

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Round Valley Area Municipal Advisory Council (RVAMAC)

Held Wednesday February 5, 2020

at the Library Commons, 23925 Howard Street, Covelo, CA

The meeting was called to order by presiding officer Jessica Stull-Otto at 6 p.m.

1. The meeting was attended by the following persons:

Council members

Lew Chichester, Charles Sargenti, Dane Downing, Kathy Britton, Jessica Stull-Otto, James Russ, Laura Betts, Kat Willits

Officials

John Haschak, 5th District Supervisor

General Public

John Marshall, Dee Mullen, Imil Ferrara, Mary Jane Cummings, Pat Sobrero, Susan O'Brien, Ross O'Brien, Carol Borden, James Asst, George Helmholtz, Louisa Bolton-Ast, Robert Cunnan, Colin Gillespie, Gail Cook, Kyra Rice

2. Approval of minutes from previous meetings

The minutes from October were reapproved with the addition of last names where absent and inclusion of a note stating the Presiding Officer is responsible for the agenda. The minutes for January were approved without discussion.

3. Forest Reciprocity Group presentation (sponsored by Dane Downing)

The Forest Reciprocity Group gave a slide presentation on forest fuel reduction by thinning small diameter trees which can then be used for various economic purposes including pole framing for housing. After the presentation Dane stated that our local forests have an abundance of such trees and that state grants are available covering 80% of the cost of thinning. It was further noted that there is a developing market for the lumber so harvested and thus landowners potentially could recoup 100% of costs expended on fuel reduction.

4. Community Foundation presentation by John Marshall

John brought to the attention of the group the availability of grants from the Community Foundation for a variety of local projects, including a Guardian Angel program which provides one time grants for emergency situations to either individuals or groups.

Supervisor Haschak discussed Measure D and E appearing on the March ballot and urged a YES vote on both measures. Measure E is an advisory measure calling for the allocation of funds collected under Measure D (if passed) to be 75% to local fire agencies and 25% to be spent on the recommendations of the fire chiefs of said agencies.

6, Jesse Alvarado discussed the Hometown Makeover contest sponsored by HGTV and asked that the Council consider being the liaison with the county if Covelo wins. Jesse also requested permission to list the Council as being in support of the application for the contest. A motion was made to grant such permission which passed by consensus.

7. Jessica Stull-Otto advised the meeting of notification by the Mendocino Council of Government regarding the trail project (also known as the Bike Path) in Covelo. The project is slated to begin construction sometime between late summer of 2020 and late spring of 2021.

8. Tri-County Bank possible departure from Covelo

Lew Chichester informed the meeting that the bank “really wants to leave” and the prospect is not merely an unsubstantiated rumor as was thought by some initially. According to Lew the present owner has to sell due to litigation and the prospective buyers contacted the bank demanding they quit the premises. The Council approved the formation of an Ad Hoc committee consisting of Lew, Jessica Stull-Otto, and Mary Jane Cummings for the purpose of drafting and sending letters to the county Planning Commission and the appropriate state agency in opposition to the bank’s departure (as this would leave Round Valley without a local bank). Pat Sobrero mentioned that complaints should be addressed to the state Department of Business Oversight.

9. Working group reports

Community Outreach: John Marshall reported that, due to Mary Lou being out of country the post card has been on hold, but that any cost overruns would be covered by a donation from M&M Feed and Supply.

Fire/Disaster Preparedness: Lew Chichester reported on the progress of the group and noted that a draft of a flyer to be distributed to area residents will be presented at the next meeting by Pat Sobrero.

Economic Development: Dane Downing reported on the first meeting of the group on February 1 attended by Dane, Emil Ferrara, and Dee Mullen. A summary reported by Dane is appended. Supervisor Haschak mentioned that the broadband project in the development planning stage may also be pertinent to the local economy. Haschak also noted that the next fiscal year budget process of the Board of Supervisors will be starting at the March 10 Board meeting.

10. Procedural matters

a. Council member email addresses through the Council website URL

Council members were advised that email addresses were available through the Council website mac.roundvalley.org for Council business. Members are requested to provide a desired prefix so the addresses may be created for each member, as in the form e.g.

“councilmembername@mac.roundvalley.org.”

Due to lack of time the other items b. – f. were tabled until the next meeting on March 4.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:05 PM.

APPENDIX

Round Valley Area Municipal Advisory Council Economic Development Committee 2-1-20

Bank Closure

Discussed various scenarios though concluded that writing a letter is the best strategy.

Census Count

Agreed that the more Round Valley residents are accurately counted, the more funding can be made available to Round Valley.

Questioned on how facilitate inclusion of the Latino community – churches/school functions

Questioned how to reach those who do not want to be counted.

Town's Parcel Map

Discussed developing a map of town identifying commercial parcels, parcels with viable buildings for businesses, and parcels with buildings that were removed.

Discussed that having such a map can simplify the identification of areas that need support, areas that need to be developed, and can help with a comprehensive business development plan for town.

Cannabis Economy

Identified that this product is currently the main economic driver of the valley. Previous primary economic drivers included timber, fishing, sheep, and hops; some of which are still active though not as primary as they once were.

The developing dispensary allows legal retail sales.

Forest Reciprocity Group (FRG)

Discussed FRG's model of wildfire fuels reduction material being used for affordable housing.

More information will be made available during their presentation at the Feb MAC meeting

Recreation/Forestry

Discussed the Wildland Conservancy's (WC) purchase of Whitter Ranch and their intention to open it to public use and recreation.

Possible employment opportunities were identified: Land managers, Administrative personnel, Trail maintenance crews, Forestry crews, Camp hosts/managers.

Phone conversation identified WC personnel are often recruited from WC scholarship recipients.

Inquiries of how scholarship can be given to Round Valley were made.

Discussed inviting WC to a future MAC meeting for a presentation of their vision and how the scholarship program works.

Micro Grid Power Generation

Discussed PG&E's identifying vulnerable locations in its grid and their consideration of power generation stations for such locations. Generators would likely be diesel powered. Humboldt County has been determined to be the focus. Round Valley would appear to be likely candidate as well.

Shipping container-sized, self-contained, solar power stations were discussed. Pricing for a household sized unit costs around \$20K and the larger commercial sized units cost around \$100K

Discussed biomass fueled electric power generators which provide Biochar.