

## Midcoast Community Council

*An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar*

PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038

<http://www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org>

Michelle Weil, Chair  
Claire Toutant, Vice Chair  
Len Erickson, Treasurer  
Dave Olson, Secretary  
Gregg Dieguez  
Jill Grant  
Dan Haggerty

### ***Minutes for Meeting of September 8, 2021***

#### **Call to Order (7:04pm)**

All Council Members present. This meeting was conducted virtually in compliance of State and County COVID-related orders.

#### **1. Board of Supervisors' Report**

Lena Silberman reported that Caltrans has begun to remove hazardous trees and fuels from the Bypass lands in Montara.

The El Granada median project tree removal started on the first of this month with good progress. DPW is hoping to have it completed by the end of this month. They are balancing aesthetics vs safety in the areas that are not being completely cleared.

There's a new beach access at Vassar street. That project was delayed because of seal pupping season but was completed quickly.

The Supervisor district redistricting is underway, with several public meetings set up. They're on the 11th, 13th, 18th and the 20th. A brief update on Covid-19: as of September 3rd, we were seeing 15.4 new cases per day/100K population, which is slightly higher than last week. That's an average of 121 new Covid cases per day compared to 115 the week before .

El Granada, Loma Mar and Moss Beach all appear on the county website to have very low vaccination rates, but The chief of health systems has said that is likely due to issues with their geocoding system related to PO boxes.

Dan asked for more information on redistricting. Lena replied that this was the required redistricting after each 10 year census to balance population and demographics between Supervisorial districts.

Jill asked if the Board of Supervisors was preparing for in-person meetings. Lena said she hadn't yet heard anything.

Harvey Rarback from Half Moon Bay said he had both good and bad news. He said the council last night voted to not give a permit for the pumpkin festival, due to Covid. The end of summer music festival was also canceled for the same reason. The good news is if you want to call it that, is that that the two recent council meetings they have had a number of constituents who have explained that the lack of affordable housing in Half Moon Bay and the coastside is driving people away, and causing multiple families to have to live in very crowded conditions in the same house, so the council is very aware of how dire the housing situation is. They are scheduling a meeting in early November to see what we can do about producing more affordable housing. He announced that the council had also agendized a discussion about the city annexing the Moonridge affordable housing development.

Len asked if the Moonridge annexation would be instead of a focus on agricultural works. Harven replied that this is just a preliminary investigation. Not related to the former nurseries. Len asked if that meant moving the city limits to include Moonridge. Harvey said yes.

Len asked what impact that would have on the residents. Harvey said it would give them a voice in Half Moon Bay. Len asked if this would be after redistricting, with Harvey saying yes, it would be later than the March end date for redistricting.

Jill asked if Half Moon Bay is preparing for in-person meetings, and secondly if there is any research into acquiring land for RV dwellers, especially essential works. Harvey answered that the HMB Council is preparing for in-person meetings October 1st, in case there are no changes to allow continued video meetings. For RVs, the LUP update does address affordable housing that includes the ability to have RV's in more locations, particularly along Hwy 92.

Gregg mentioned a UCLA study on housing vacancies, showing that about 2/3 of the housing in LA was owned by investment interests. He asked if there were conditions on Moonridge and other affordable housing to prevent them being used as short-term rentals. Harvey answered that last night the council passed a short-term rental ordinance and a main thrust was to ensure that housing stock remains available for longer term rentals, rather than motel-like use, by only allowing 60 days/year of non-hosted rentals.

### **(7:21) 2. Public Comment & Announcement**

Mark Baker, founder of softlights.org spoke about the problems with LED lighting. He feels that LEDs are nonpoint sources of light but that claims otherwise have allowed them to escape regulation. He says his group has documented epileptic seizures, debilitating migraines, psychological trauma, and eye damage due to LED lighting. He said that LEDs do not save energy, because they are not directly comparable to incandescent and other older lighting types. He feels LED lighting is discriminatory because they create illegal barriers for light-sensitive persons. He requested that people visit <https://www.softlights.org> for more information, and offered to help the MCC with research and policy.

Bill Sofkey spoke about the rejuvenating effects of nature, including the surf. I said he is a scientist with expertise in the nervous system, and that he and his wife moved here in part to be around nature. He also offers his services as a consultant on LED lighting and similar issues.

Len spoke primarily to the previous comments that the council does not comment on public comment, but that if they have specific information, they can post them in the chat function as a way to get the information out. He said that perhaps there could be an offline meeting with some councilmembers to discuss the issues, or a special notice meeting of the council.

### **(7:28) 3. Consent Agenda**

Minutes for July 28, 2021 and August 11, 2021 were pulled from consent by Dave because he had not finished them

### **(7:29) 4a. CFSC County Coordinators Grant Opportunity Letter of Support**

Michelle summarized the council actions that have led up to this, and that it is in part a response to our request for overall wildfire preparation and response coordination. Our letter is based on a form letter provided by Lena, with changes made by the MCC.

Lena described that the grant is to cover billable hours, and that there is a fair amount of flexibility on how they are spent. Most likely the coordinator would report to the County Office of Sustainability, OES or the San Mateo Firesafe Council. It could be for one or more existing employees to do new things, or new employees, or new consultant(s). The San Mateo Firesafe is the oldest local Firesafe council in the state, and the county is optimistic on our chances of getting the grant.

