.ca.gov/redistricting and Redistricting2021@sonoma-county.org

Lamberson: There is no appetite here for dividing any of Mark West, Larkfield, Wikiup, Fulton area.

Martini's Power Point presentation will be attached to the minutes.

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

1. Discussion: Road Diet/Traffic Calming: Open a conversation regarding traffic conditions/complaints with a goal of ultimately creating an over-all strategy: Jen Mendoza and Vincenzo Corraza, Traffic Engineer, TPW

Jen Mendoza:

Background

September of 2018, Supervisor Gore wanted conversations about MWCAC area traffic and centralizing Mark West. Fires etc. happened and it was put on back burners. The County now has the ability to bring it up again. They have a grant writer and are looking at different sources of funding.

Intention

A road diet means the ability to keep traffic flowing while slowing it down and driving more safely. There are many issues and complaints about road issues and traffic in the Mark West, Wikiup and Fulton areas. The intention is to talk about options and get feedback from community.

Jen Mendoza is planning for community members and experts of different fields to walk the area, sharing perspectives. Ideas and projects will be discussed at MWCAC meetings. Ultimately sending chosen ones to TPW and Supervisor Gore.

Vincenzo Corraza:

The County has a website, available to the public, with interactive maps, including speed-limits maps. Google "FHWA traffic calming", for extensive information on traffic calming.

There are essentially 3 E's for traffic safety: Education, Enforcement, Engineering. Engineering has four major tools:

- Horizontal deflection, cause drivers to go a little left or right
- Vertical deflection (speed humps)
- Street width reduction. Corner extensions, medians, parking, etc.
- Routing restrictions, diversions, closing roadways, sending traffic away from your neighborhood

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Some examples on the site show pictures of traffic calming areas:

- Lateral sifting lanes
- Medians
- Chicanes (Curves that cause a particular speed)
- Halfmoons with narrow lanes
- Median landscaping (splitting the roadway)
- T intersections
- Round-a-bouts with landscaping, mini round-a-bouts. Really good tool for traffic safety.

Functional Classifications:

One interactive map shows particular roadway classifications. Old Redwood Hwy. is a minor arterial; so it is eligible for state and federal funds. Road diet is appropriate for Old Redwood in Mark West. One can see it all on the website.

Creating the list:

- Old Redwood Hwy. in front of the Larkfield Shopping Center
- More bicycle and pedestrian friendly roadways, County adopted a street policy to allow multimodal roads.
- Subtopic: Bridge over Mark West Creek
- Possible roundabout in big intersection
- Section in front of Sutter and visibilities coming in and out of different roadways (one of the main areas of complaints to the County) Interacts with the State, due to the freeway access.
- Wikiup and Carriage Lane: need anti-donut measures.

Discussion:

Vincenzo is the engineer currently dealing with the traffic in Sonoma County. There are already warrants stating that Old Redwood Hwy. qualifies for speed reduction. Lescure will email them to Vincenzo.

Lescure: In some places, instead of landscaping, you could build storm water mitigation features and sell them for credits to outside developers, to help finance the project. Vincenzo: Like rain gardens.

The Council, or citizens, can request a speed-radar trailer through the website. They record time and speed. Directions to request one, through the County of Sonoma TPW site, using their "Contact Us", are attached to these minutes, as a document, on the MWCAC page, on the County of Sonoma Website.

Noted: It's been done on Wikiup with no follow up.

Mendoza: She deals with issues like this. When made aware, she persistently follows up with department and staff.
Jen Mendoza: jennifer.mendoza@sonoma-county.org

She will have the date for the walkabout at the September meeting. Will revisit the conversation then.

Fulton: Turn Lane Suggestion

Remove the west-bound-turn lane, at Somers Street, and extend the west-bound turn lane for turning onto Fulton Road, from River Rd.

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Roni Berg will create and deliver a survey flyer, asking for the residents' input, to the people who live on Somers Street. She will ask them to send feedback to the MWCAC gmail account.

Concern: It will be unsafe to turn off of Fulton Rd, crossing traffic at C or D Streets. Alternative would be to have to go far south and turn around and come back north to Fulton. Suggest a possibility of a stop sign on Fulton Road at C Street, in Fulton.

The Council appreciated TPW for all their efforts all over the MWCAC area.

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**

D) Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items:

1. Catherine Dodd: Would like to draw attention to the pond in Wikiup, now covered with algae. Trees on Wikiup and Carriage Lane are dying. How to go about asking for sidewalks on the two blocks on Carriage Lane that don't have them? Catherine shared her email address: Catherine.Dodd@gmail.com

E) Subcommittee Reports & Discussions: ACTION ITEM

1. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP): (Berg/Lescure) **None**
2. Rebuild/ Fire Mitigation Subcommittee (Sherwood/Fies) Sherwood and Fies looking into grant opportunities. Hoping for more opportunities. Mendoza heard there will be. She will check into it, as she has been out of office.
3. Community Services District (CSD) (Sherwood/Lamberson) **None**
4. Wikiup Open Space (Lamberson/Berg) Things are just moving forward.
5. Sonoma County General Plan for Mark West Area (Lescure/Lamberson) Now have contact for person in charge of the effort at the County Planning Department. Traffic calming will be a real plus.

F) Pending Items: Updates when available

1. Utilities & Water: **None**
2. Speed limits on Mark West Springs Road and Old Redwood Hwy. **See above**
3. "HAWK" light in front of Larkfield Shopping Center: Corazza: It's going to the CA Transportation Commission for approval of allocation of funds. If approved, TPW will advertise for the project. Hopeful for construction next year.

Corazza: For information and place to send letters of support:

4. List of unmet needs projects for Larkfield/Mark West/Wikiup: Pending further discussion **None**
5. 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

I) Future Agenda Items: Potential projects and/or suggestions for future MWCAC meetings

1. Susan Sloan, COPE program in Wikiup (TBD)
2. Chamber presentation (TBD)
3. Traffic Discussion Continuation and date for the walk-about.
4. Possible speaker on home hardening and vegetation management (TBD) Lisa Hullett
5. How about a community clean up? Maybe partnership with the Chamber.
6. Presentation on Finding/Preserving Marcus West family Cemetery
7. NIFP Application: MW Village (TBD)

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8. Follow up: MW Estates NIFP application (September)

Announcement: Community Faire is September 22 ~ See Chamber website

J) Adjournment: ACTION ITEM

There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Lescure, seconded by Berg, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Approved Date:

Chair

MWCAC MEETINGS: 6:00 PM—SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
Zoom Meetings Until Further Notice
sonomacounty.ca.gov/Mark-West-Citizens-Advisory-Council
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