Redwood Valley Municipal Advisory Council

Wednesday July 11, 2018

Redwood Valley Grange

RVMAC Members present: Chris Boyd (Chair), Sheilah Rogers (Vice-Chair), Alex de Grassi, Debra Ramirez, Sandra Berman (Secretary + Alternate), Marybeth Kelly (Alternate)

Absent: Katrina Frey (Treasurer), Melinda Hunter, Cassie Taaning

1. Call to order; introduction of guests—Chris.

2. Review/approval: A. Today’s Agenda; B. June Minutes.

Motion to approve, seconded and approved.

4. Public Expression on Non-Agenda Items

Jeff Tyrrell- fire lawyer. Trying to get Erin Brockovich to come out to talk about the fires and PG&E. Stay tuned. July 31 or August 1 are the dates in mind.

Marybeth: RV Grange working on kitchen upgrade to commercial status. July 22 fun in the park, and music swap happenings at the Grange.

Sheilah: MROC (Mendocino Rebuilding Our Community)- emotional and spiritual support committee, headed by Rose Bell is planning events for 1 year fire commemoration. Sunday, October 7th kick off event. Asking the MAC to coordinate the potluck and the candle light vigil. Looking for volunteers. We will be talking about this more in August.

Chris: PG&E wants to give the MAC $10,000 for community planning. Want it to keep working on our plan. Tentative approval was given but no paperwork yet.

3. Presentation of Resolution 18-1 honoring Alex and Anthony Chehada for their successful offer to purchase the planned Dollar General lot from the developers, thereby preventing the store. The Chehadas, proprietors of the Redwood Valley Market, made a considerable investment to fight the development, and in so doing, served the wishes of a large segment of the Redwood Valley community. This is the first proclamation ever presented by the RVMAC in honor of local residents/business people.

5. Continuing Business:

A. RV Community Plan—Discussion and action, based on May 31 meeting, impacts, next steps, volunteers. Cliff Paulin, our consultant, unable to attend July or August meetings. Beginning circulation of sign-up sheets for volunteers to focus on several subject areas. Building on the 2004 Community Plan and bringing forward new ideas. 50-80 people usually attend the meetings. We want to have a new strong draft. Looking for community interest in involvement in subcommittees. Cliff will help us with the draft once we have a clearer idea.

From the old plan: Establishing an architectural theme will be a key goal. We are hoping to get more specific as we move forward with this plan. Of utmost importance is to gain considerable community involvement!

Design guidelines would be useful for this. For example: locate parking areas behind new businesses; consider lighting that preserves night skies; criteria for new signage; types of windows; wildland/urban interface fire issues; building colors; native landscaping; possible specific design standards for neighborhoods; preservation of aspects of the rural character; etc. After a conversation with Nash Gonzales, we would need a process written into the county code which would bring issues/developments into public review.

Placer County is a good example where such guidance has been developed, and the materials are on line. The town of Mendocino is not a good example of a town plan, as it is in the more restricted coastal zone and our community will likely want a less restrictive character.

Nash Gonzales: Good idea to start with guidelines. General Plan was adopted in 2009. Only a handful of RV residents at those public hearings. General Plan is a living, breathing, document. Would have to be reviewed to ensure our proposals meet state statutes. Build out is then accomplished via the zoning code. First goal: Community Action Plan that we can submit to become part of the General Plan.

Long range plan: a review process that would be written into County Code and Zoning Code, which will refer back to the RV Area Plan.

Formula Business Ordinance- could prevent what happened with the Dollar General.

What about re-zoning?

General Plan review started in 2001— was approved in 2009. Lots of visioning at this time.

Opening up the General Plan requires a CEQA review. CEQA applies to projects that are discretionary, goes beyond the scope of what the General Plan looked at.

Why was the RV 2004 Community Action Plan not involved before the 2009 General Plan approval? Had the community been more engaged in the hearings it would have made more of an impact. Overall, Mr. Gonzalez encourages and supports the RV community in our work on these efforts.

B. Fire Recovery Update—MROC (Mendocino Rebuilding Our Community) information. Nash Gonzalez, Mendocino County Building Official: Nash is transitioning to Recovery Director, as Tammy Moss Chandler returns to direct the Health and Human Services Dept. Now, the long range planning approach: funding, housing, etc. Long term recovery efforts are also coordinating with the Office of Emergency Services’ hazard mitigation plan. Safety elements changed in 2013, need to be compliant with State law. If a County has the right plans it becomes easier leverage funding in the wake of disaster declarations. Looking at the safety element: Alert warning, evacuation, transportation during an emergency, etc.

