

Strawberry Design Review Board (SDRB)

Meeting Notes

Public Meeting – Monday, March 20, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Meeting location: Via Zoom.
Call to order: 7:03 p.m. by Julie Brown, Chair
Board members present: Julie Brown (JB), Matt Williams (MW), Penna Omega (PO) -via Zoom
Board members absent: Chad Sparks
Other attendees: Candice Bozzard (Secretary)

Review and approval of past minutes

Moved/Seconded by MW/PO to approve 02/06/23 minutes. Unanimously approved (3 yes, 0 no – 1 absent)

Minutes from 2/20/23 were tabled until the next meeting.

Correspondence and announcements: MW read into the record an email received on Feb. 28 from Bruce Corcoran (attached) urging the Board to endorse the petition to help preserve the Community Plan.

JB read into the record a March 3 letter from Douglas Wallace, Chair of the Tamalpais Design Review Board, to the Board of Supervisors (attached) outlining their opposition to the text amendments in the Countywide Plan that in their opinion weakened community plans.

Any Comments from the Public for Non-agenda Items: None

Agenda Item #1: Discussion of Countywide Plan Amendments, Form Based Codes, Impact on Community Plans, Petition to reverse CWP language on Community Plans.

PO stated she signed the petition as a public citizen since she took offense that local control had been dismissed so easily and that the Planning Commission had been disregarded.

It was a consensus of the board that the revised Countywide Plan did a disservice to the Community Plans and the citizens of the Strawberry area by removing the language that allowed the more specific plan to govern. We agreed for Julie to draft a letter from our Board to the Board of Supervisors expressing our concerns.

Moved/Seconded PO/MW to sign the petition to reverse the language in the Countywide Plan and draft our own letter from the SDRB to the Board of Supervisors.

Unanimously approved. (3 yes, 0 no – 1 absent)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

From: John Bruce Corcoran <brucecorcoran@msn.com >
Subject: Please Endorse the Petition to Save Community Plans
Date: February 28, 2023 at 11:26:35 AM PST
To: Julie Brown <redesignsf@icloud.com >

Dear Julie Brown, Strawberry Design Review Board Chair,

My wife Fran and I, who have lived in Strawberry for 45 years, ask the board to consider and vote at your next meeting on endorsing the petition to "Save Community Plans." The petition appears below and as an attachment.

This issue is of utmost importance to Fran because she served as a member of the Strawberry Community Plan Review Citizens' Advisory Committee that produced the Amendments to the Strawberry Community Plan (SCP) that were adopted by the Marin County Board of Supervisors in 1982. That year-long process was open, comprehensive, and collaborative. Until January 24, 2023, the SCP governed development in Strawberry because it was more detailed than the Countywide Plan, but new ordinances now state that the Countywide plan governs even though it is less detailed. This change was an overreach by County staff and officials that was unnecessary. Fran wants to preserve the work of the Advisory Committee to the greatest extent possible.

I am a member of the Strawberry Community Association, which advocates for thoughtful and prudent development throughout Strawberry. I also want to preserve the governance of the Strawberry Community Plan to the greatest extent possible.

We strongly urge the Board to vote to endorse the Petition.

Very truly yours,
Bruce and Fran Corcoran
184 Great Circle Drive

Re: Please Endorse the Petition to Save Community Plans

Matt Williams <mat.sdrb@gmail.com>
To: Matt Williams <mat.sdrb@gmail.com>

SPREAD THE NEWS...

Save Community Plans

ACTION NEEDED - Please follow the below recommended advocacy actions:

1. Click [HERE](#) to sign the Online Petition entitled; "**Reverse the Needless Destruction of Community Plans in Marin County**".

If you need help signing the [Change.org](#) petition or leaving a public comment, please do the following:

Click [HERE](#) for directions on how to sign the petition.

Click [HERE](#) for directions on how to post a comment.

**Please note that you don't need to pay a fee (as [Change.org](#) suggests) unless you want to. You should receive an e-mail message from [Change.org](#) thanking you for signing as confirmation that your signature has been received

2. Send emails to the Marin County Supervisors expressing your support of the Petition:

- smoultonpeters@marincounty.org
- msackett@marincounty.org
- droni@marincounty.org
- krice@marincounty.org
- elucan@marincounty.org
- bos@marincounty.org

3. Spread the news:

Please ask all your contacts to sign the petition and to send related emails to the Supervisors too. You can forward this email to your email list and you can use the below link to share the petition on all social media channels:

<https://www.change.org/SaveCommunityPlans>

You can also share the below link to the Marin Post article titled; "**Please Sign the Petition to Save Community Plans**", which has more detailed information about this issue:

<https://marinpost.org/blog/2023/1/31/please-sign-the-petition-to-save-community-plans>

On January 24th, the Marin County Board of Supervisors adopted the 2023-2031 Marin County **Housing Element Update** and various Countywide Plan amendments related to the housing plan.

