



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

Tuesday, April 29, 2014
7:00-9:00 pm
Marin County Civic Center, Room 315
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Members Present

Jane Brand
Russ Greenfield
Bonnie Monte
Gary Robards
Oscar Segura

Staff

Christine Gimmler, Senior Planner
Lauren Armstrong, Planner

1. Summary Minutes

The Advisory Committee accepted the summary minutes from April 8, 2014.

2. Issues for Discussion

Community Character

Bonnie Monte shared a second draft of the description of Santa Venetia's "community character", which highlights Santa Venetia's rural character, diversity of residents, and abundance of natural resources. Jane Brand posted the draft on Next Door to get feedback from other community members. One resident of 35 years, whose husband has been a resident for 50 years, commented that she would like to see more beautification of yards and sidewalks in the community. The sub-neighborhoods of Santa Venetia each have a different character, and Gary Robards created a map of the sub-neighborhoods. Committee members were requested to submit written descriptions of their neighborhoods to include in the "community character" section of the Community Plan. This issue will be discussed at the June community meeting, possibly accompanied by maps of the sub-neighborhoods. The historic timeline would also be a useful graphic to have at the community meeting.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

Committee members reviewed a draft map of bicycle and pedestrian improvements prepared by staff based on the map provided by Gary Robards, Russ Greenfield, and Roger Heller. The map includes information from the Marin County Bicycle Plan, the Bay Trail and direct observation. Staff will continue to work with Gary to refine the map, and a larger version will be made available at the community workshop so that community members have the opportunity to provide input about potential bike and pedestrian routes.

A concern was raised about publicizing bike routes through Santa Venetia's neighborhoods. The community plan map can memorialize the community's preferred locations for bike and pedestrian routes, with the caveat that a number of legal, financial and other feasibility factors would need to be considered before the route becomes "official" with infrastructure or signage.

The committee also discussed Safe Routes to School, which is a program for communities to map and prioritize bike and pedestrian access to schools. This process gives the Department of Public Works (DPW) the assurance of community support for the routes, and is the primary avenue for making bike and pedestrian improvements. Gary has contacted the Santa Venetia Safe Routes to School committee but does not believe they are currently active. A number of alleys and other access routes in the vicinity of Venetia Valley School are publically owned and could provide access to students and neighborhood residents.

Under state law, sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of adjoining property owners, but the Department of Public Works will be presenting the Board of Supervisors with options for addressing sidewalk repairs throughout the County in the near future. Sidewalks are an important part of community character, but the community plan has a limited role. The plan can provide general information about sidewalk maintenance and express support for well-maintained sidewalks, but should avoid identifying specific sidewalks in need of repair, since adjoining property owners are liable for those repairs.

Key Development Sites

Staff presented information on the development potential for the Oxford Valley and MacPhail's school sites. The Community Plan can't prevent development from occurring, but it can make recommendations – for example, to consider rezoning the Oxford Valley property to Residential Single Family Planned District (RSP) to allow application of planned district development standards such as clustering of structures, preservation of natural resources, and trail access. The MacPhail's school site has Public Facility and Low Density Residential zoning as well as potential wetland and stream conservation areas restricting the density of development. Potential recommendations could include consideration of a community meeting space or recreational fields, use of employee/student shuttles, and protection of environmental qualities of the site.

Natural Resources

Committee member Gisele Block plans to share an outline of significant natural resources in the community, with maps generally identifying the resource areas and 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.

3. Community Workshop #2

The second Community Workshop is scheduled for June 9, 2014 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Jewish Community Center at 200 N. San Pedro Rd. Postcards will be mailed out to the community in the first week of May. Gary Robards offered to transport the flyers from Civic Center to Venetia Valley School to be distributed through the students' weekly information packets. Jane Brand offered to post information about the open house to Next Door and Big Tent. Committee members indicated a willingness to help staff the various tables at the community open house.

4. Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be held Tuesday, June 3, 2014. Following the Community Open House on June 9, the next advisory committee meeting will be July 8th. The committee will recess in August while staff continues work on the Draft Community Plan.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.