

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Round Area Valley Municipal Advisory Council (RVAMAC)

Held Wednesday, August 5, 2020

Online by Zoom at URL

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81233910849>

The meeting was called to order by Presiding Officer Jessica Stull-Otto at 6:19 p.m.

1. The meeting was attended by the following persons:

Council members

Dane Downing, Kathy Britton, Jessica Stull-Otto, Laura Betts, Lew Chichester, Charles Sargenti

Officials

John Haschak, 3rd District Supervisor, Matt Kendall, Mendocino County Sheriff, Nephele Barrett, MCOG, Loretta Ellard, MCOG

General Public

Pat Sobrero, Jessi Alvarado, Kay Richards, Mary Lou Mileck, Jerry Ward (Solid Waste of Willits)

2. Minutes of the July 1st meeting were approved by consensus.

3. Supervisor update

John Haschak provided updates on several topics: Covid-19, discussion with Jerry Ward of Solid Waste of Willits and Howard DeSchiel of the county Department of Transportation regarding lack of capacity at the transfer station, the new Ad Hoc committee of the Board of Supervisors consisting of John and Supervisor Williams focusing on correcting cannabis permitting problems, and ongoing discussion with Professor Keith Taylor of U.C. Davis Extension regarding co-operative and economic development.

4. Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) presentation by Nephele Barrett and Loretta Ellard.

MCOG is looking at planning grants for public transit options for Round Valley, as currently there is no public transit. Lew Chichester felt that traffic safety should be a higher or equal priority. Nephele discussed the Active Transportation grant program which funds pedestrian and bicycling improvements and is the funding source for the Hwy. 162 trail currently moving forward. The MAC cannot apply for this program, but the county, the school district, and the Tribes could be an applicant. There are several projects identified by MCOG for Covelo which may be competitive for grant funding. Another program available is the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) which has a current deadline of October 15. There are two set asides of a maximum amount of \$250,000 which are easier to apply for. The tribe would be eligible to apply for both of these.

U.C. Berkeley is hosting an online interactive mapping tool called Street Story. Users have the ability to mark on a map and describe an occurrence of a traffic safety problem which becomes part of a database for planning purposes.

Property owners along the proposed 162 trail should be receiving right-of-way letters in the next two weeks.

Charles Sargenti asked if there is a means of determining whether the MAC is eligible to apply for grants. Nephela stated it depends on the program. John Haschak is looking into this question through county officials.

5. Jerry Ward of Solid Waste discussed the situation with the lack of capacity at the transfer station. Current usage is up to 400 – 450 cubic yards per week, up 55% from the previous year. On top of this, there is a shortage of drivers. Suggestions from those present included upping the pay to attract more drivers and advertising the positions locally. Jerry also stated capacity could be increased by reconfiguring the site to accommodate “possum belly” type trash haulers but the county would have to provide the funds to do this.

6. MOVE 2030. Jessica read from a partial list of project priorities to be submitted to MOVE 2030. A decision was made to defer discussion until everyone could get a copy of the list and rank items for reaching a consensus of priorities.

7. Economic Development committee.

Dane summarized the report prepared by the Economic Development committee. The full report is attached below.

8. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION THE VIDEO OF THE MEETING ON ZOOM CAN BE VIEWED AT:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/4JUrh-DixmlOUI3VxHvDaqFwP4DUT6a82ihl_qdZmhwsZt8MxObd8U-YMiYCEaaS

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Round Valley Area Municipal Advisory Council
Economic Development Committee
7-26-20

Meeting began with:

There was Consensus that the agenda would reflect the same topics discussed at the last meeting. It was recommended, however, that the discussions focus on Economic Diversity.

Conversation w/ Economic Development and Financing Corporation representative Diann Simmons was reported: Diann was impressed w/ all the work the MAC Economic Development Subcommittee has accomplished thus far; timing is great to be included in Mendocino County’s ten year economic development plan, named Move 2030; Diann recommends the MAC prioritize their projects for economic development while keeping in mind those that are actually doable, applicable to other areas of the county, and fundable.

