



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

Tuesday, August 13, 2013
7:00-9:00 pm
Marin County Civic Center, Room 315
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Members Present

Jane Brand
Giselle Block
Mary Hanley
Roger Heller
Tami Hull
Bonnie Monte
Gary Robards

Staff

Christine Gimmler, Senior Planner
Suzanne Thorsen, Planner

1. Summary Minutes

The Advisory Committee accepted the summary minutes from June 6, 2013.

2. Community Plan Goals

The Advisory Committee discussed the draft “community plan goals” document prepared by staff which compiled the goals selected by the committee at the June 6th meeting. Committee member questioned how “sensitive biological resources” would be defined. Since the location and presence of sensitive resources can change over time, staff noted the challenges of including a comprehensive list or mapping of biological resources in the community plan. However, at a minimum, the plan could provide a general description of the type of resources and habitat areas that exist in the area and note those that are most valued by the community. The committee also discussed whether the proposed goal related to climate change should be combined with “safety from flooding” or considered in conjunction with every goal given that climate change will likely result in widespread impacts. Staff agreed to reconsider how the goals could be modified to address this concept. Finally, in response to questions related to the goal of “preserving vistas,” staff noted that a useful role of the community plan would be to identify which views and vistas are important to the community and should be protected.

3. Facilitation Training

Staff informed the committee that arrangements had been made to hire a facilitator to train advisory committee members on facilitation skills and help with outreach in general. The training session will occur on Monday evening, August 26th, and will cover basic facilitation skills (for example, how to promote full participations, maintain a civil tone, include people with different communication styles, etc.) as well as training structured around the

community meeting agenda so that facilitators are comfortable with the meeting format and their roles. Committee members suggested that it would be helpful if the trainer could provide a list of “coaching tips” for reference during the meeting should a difficult situation arise. Staff noted that the facilitation trainer would be present at the meeting to support the work of the facilitators if needed.

4. Community Meeting #1

Staff sought input from the committee regarding the draft agenda for the first community plan workshop to be held August 29th. In general, the committee expressed a preference for a brief informal presentation (rather than a powerpoint presentation). The committee also supported a suggestion that Supervisor Susan Adams be invited to do a brief “welcome” at the start of the meeting. Several members stressed that the presentation should include an explanation of what a community plan can and cannot do to help community members understand that there are problems which the community plan won’t solve. The committee also suggested that copies of the Executive Summary of the 2011 Santa Venetia Community Survey be made available at each table.

Regarding the format of the group discussions, the committee expressed a preference for open discussions rather than assigning each table a specific topic of discussion. Staff offered to provide “conversation starter” questions to each facilitator to help move the conversation to various subjects if needed. Staff confirmed that there will be a “timekeeper” to help facilitators keep track of how much discussion time remained. There was a strong preference for including a “group sharing/report back” item on the agenda so that everyone would have a sense of what was discussed at other tables.

The committee discussed at length various options to spread the word about the community meeting. Members offered to do email outreach to groups in the community they are connected with including various homeowner’s associations, school-related groups, the local watershed group, neighborhood watch lists, a garden exchange group, and of course, the SVNA “e-group”. Staff offered to look into the availability of an online “RSVP” tool that might help staff get a sense of how many participants to expect at the meeting. The committee also expressed interest in accommodating Spanish-language speakers at the meeting. It was suggested that the SVNA member who volunteers to translate various newsletter articles might be able to attend the meeting in case there is a need for translation. In general, there was strong support for more and better outreach to the Spanish speaking residents of Santa Venetia for future community meetings. Finally, various committee members offered to bring refreshments such as beverages and cookies to the meeting.

5. Community Plan Context/Background

This item was not discussed.

6. Next Steps

The committee agreed to move the next advisory meeting from Tuesday, September 3rd to Tuesday September 10th to provide staff with more time to prepare and compile results from the August 29th community meeting.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.