***A "Housing Element" is part of a General Plan adopted by a city, town or county that includes the goals, policies and programs that direct decision-making around housing.*

Among other consequences, these amendments needlessly eviscerate community plans by rendering them unenforceable, leaving areas open to development with minimal controls.

Most importantly, there is no requirement by the State that community plans be weakened in order to achieve a compliant Housing Element, according to legal counsel.

Community and environmental organizations, which are located within the jurisdictions of the 24 Marin County Community Plans, are coordinating an effort to maintain the integrity of Community Plans. There is still time for the Supervisors to reverse their mistake.

Part of this endeavor involves gathering signatures on the petition entitled, "Reverse the Needless Destruction of Community Plans in Marin County". The list of signatures is growing rapidly.

Community plans are vital to guide the Marin County Planning Department because each community has different physical aspects, goals, and desires. These plans were meticulously studied and drafted by local residents over many years. They are extremely valued documents that state community goals, objectives, policies and implementation programs relative to the current and foreseeable future conservation and development issues facing each community.

If you care about preserving the environment, habitat, and wildlife; protecting public health & safety; maintaining views; controlling traffic congestion; carefully planning for development; keeping our small-town/ semi-rural/ rural neighborhood character; and safeguarding a host of other treasured aspects of living in Marin, then you will also care about saving Community Plans.

For example, the Strawberry Community Plan is a thoughtful and very detailed guide for the creation and placement of multi-family housing, single-family housing, and affordable housing. It also specifies how open space should be preserved, among other beneficial guidelines. If the Countywide Plan amendments prevail, then this careful, location specific planning would be replaced with the very general, unspecific County zoning.

Another example: The Tamalpais Area Community Plan (TACP) governs Tam Valley, Almonte, Homestead, and Muir Woods Park. Among other directives, the plan spells out specific dimension limitations for most of the commercial/mixed-use sites in Tam Valley and Almonte. Accordingly, the commercial/mixed-use properties on the East Side of Shoreline are limited to 15 feet high, in order to preserve treasured Bothin Marsh's habitat and wildlife as well as maintain scenic views of the marsh and the bay throughout the Community. The TACP is the only place this height limit is found.

This situation repeats itself in the context of all of the community plans. They are the sole planning documents for many critical properties.

As referenced above, land use attorney Riley Hurd determined that there is no requirement by the State of California to downgrade community plans. In a letter addressed to the Board of Supervisors dated January 23, 2023, Attorney Hurd wrote about the amendments or "edit" to the Marin Countywide Plan pertaining to Community Plans:

*"...The real question is: **why is this edit proposed at all?** We already know that state law supersedes local regulations.*

It's also a fact that housing projects may avail themselves of waivers from any local standard that precludes the project from reaching its maximum density.

So, what is the point here other than to try and eliminate Community Plans in a roundabout way?

Please reject these amendments, as the stated goal of allowing housing is already covered by state law."

The best course of action for the Supervisors to take is to immediately reverse the Countywide Plan text amendments and retain the preferred longstanding language regarding community plans in order to preserve the essential integrity of these vital plans.

If this issue resonates with you, then please follow the below **"TAKE ACTION"** recommendations.

TAKE ACTION!

1. Please click [HERE](#) to sign the Online Petition entitled; "Reverse the Needless Destruction of Community Plans in Marin County".

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Thank you in advance for your advocacy. **Together we can make a difference!**

March 3, 2023

Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear President Moulton-Peters and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

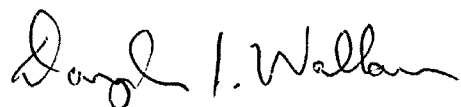
The Tam Design Review Board views the Tam Area Community Plan as representing the vision and will of the residents in our area. In that capacity we have examined the recent text amendments made to the Countywide Plan and have concerns that the changes may have significantly weakened community plans, and thus undermined the land use policies that have been embraced through extensive public review.

We question whether these changes are required for the Housing Element to comply with state law. These amendments were incorporated by staff despite repeated objections from the Planning Commission and vigorous public comment. Some of the amendments seem to codify staff policy preferences rather than state requirements, possibly leading to unnecessary erosion of local protections. Further, it appears that at least some Supervisors were not fully informed of all the Countywide Plan changes or their consequences.

The TDRB strongly believes that the specific provisions of the Tam Plan have protected sensitive areas from haphazard development and engendered meaningful community engagement. We hope you will continue to see the value of community plans as decades-long efforts of dedicated citizens to guide development that continue to serve the entire community.

We appreciate the recent offer to meet and discuss these concerns, and hope to arrive at an outcome that can be supported by the community at large.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas I. Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Douglas I. Wallace
Chair, Tam Design Review Board