Conversation with Uma was reported to include suggestions re: Move 2030 RVAMAC priorities include those that are doable as well as the community’s big picture hopes.

Town’s Business Development

Parcel map item update - GIS mapping support is available through the County, though their support resources are limited maps and overlay maps can be produced and serve as a template for MAC and community input. Discussions on where to begin the boundary areas for the map included out to the Casino to the north as south to the church for sale on 162 south of town. It was suggested though that the Covelo Community Services District's district map be used to begin the mapping process since it encompassed the main/most commercial zoned areas. Jessica has the expertise to support GIS map developments. Embedded in the GIS system are spreadsheets to note, track, update details per parcel. Parcel map can identify high potential parcels, differentiate residential from commercial parcels and those which can serve both functions, identify parcels to be remediated as well as parcels unlikely to serve economic development, identify parcels of current development/redevelopment such as the redevelopment of Dan's market restaurant. A strategy for receiving public input included placing one large map in the window of the library. Accompanying this would be a request that input be dropped off at the Old Courthouse via the mail slot in the door. In addition to the library, it was proposed that a large mural size map be painted on the north wall of the Trading Post storeroom for public view and discussion.

Tribal input to the mapping process is important. We need to ask the Tribes how best to include their needs and vision in the MAC Economic Developments.

North Coast Opportunities was reported to have reached out asking about increasing services to Round Valley, the capacity of Districts in the valley to receive grants, and possibilities to develop water systems such as fire hydrants.

Post Fire Town Meeting reports included a community outpouring of willingness and passion to cleanup the fire damage before the rains return and send potential hazardous/toxic materials into the ground, ground water, and surface water. This willingness and passion include equipment operators, sources of immediate funding, grant writers for future funding, and volunteers. It was reported that the tire shop and North Fork Café buildings do not have insurance to cover such costs as clean up and rebuilding. The Art Center was said to have such insurance money and plan to source the work locally. Of the many beneficial results of these meetings one has been the generating of lists of names, contact information, and skills sets who can help with the revitalization efforts.

Library References

Library closure was mentioned but it was noted that the library is accepting requests for taking out materials. If called ahead, the staff will collect materials for pick up.

Bank Closure

It was reported that the new owner(s) of the business center where the bank is located have no plans to evict the bank as was originally reported. There is a record though of Tri Counties submitting an application to withdraw services from Round Valley. No new information has been found that this request was accepted or has/will move forward. Follow up is needed and Subcommittee members will follow up with previous contacts to verify.

Cannabis

It was reported that Sheriff Kendal stated that 90% of the violence, trash dump, and water issues are stemming from and related to the illegal marijuana grows.

Discussions about the County initiative to divert all cannabis dealings to the State was recently floored by the Supervisors, thus the initiative did not since move forward . This is likely due to the amount of public input regarding the topic. The Supervisors may try again at their next meeting.

Water truck issues were discussed and the need to do something about the selling of ground water to these purveyors. Then caution was noted that if the water sales from wells cease then the pumping out of creeks and rivers will very likely increase. It was also noted that there are no regulations nor laws in this state for groundwater use, though there are for surface waters

There's the potential business opportunity to educate growers how to reduce their water consumption by watering smarter and not overwatering with runoff. Informational cards could be set at locations where supplies are purchased. Volunteers offered to collaborate more on this topic to get the word out.

Recreation/Forestry

In terms of recreation and to develop a business the idea of a Drive-In theater was proposed for the Rec Center out at the airport. This location has unobstructed open space and large areas for vehicles to park. Sound systems could be simply one's cell phone within individual cars.

No updates were found regarding the Wildland Conservancy's (WC) purchase of Whitter Ranch.

It was reported that interviews on National Public Radio were encouraging the utilization of National Forests for recreation while social distancing.

