

Mid-Coast Community Council Retreat 24 January 1998 at Montara Gardens

Present at the Retreat:

- Councilmembers Joe Gore, Mary Hobbs, Ric Lohman, Chris McComb, Paul Perkovic, David Spiselman, Laura Stein;
- Supervisor Rich Gordon
- Joe Caruso (Aide to Supervisor Gordon)
- Members of the Public and Committee members included: Jim Marsh, Nancy Maule, Leni Schultz, Kathryn Slater- Carter, April Vargas, Elisabeth Vespremi, Leonard Woren

1. Committees / Volunteers

Align with County structure for convenience

Existing Committees:

- Parks and Recreation
- Planning and Zoning
- Airport
- Form of Government
- Fund Raising
- Public Works and Traffic

Proposal to restructure as primary Committees and topical

Subcommittees, with following Chairs:

- Planning - Laura Stein
 - ABAG
 - Current Projects
 - Design Review
 - Forms of Government
- Public Works - Joe Gore
 - Airport
 - Traffic
- Parks and Recreation - Mary Hobbs
- Health Services - Chris McComb
 - Sewer
 - Water
 - Fundraising
- Council members were made Committee Chairs,
- There will be one elected Council contact for each County department head.
- All communication with that department head should go through or involve that Council person.
- There should be one committee contact for each project as the primary contact with County staff *→ majority 'this works by report'*
- Voting members of standing Committees are either the Council members or their designees. (That is, at most seven votes within any Committee).
- All recommendations in the name of the Council need to go to the full Council for approval (perhaps as Consent Agenda items), except for short-time-deadline items that may be originated from a standing Committee that have been directed through the Council chair and are within the Council's charter.
- Each Committee will have a clear charter, to be drafted by the committee and approved by the Council.

2. Communication with Board / County staff

Suggestions from Rich Gordon:

- Perhaps on an annual basis, have two or three Council members meet with each Supervisor, just to let them know what the Council is doing.
- Particularly important in influencing the Supervisors is to provide them with enough background information on how we reached a particular recommendation. We will provide a very concise summary, perhaps bullet points, so that a single page will suffice for those who have limited reading time.
- Make sure we are giving them advice, not just "We don't want this"

Review Of Current Operations

Council Appearances before the Board of Supervisors:

Continue to have different Council members present before the Board, because it shows that it isn't just one person with the same agenda all the time, and also each of the Council members has a different personality and resonates with or conflicts with different Board members.

Letters:

Should reflect a summary of our recommendations, why we reached that conclusion, how we decided, and perhaps arguments for and against the decision, using bullets on a single page with more detail where needed.

Contact With Our "Sphere of Influence" in Half Moon Bay:

David Spiselman will be our ambassador to Half Moon Bay City Council meetings this year.

2. Communication with Board / County staff (continued)

Suggestions:

- Invite other Board members to come to some of our meetings.
- Have our Chair provide regular (weekly?) input to Joe Caruso, and always keep Joe and Rich informed of our activity.
- Invite Jon Silver (Chair, Planning Commission) to come visit.
- Stop representing ourselves as victims. Act and think like elected representatives, keep learning to be more effective.
- We can try to determine why our recommendations didn't have the desired effect.
- We need to set up a time line for each issue, and work items appropriately throughout, so that Board members are up to speed on our concerns before it comes to a formal Board meeting vote.
- Establish a rapport with department heads, so that we are aware of issues before there is formal notification.
- Prioritize the issues we try to address.
- Ask the public to write letters stressing how important an item is to the Coast, while remaining polite.
- We should send follow-up letters (of thanks for support, especially).
- Put timing along with subject at top of each communication (e.g., background, urgent).

3. Developing Volunteers

Each Committee should consider the following issues:

- Review current volunteer status.
- What's working, what's not?
- How to find and support volunteers.
- Which ideas should be followed-up, and by whom?
- Devise ways to improve communication with the Public

Suggestions for community outreach:

- Newsletter - Joe Gore, David Spiselman, perhaps help from Nancy Maul or Laszlo Vespreni
Agendas in the Half Moon Bay Review and Pescadero Pebble, San Mateo County Times Chris McComb, David Spiselman
- Welcome Wagon flyer - Joe Gore will investigate
- Social event / appreciation party - April Vargas
- Education regarding County procedures - delegate to Planning Committee
- "San Mateo County Times clipping service," will be operated by Chris McComb, bringing items to our attention covered by the Times, regarding the Coast, or Board action on Coastal issues.
- The Newsletter - Joe Gore volunteered to take care of Laura Stein's campaign promise.
- Candidates Nights (probably for June and November elections) - April Vargas volunteered to continue working on these events.

4. Agendas / Priorities

Protocol Committee, Laura Stein, Chair is evaluating:

- How can we prioritize agenda items?
- How can we control the texture and length of our meetings?

5. Office / Council Business

Mail:

Implemented a mail collection and logging system. Chair collects the mail twice weekly, Tuesday evenings before regular meetings or Wednesday evenings before Planning and Zoning Committee meetings, and Friday evening or Saturday mornings.

Computer in office:

Possible functions are:

- Voice mail;
- ~~Mail log; Copies of all outbound letters; Incoming fax; and~~
- Fax-back for current agenda.
- Concerns were raised that we not advertise functions we aren't willing to commit to providing regularly. It is embarrassing to have last year's agenda on fax-back or voice repeat.
- Each Council member can have an individual outgoing message, can refer callers to a home number.

Budget Needs:

- Newsletter printing and mailing
- Speaker system
- Fax machine
- Overhead projector and screen
- Refreshments for retreat and volunteer appreciation event
- One seminar per year per Council member

6. Can we learn from other Community Councils?

Form ad hoc task force to initiate contact with other Community Councils to investigate forming a Council of Councils.