

Tamalpais Design Review Board Meeting Minutes  
Regular Meeting: August 28th, 2019, 7:00 PM  
Meeting Location: TCSD Cabin - 60 Tennessee Valley Road, Mill Valley

**I) Call to Order: 7:01pm - Andrea Montalbano (Chair)**

Board Members Present: Andrea Montalbano (AM), Alan Jones (AJ), Doron Dreksler (DD), Logan Link (LL)

**II) Approval of minutes:** no minutes to approve at this time.

**III) Correspondence:**

Ongoing discussion about the proposed project on Alta Way:

- At the 8.21.19 meeting, a community member asked if the Alta Way letter written by Jeremy Tejirian to the TDRB could be shared.
- AM spoke to Jeremy about this; Jeremy agreed that this would be okay.
- AM has sent the letter to Friends of West Tam Valley, who in turn will disperse it to the neighborhood.
- Friends of West Tam Valley also sent a letter about Alta Way to AM; letter has been shared with board.
- Lee Budish (LB) invites Supervisor Kate Sears (KS) to attend the Alta Way TDRB meeting on 9.4.19, although KS has a conflict on this evening. *\* please note that meeting has since been rescheduled.*
- AM emailed Supervisor Sears and Supervisor Rodoni about this topic, citing that all access improvements for paper streets must come before design review.
- Jeremy's letter claims that design review is not involved; AM feels this may be a legal issue.
- AM hopes to have a response / further clarity before the next Alta Way meeting.
- DD notes that insufficient information was also provided for the proposed O'Donnell Financial project on Shoreline Hwy; this is beginning to feel like a trend.
- LB asked to be kept in the loop as discussions progress; AM agrees.

**IV) Items not on the agenda:** no additional non-agenda items.

**V) Agenda Items:**

*Introduction of topic: The Tamalpais Area Plan and its relationship to the County's General Plan and future vision of the Tam Junction and Manzanita Areas.*

*Background: The Tam Junction and Manzanita areas encompass most of the commercially zoned parcels in the Tamalpais area. These areas have been subject to historic flooding, are vulnerable to sea level rise and are within the Baylands Corridor. The Tamalpais Design Review Board has some very basic questions about the status of the County's regulations and attitudes*

*surrounding new development in these areas. The Board would like a review of present policies and future problems and possibilities for this area from the County point of view, so that we have a clear picture of how our recommendations, per the Tam Plan's own guidelines, will be received.*

*Here are some examples of specific questions the Board has:*

- 1) Development of new housing in this area is extremely vulnerable to dangerous flooding. Does the County have a policy regarding emergency vehicle access and its ability to reach proposed housing during times of flood?*
- 2) Is any consideration given to returning some area to floodplain and marshland? Is this coming down the line any time in the future?*
- 3) Does the County have any special requirements for new developments in these areas regarding permeability, plantings, break away walls, appropriate uses on the first floor, building out of the floodplain, etc.?*
- 4) We know that there are several state sponsored pro-housing bills in the works and we would like to know what the County's attitude will be toward development in these sensitive areas. Will the Board and the County have any input?*

Presentation by Kristin Drumm (KD), Senior Planner and Marin County Planning Representative:

- Please see PDF of presentation attached to these minutes.
- In summary, presentation first outlines the Marin County planning hierarchy and continues on to explain the boundaries, sections, and purpose/goals of the Baylands Corridor.
- KD notes that the County will look at including more land into the Baylands Corridor when reexamining the general plan.
- On the note of development in the Baylands Corridor, AM asks if a paved lot would be considered developed. KD replies that paved would be an "improvement" and the lot would be considered vacant.
- LB notes that a lot has changed since the Baylands Corridor was created in 2007 and asks if the situation is reassessed. Chris Choo (principal planner with Marin County Department of Public Works) replies that there are various Bay Area groups that reevaluate.
- Presentation shifts to cover Countywide Plan implementing programs.
- AM brings up that the board recently saw a project with a master plan from the 1960s, but there is no public record of this master plan. Even still, the board has been tasked with ruling on amendments to this master plan and unsure of how to proceed.
- KD replies that she does not know the history of this property, but some older properties are exempt.
- Presentation continues on to answer questions outlined in agenda.
- There are higher standards for development in the floodplains; projects are routed through two public works staffs.
- On the note of emergency vehicle access, KD acknowledges that there is no plan for what to do if/when roadways flood and this should be considered.

- On the note of returning areas to marshland, KD adds that the best scenario is to avoid development in these areas. When required, the goal is to mitigate.
- On the note of special requirements in floodplains, commercial developments do not have to elevate to FEMA standards; they instead must flood-proof the structure. Residential developments must elevate.
- AM asks if the extra height from required elevation is part of, or in addition to, the maximum height allowed by planning. A clear answer is not provided.
- AJ brings up that the County tells the TDRB to only base decisions on the Tam Plan, but the Tam Plan is dated in some areas; the board is being asked to look at projects that have challenges that the plan does not address. AJ questions what board should do in these situations.
- KS agrees that this should be addressed and recommends that the board has a meeting with Tom Lai (assistant director of community development) to discuss.

Presentation by Chris Choo (CC), principal planner with the water resource division of the Marin County Department of Public Works:

- Please see PDF of presentation attached to these minutes.
- in summary, CC discusses sea level rise planning and adaptation.
- CC notes that one of her main concerns is utilities and safety risks.
- The state has asked local jurisdiction to plan for 10ft of sea level rise. County is instead focusing on current and near-future risks, aiming to be strategic about what and where to address.
- There are limited places in Marin where nature-based projects will effectively address issues; this approach appears best suited for large County-owned parcels in Novato.
- On the note of adaptation, two of the main challenges are property ownership and the cost of obtaining easements.
- In the Tam Junction/Manzanita area, the County is looking at ways that Coyote Creek could be routed to empty into Bothin Marsh, potentially helping to reduce flooding. The County will embark on community discussions in early 2020.
- CC also shares that she is involved in a County project that aims to address both flood and fire concerns by looking at ways to maintain emergency routes.
- LB asks if there are priority areas for this project. Tam High School is a designated community refuge area for Tam Valley, but the route leading to this location is often flooded.
- CC is hoping to address drainage on Almonte and adds that locations are currently being identified. KD adds that a main goal of the project is identifying alternative routes.
- AJ asks if consideration has been given to requiring residents to raise their homes when renovating, with a County goal of letting Tam Valley return to marshland in 40 years. This would create a houseboat-like community with docks and communal parking.
- KS brings up that the Tam Valley area needs to start gathering funds for sea level rise projects. In Strawberry there is a program that funds the Y; perhaps something similar should be considered.

- AM points out that conditional use permits are keeping auto properties at Tam Junction, which is an inappropriate use for this sensitive area. Recommends that permits end when a property sells. KS agrees that this is worth looking into.
- LL expresses the challenge of reviewing projects in areas that are already experiencing significant flooding issues, as it does not feel responsible to approve new development without first addressing these concerns. The community needs to see that effort and progress are being made.

**VI) Public in attendance:** Supervisor Kate Sears, Maureen Parton, Sarah Estes-Smith, Lee Budish

**VII) Meeting adjourned:** 8:45pm