The work of trail restoration was discussed as a great need. Trail work provides jobs and encourages volunteers to provide better access to the forest and watershed. The High Sierra Volunteer Trail Crew possibly has Resource Advisory Council (RAC) money slated for trail work in the Mendocino National Forest. Those monies could be made available for our community to get paid to repair the trails. The Upper Eel Watershed Forum is a local, though dormant, non-profit which is available to receive such funds and other grant funding to conduct such work. FireScape Mendocino is an advisory group which promotes fire remediation and would apply to such trails damaged by past fires.

Two Round Valley Unified School District teachers were noted as supportive to engage kids in the forestry/recreation/natural resources conversation and activities.

The removal of Scott Dam and its current re-permitting process was raised. The two-basins proposal was discussed and it was noted there was no money offered to enact the proposal. The proposal also satisfied the requirement needed to extend the permitting process.

Side note: Upper Eel Watershed Forum could serve to channel grant funds to remediate the fire damaged downtown areas.

Forest Reciprocity Group (FRG)

FRG has teamed up with new collaborators who developed and designed a 700 square foot cabin utilizing fire salvaged logs. This gives FRG two home designs utilizing forest fuels reduction materials.

Occupational Training

Discussions on the need for training in resume writing, submitting applications, and interview protocols highlighted that Mendocino College has held such courses in Round Valley. This could be done online

now though the need for a less formal structure may appeal to a broader range of participants and garner more attendance.

The training previous list of job skills in past Subcommittee notes were affirmed to be important though the development of internships with tradespersons could compliment the standard training programs. A list of potential tradespersons could be developed alongside a list of interested persons seeking such skill sets. It was suggested to contact Monica Gowan to solicit Mendocino College's support with such work. The development of a culinary arts class was discussed in this regard. Mendocino College can provide the administrative support needed to get such intern type projects going. Engaging Mendocino College also allows for dual enrollment for high school students seeking internship programs to learn the skill of their choice as well as receiving school credit by both scholastic institutions. It was noted to include Round Valley Unified School District continuing education teacher and students into this conversation and developments.

Family Resource Center/Round Valley Indian Tribes may have resources available to support community education projects getting started and ought to be contacted re: collaborations.

It was also noted that there needs to be education and training offered on how to participate in the public/governmental process as well as how to identify, find, write, and fulfill grants in general.

Micro Grid Power Generation

There was an update re: the manufacturer of Personal Power Stations for homes and small businesses. These systems are self-contained solar units ready to plug into ones existing electrical system. Units the size of a van for a home and a unit the size of a small shipping container for a business. There's been an increase in interest and as a result has pushed back the timing of site assessments and product deliveries. The units for a small home are in the \$25,000 to \$30,000 range.

The term micro-grid was applied to both the scale of a single home or the scale of the entire valley. It was noted that Alcatraz Island has its own micro-grid.

PG&E is reporting its response to the ineffective Plan Power Shutoffs and Red Flag Shutoffs last year with better communication and public notice procedures. They have increased the ability to isolate more efficiently those locations in the Red Flag areas without affecting the surrounding areas as they did in the past.

The local Forest Health Biomass Power Generation Project has some hurdles to overcome and has left the need for a study and assessment as the next step.

Mendocino County Resource Conservation District is developing and building micro-biomass electrical generators. These units fit on a 4'X4" pallet and are designed to connect directly into the existing power system of a building. They use biomass such as wood chips to produce the electricity. These units have inherent maintenance and operational issues that are yet to be solved. These new units though may be able to do so. More to be reported as the information becomes available.

Valley wide micro-grid was proposed utilizing solar. The discussion included the reality of solar power limitations during winter/cloudy days, weeks, or months. A hybrid approach was proposed for solar and biomass electrical generation to power the valley's needs. The topic overarching this discussion that was agreed to be most relevant was the Valley's Energy Independence.

Procedure/Input

Regarding how best to present three hours' worth of Subcommittee meeting notes into a MAC report: it was concluded that each topic ought to be reported on and just some highlights for each topic mentioned. If MAC Council members and/or the public have questions regarding any content of the report then those Subcommittee participants who spoke the topic could field the questions.

The determination of the Economic Development Subcommittee being a Standing Committee needs to be addressed at the next Regular MAC Meeting in August.