



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

Tuesday, April 8, 2014
7:00-9:00 pm
Marin County Civic Center, Room 315
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Members Present

Giselle Block
Jane Brand
Russ Greenfield
Mary Hanley
Roger Heller
Gary Robards
Oscar Segura

Staff

Christine Gimmler, Senior Planner

1. Summary Minutes

The Advisory Committee accepted the summary minutes from March 11, 2014, with suggested modifications to correct a misspelling and include a recommendation that the community plan explain how parkland dedication fees are allocated within the County.

2. Revised Draft Community Plan Schedule

Staff distributed and reviewed an updated timeline for the community plan process, which anticipates two community-wide meetings in early June and early October, release of a draft community plan in early September, and Planning Commission and Board hearings in November and December. Staff noted that the draft schedule is ambitious and will ultimately depend on the number of public hearings needed. The availability of time on future Planning Commission and Board agendas will also be a factor. However, staff's goal is approval of the Santa Venetia Community Plan by the end of 2014.

3. Issues for Discussion

Raising Homes for FEMA Compliance

Staff distributed and reviewed a handout outlining the implications of zoning requirements for property owners who wish to raise their homes to comply with FEMA standards. As described in the material, the zoning requirements and application process for property owners will vary depending on the type of zoning district in which they are located (conventional versus planned district), the height of the "understory" area created as a result of raising the home (less than 7 feet or more than 7 feet), and whether the house is being raised the minimum amount necessary to comply with FEMA, or more than the minimum.

Depending on the combination of these factors, an applicant may or may not need to go through a Variance or Design Review application process. Staff outlined the various scenarios as shown in the tables. In summary, due to the height of existing grade in Santa Venetia relative to FEMA standards, raising homes in this area is not expected to create large (>7 foot high) understory areas likely to result in the need for Variance approval. In addition, the vast majority of flood zone properties are governed by conventional R-1:B-1 zoning, which does not require Design Review. Therefore, any community plan guidelines related to the raising of homes would rarely, if ever, be applicable. Following a discussion, the committee concurred with this conclusion.

Community Character

Jane Brand discussed her efforts with Bonnie Monte to assist staff in developing a description of Santa Venetia's "community character" for use in the community plan. She distributed a first draft which highlights community characteristics valued by residents and describes the character of the various "sub-neighborhoods" within Santa Venetia. Jane indicated that she has posted on Next Door Santa Venetia for additional feedback from the community and responses about what makes the community unique will be incorporated into the draft. She noted that a neighbor with connections to the Marin County Library had provided interesting material related to the history of Santa Venetia which will be useful to supplement the community plan "historic timeline." Committee members with thoughts or suggestions are encouraged to contact Jane or Bonnie. This issue may also be appropriate for further discussion at the June community meeting.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

Committee members Russ Greenfield, Gary Robards, and Roger Heller indicated that they had met to discuss the issue of potential bicycle and pedestrian improvements and had begun preparing a map showing existing and potential bicycle and pedestrian routes. After discussion, the committee agreed that it would be helpful to establish a method for prioritizing improvements. For example, priority areas could include heavily used locations near schools, bus stops, commercial areas, etc. Although poorly maintained sidewalks or gaps in sidewalk continuity are of concern in some areas, it was noted that some residents prefer the more rural character or streets without sidewalks. Gary and Russ agreed to continue refining the map, which could then be brought to the community open house for additional input.

Natural Resources (note: this issue was added to the agenda and discussed briefly at the end of the meeting due to time constraints)

Committee member Gisele Block noted that she had begun an outline of significant natural resources in the community and that she intends to briefly describe and map them and identify potential threats. Staff and the committee agreed that this would be appropriate for inclusion in the community plan and could be presented at the community workshop for additional input.

4. Community Workshop #2

Timing and Location

Staff discussed plans for the second Community Workshop, tentatively scheduled for June 9, 2014. Committee members had no objections to that date and also supported the proposed timeframe of 7:00 to 9:00 pm. The committee also felt that the Jewish Community Center would be a convenient location for many community members.

Format

Regarding the organization of the community meeting, staff is considering using an “open house” format. Following a brief welcome and introductory presentation explaining the format, community members could circulate to various “topic tables.” This would enable participants to focus on the issues of particular interest to them. Committee members were supportive of the format and indicated a willingness to help staff the various tables.

Outreach

Staff and committee members discussed outreach methods for the community meeting. The Committee indicated a strong preference for “postcard” mailers (similar to that used for the first community event last year) over a more traditional notice. They agreed that the postcard format is more visually appealing and stands out from the rest of the mail, and is therefore more likely to be noticed. Staff noted that information for Spanish-speakers will be added to the notice this time. Other avenues for outreach discussed by the committee included:

- The SVNA newsletter and mailing list
- Use of “sandwich boards” on North San Pedro and possibly at the JCC
- Posting of flyers at the Santa Venetia Market, the JCC, Santa Margarita Island and possibly other public parks or walking trails
- Email lists including the Santa Venetia Yahoo group, Next Door Santa Venetia, Big Tent, and the Venetia Valley School PTA email lists.

In addition, Gary Robards offered to get in touch with the Venetia Valley School Principal Juan Rodriguez to see if information about the meeting could be provided through Venetia Valley School.

5. Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be held Tuesday, April 29, 2014. Staff requested that Committee members working on various issues have a draft prepared by the next meeting date.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.