



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

Tuesday, June 23, 2015
7:00-9:00 pm
Marin County Civic Center, Room 315
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Members Present

Bonnie Monte
Giselle Block
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 May 12, 2015, with a minor revision to clarify that the first bullet point for the Buck's Launching property relates to the Bay Area Water Trail (rather than the Bay Trail). Staff also provided an update regarding the legal status of the MacPhail's easements discussed on May 12th. According to County Counsel staff, it is likely that the "marsh easement" and "recreational field easement" identified in the Grant Deed were effectively extinguished when the property was transferred back to the San Rafael School District (since the easements were created and held by the District in the first place).

2. Continued Discussion of Community Plan Issues

Committee members continued discussion of various potential community plan issues, beginning with traffic. It was suggested that the community plan should identify what traffic "level of service" (LOS) community members would like to maintain or achieve in Santa Venetia. Staff noted that, as described in the draft community plan, the Countywide Plan establishes a LOS standard of "D" or better for all arterial and collector roads throughout the County (Note: LOS "D" indicates that drivers may experience what is deemed as a "tolerable delay" of 25 to 40 seconds at signalized intersections, and 35 to 55 seconds at stop sign controlled intersections). Since the Board of Supervisors has determined that this is an appropriate countywide standard, it is unlikely that they would support changing it from community to community. However, this type of proposal could potentially be presented as an option for the Planning Commission and Board to consider, or alternatively, it could be expressed as a community preference, even though it does not alter the countywide standard.

The Committee also continued discussion of the following “key sites” within Santa Venetia.

Boyd Ranch – At previous meetings, there was discussion of whether the plan should suggest acquiring an easement through the Boyd Ranch property to provide access to China Camp. Rather than target a specific property, staff recommended reliance on the concept previously suggested for consideration in future park planning efforts for the Buck’s Launching site, which encourages incorporating trail connections to China Camp “where feasible”, without targeting a particular route or property.

MacPhail’s site – the MacPhail’s property is owned by the San Rafael School District, but is currently vacant. The School District is in the process of completing a master planning process for its facilities throughout the County, but the status of the MacPhail’s site is not clear. Committee members indicated that there is a strong preference among community members to maintain community access to recreation fields on the site. They recommended that this concept also be mentioned in the Parks Chapter, since the fields are a recreational asset for the community. If not put back into use by the District, committee members expressed hopes that the site could be used for some sort of environmentally and educationally-oriented non-profit organization or institution to take advantage of the site’s proximity to the bay, marshlands, and other nearby natural resources. It was also suggested that a mix of uses (such as educational and residential) would be preferred over solely residential use.

The Committee agreed that they would like to get a better understanding of the potential “maximum density” that could be permitted on the property in order to determine if the existing zoning is appropriate or whether rezoning to a lower density should be considered or recommended. Recommendations may also be appropriate regarding where on the property any development should be sited. Staff agreed to gather additional information on this site for consideration at the next committee meeting, including clarifying whether any portion of the site falls within the jurisdiction of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). In response to a question regarding the stability of the site for any future development, staff indicated that geotechnical studies and soils reports would be required that demonstrate the site is suitable for construction prior to approval of any new development.

Oxford Valley – This property was discussed at some length at a previous meeting. In addition to the concerns already noted, the committee agreed that grading for roads on steep slopes should be avoided to reduce potential impacts on vegetation and drainage.

Azari property - The Azari property is a privately owned, commercially-zoned site located adjacent to the 7-11 property on Oxford Drive. The owner has indicated an interest in redeveloping the parcel, currently used for auto repair, with live-work residential units. The major concern shared by committee members is that development on the site be served by adequate on-site parking. It was also suggested that any development in this area should carefully consider the safety of access, since the existing configuration of the intersection of Oxford and North San Pedro Road is considered hazardous by those who live in the area. It was also noted that access to the flood zone interceptor located behind the property should be maintained.

Marin JCC – The Marin JCC property has been discussed at several previous meetings. Committee members consider the facility to be an attractive, well-maintained community asset. However, traffic in the vicinity is a very real problem so this issue would be the community's primary concern related to any future development on the site. It was suggested that creative solutions to reduce traffic impacts would be needed as part of expansion or intensification of this use. Other committee recommendations included avoiding development on existing hillside open space areas on the property and ensuring that any outdoor lighting does not impact nearby neighbors. The committee once again confirmed that they would like to better understand the JCC's future plans for the property but do not support rezoning of the site to a Planned Zoning District absent specific information about the extent and type of uses that may be proposed in the future.

Commercial Uses - In past meetings, committee members noted a general community preference for independent, local-serving businesses over chain operations. During further discussion of general commercial uses in Santa Venetia, the committee expressed interest in encouraging more food and beverage-related businesses, such as coffee shops or cafes. It was mentioned that a combined bike store and coffee bar called Bike-N-Bean had previously been located in Santa Venetia but subsequently moved to Larkspur. This is an example of the type of use that the committee thought residents would support.

Open Space Rezoning – It was noted that a number of open space areas exist in Santa Venetia which are still governed by the residential zoning district put in place before they were acquired by the Open Space District. This issue had also been raised during the Planning Commission hearing on the plan in late 2014. Staff agreed that the plan should include a policy to rezone publicly owned open space areas to OA (Open Area).

3. Next meeting date

The next Advisory Committee meeting would normally be held Tuesday July 14th. However, to allow enough time for staff to prepare for the next meeting and to accommodate July vacation schedules, it was agreed that the next meeting would be postponed until the second Tuesday in August (August 11th).

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.