Reach out the the Fire Chief or Sheriff to attend our meetings?

County and State emergency plans are developed according to Federal and State guidance, and are “multi-hazard”, including geologic hazards. The well-established theory is that by addressing ANY hazard (fire), a community is better prepared and coordinated for ALL hazards (earthquake, flood, tsunami, terrorist attack, etc.).Water infrastructure: Currently, per Mr. Gonzalez, there is no delay on building permits, based on water systems. Even where sprinklers are required (2016 building and fire codes require residential sprinklers) and the infrastructure is not yet in place, there are alternative means and methods to achieve code-level fire protection: above ground water tanks to supply the “fire water” are achievable. Class K (a special category in Mendocino County for the old “cabin” alternative building standards) and modular homes don’t require sprinklers.

Timetable on water system upgrades? Engineers are currently working on it.

Regrading issue—In many cases, the sub-contractors who dealt with residential fire debris over-excavated sites. The County and State OES have worked vigorously to correct these problems without further cost to homeowners, and have created a template now being used in Napa and Sonoma Counties as well. While there are still a few problems to address (example: where contractor buried some of the burned debris but that hasn’t necessarily been found as yet), good work and progress are being made.

C. Disaster Recovery Grant Application by County—Road in Ukiah.

$9 million grant application has been approved by the County (June 19 Board meeting) for the former Masonite location. Looking for a 1-mile connector road for Orchard Avenue all the way to North State. This project is eligible for federal disaster recovery funds on the basis that recovery for a disaster is facilitated if economics are improved throughout the region. Ross Liberty estimated 100 more jobs. $93 million approved for fire recovery in the western states, this would be 10% of that. It would definitely be of benefit to the entire county, and all the design and engineering are completed so it will be “shovel ready”-one of the criteria favored by the Feds in approving of these grants.

D. Storage complex, corner of School and East Rd.

120 unit storage unit has been approved for downtown Redwood Valley (corner of School and East Rd). There is no water or sewage there and it is zoned industrial, making this project “ministerial” with no need for public review. 3 long prefab metal buildings with paved roadway between. 6 foot high metal wrought iron fence. Alex thinks this is ready to go. Bio-swales to slow down storm water run-off. Test wells? Marybeth is going to look into it. The MAC members opined to Mr. Gonzalez that even though there apparently was no legal requirement to notify the MAC about this project, it had apparently been in the works for 8 months before Planning and Building sent an email to Chris Boyd advising of the project. By that time, the owner had already ordered the prefab buildings. Had the MAC known many months ago, perhaps we could have met with the owner, Mr. Lee Burgess, and asked him to consider carving out some area of the lot for mixed use (such as a coffee kiosk), as had been written into Pages 6-38-40 of the 2009 General Plan. That plan used the word “encouraged,” which is strictly voluntary, and the Planning and Building Dept. told MAC members that they thought it would be prejudicial if they had encouraged such an outcome. Chris begged to differ! But that’s just why our community needs design criteria and a stronger community plan incorporated into County codes.

6. New Business:

A. Grant Application by County for Fish and Wildlife grant, egress route north on Tomki Rd. Kristin Ohlsen - not able to attend tonight.

There is a county grant application to Fish and Wildlife to fix some of the streambed crossings. The MAC wants to support this. Kristin intends to present this at the August MAC meeting.

7. Standing and Ad Hoc Committee Reports:

A. Standing: Development Review.

Mr. Vandewater is the planner assigned to the Flow Kana enterprise. There will be a public hearing in front of the planning committee in August (probably Aug. 16?). Meeting will be focused on FK manufacturing and testing facilities.

Had been some talk about FK wanting a lodging or retail facility- that is not part of this review. Have 40 employees- they are looking to double this.

Grandville Pool- FK uses less water than Fetzer did. This was echoed by Mary Lynn Hunt. FK did extensive repairs on the old Fetzer water system to correct large leakages in the system.

Also FK will likely be repaving Bel Arbes Road.

8. Officers’ and Members’ Reports/Announcements.

Marybeth continues to follow up with the Transportation Dept. regarding crosswalks and signage to address poor visibility on our dark roads. She reports that our intersections were painted first thing in spring.

9. Next meeting: August 8, 2018.