



**SANTA VENETIA COMMUNITY PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Summary Minutes**

Tuesday, March 17, 2015
7:00-9:00 pm
Marin County Civic Center, Room 315
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Members Present

Bonnie Monte
Jane Brand
Russ Greenfield
Mary Hanley
Roger Heller
Gary Robards

Staff

Christine Gimmler, Senior Planner

1. Summary Minutes

The Advisory Committee accepted the summary minutes from February 10, 2015.

2. Update on Traffic Committee

Committee member Gary Robards provided an update on the Santa Venetia Traffic Committee meeting held Monday, March 9th. The Traffic Committee is a voluntary effort by the San Rafael School District, Brandeis Hillel School, Marin School, City of San Rafael, and Marin County Department of Public Works to work together cooperatively to address traffic congestion on North San Pedro Road, particularly during school “drop off” and “pick up” times. In 2013, representatives of Venetia Valley School and the Brandeis School agreed to shift their school’s start times by five minutes each to reduce conflicts between arriving vehicles. Committee members agreed that these modifications have helped to reduce congestion and discussed further staggering start times. However, it was noted that there may be opposition to additional schedule modifications as it can impact the work and commute schedules of family members who drive their children to school. The traffic committee also discussed progress made to date to initiate a Safe Routes to School program for Venetia Valley School, including establishment of a student drop off area on the Civic Center campus in the “jury” parking lot. Staff from the County Department of Public Works, the Safe Routes to School program, and Venetia Valley school representatives had conducted a “walking audit” to consider the feasibility of formalizing the jury lot as a drop off area and providing a safe path of travel for students between the lot and the school via Madison Avenue. Additional research and analysis will be needed before the feasibility and costs of this type of project could be determined. It was agreed that the traffic committee would send a letter to Supervisory Damon Connolly requesting that County staff be assigned to pursue this project in coordination with Safe Routes to School. Gary indicated that he would continue to keep the Advisory Committee informed of progress made by traffic

committee. Following Gary's update, Committee members briefly discussed the idea of the drop off area. It was noted that some residents may have concerns about increased noise, activity, and litter that could result if more students are walking through neighborhood streets to access the school. There was also discussion of who was responsible for maintaining the various associated road segments, which is something that would need to be determined as part of the process if this project is pursued.

Other Items

Before moving on to other scheduled agenda items, the Committee discussed a report recently completed by the Gallinas Watershed Council regarding boat docks in Santa Venetia. The report provides some background information regarding boat docks in the community and provides an overview of the permitting process required to repair or replace an existing dock. As demonstrated in the report, dock permitting can be an expensive, time consuming, and confusing process that involves multiple federal, state and local agencies, including the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in addition to the County Planning and Building Departments. The report also addresses the uncertainty of property boundaries and ownership along Gallinas Creek. The Committee discussed the purpose of the report and whether the document should be included in the Santa Venetia Community Plan. Staff noted that the community plan could describe the issue briefly and provide resources for residents interested in obtaining more detailed information.

3. Continued Discussion of Community Plan Issues

Further comments on Oxford Valley and Boyd Ranch

At the February meeting, Committee members had discussed material distributed by staff related to two of the "key sites" identified in the draft community plan, "Oxford Valley" and the "Boyd Ranch." The material included a written summary describing development considerations and key Countywide Plan policies applicable to each site. Development constraints were also presented graphically on maps of each property. If committee members have any further comments or thoughts on these properties, they should be forwarded to staff via email or phone.

Development considerations for MacPhail's and Grange properties

Staff presented similar material for two additional sites of interest to the community, the MacPhail's school site and the Grange property. Due to time constraints, more limited information was prepared. As shown on the maps, development of the MacPhail's property is constrained by several factors, including proximity to wetland and marsh areas and potential sensitive species. In addition, portions of the property are in a Special Flood Hazard area. Accordingly, Countywide Plan policies regarding biological resource protection, wetland preservation, and environmental hazards would apply. As discussed previously, the MacPhail site is owned by San Rafael City Schools, which is in the process of preparing a facilities master plan that may address future use of the property. The primary constraints for the Grange property mapped to date relate to the steep topography of the site. As shown on the map, a majority of the property is characterized by extremely steep slopes exceeding 40 percent which can impact development potential.

Commercial use preferences and signage

At their previous meeting, committee members reviewed the type of retail and service uses allowed in the C-1 (Retail Business District) zoning that governs most of the commercial property in Santa Venetia. In general, committee members expressed a preference for independent, local-serving businesses over chain stores. However, there was also a suggestion that the existing Subway sandwich shop and 7-11 are convenient and economical places to get a bite to eat in the neighborhood and may be frequently patronized by some residents. In past surveys and community meetings, residents have generally indicated that they value Santa Venetia's existing commercial businesses. Committee members should continue to consider whether there are types of commercial uses they would like to specifically encourage in the neighborhood.

Recommendations for Buck's Launching property

Due to time constraints, discussion of the Buck's Launching property will be continued at the next advisory committee meeting.

4. Next meeting date

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held April 14th.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.