Michelle then displayed the letter and quickly walked through it.

### **Council questions**

Gregg asked if he was correct in thinking that the governance structure for the position is not yet defined. Lena said that's correct.

Len referred to the 10 year old Calfire/RCD document covering a joint project between San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, and thought perhaps that should be mentioned as a reference in the grant application. Lena said it's late to do that, but she'd check.

### **Public Comment**

Lucy Wicks thanked everybody for this effort. She'd like to see that the letter move the 4th paragraph up to emphasize its importance.

### **Council Discussion**

Claire supports the letter and thinks it needs to be sent out quickly, and if needed, the position can be tweaked later.

Gregg said that he'd like to have earlier input on future letters, and that he supports it.

Moved by Michelle, 2nd Gregg, Passes 7-0

### **(7:47) 4b. Wildfire Preparedness Update**

Michelle summarized the agenda item, then handed it over to Kellyx from the RCD.

Kellyx apologized for the large number of acronyms in her talk. She said that the \$1M project funded by the Coastal Conservancy to reduce fuels at the southern end of Quarry Park started today. It will be about 40 acres, and then continue with widening the fuel breaks along the Quarry Park fire roads to 200 ft on each side, including removing dead or dangerous eucalyptus. That will be about 100 acres, and will be done over a 3 year period.

Kellyx then talked about the scoping of effective projects for future grant proposals. It is primarily for consultants to complete background research, especially citing relevant investigations. They will develop site specific understanding of wildfire scenarios in El Granada and scope a set of actions, with operational constraints, as well as opportunities with detailed cost estimates. The result will be a list of projects that will be ready to go, and for which grant proposals can be written.

### **Council questions**

Gregg said that he would really like fire code changes to require mature eucalyptus removal, similar to the existing weed abatement program. He asked if the consultant can consider re-vegetation and governance structures. He also asked if damage costs were part of the metrics for the projects. Kellyx answered that she preferred the term actions over projects in part because she wants them to be able to consider policy changes and other things that don't fit the project model. Re-vegetation would be in scope if it reduced the risk of wildfire substantially. Also that FEMA ranks funding for wildfire reduction lower than something considered to be a permanent solution, so that affects funding strategy. Damage costs are not planned to be part of the metrics, because they are hard to develop and quantify, and the funding for the scoping is relatively small and insufficient for that effort. In general, quantification won't be part of the metrics for that reason.

Jill asked if there will be a budget for the suite of actions, or is it the sky's the limit? She also asked how community members could provide input on the scoping. Kellyx answered the best route for input would be through the MCC, and that there will also be 3 meetings with the partners, including the MCC, Firesafe, and Calfire. 1st would be to develop an understanding of stakeholder concerns, 2nd to present a draft summary of their assessment finding and the 3rd to present draft potential actions. There will be a public meeting at the end to present the final product to the community.

Len presented an annotated slide showing eucalyptus groves on the Midcoast, and asked about re-vegetation after cutting. He also asked if the scoping would include work with modelling. Kellyx said that the scoping would not be taking a list of preferred projects from the stakeholders and run it through a model. The scoping would use local and other knowledge about where the risk is and where the potential for work is. Actions can be both short and long term, with no limits on what can be considered.

Dan asked Kellyx to comment on how we can be sure that we'll get the best results for the money available. Kellyx said that was a large part of the scoping, in terms of what would be most effective, by pulling together the best information available. Dan asked if the consultant would make the decisions. Kellyx said that the consultant would not make the decisions. Dan clarified that he was asking primarily about the \$1M effort that started today, and how the logs would be used, including chipping, biochar, etc. Kellyx said that she didn't have an answer for that.

Jill asked when and where the RFP will be posted. Kellyx said by September 15th, and on the RCD website. They will also send it to partners like the MCC, email, etc. Jill asked if it would be in the local paper. Kellyx said they send the RFPs to industry journals, but could also send to local papers.

Nicholas Calderon answered Dan's question about logs, saying that they are considering how to chip some of them and how to use the chips. It's likely that there would be too much to use locally. It can't be shipped overseas any longer, there is no longer a market for it.

Len summarized the FireSafe Council meeting of Sept 8th. It was completely devoted to a presentation by Next10. It was focused on urban/wildland interface with housing similar to the Midcoast. He said it's worth listening to the video. He also said that the median tree cutting is going slower than projected, and that it is producing a mountain of chips.

Gregg and Len mentioned that there are eucalyptus trees being trimmed along Hwy 1 near Medio Creek. It all appears to be within 10 feet of the highway. Len mentioned that there will also be eucalyptus removed in that area for the new coastal trail project. He asked if Lena had any info. Lena said she didn't have definite knowledge.

### **Public Comment**

Melinda McNaughton asked if there are any re-vegetation plans for the medians. Lena answered that there is no current plan. Melinda asked if the RCD had been invited to help, or other organizations. Lena said not officially, and Melinda asked how they could be involved. Len said that the MCC asked for funds for re-vegetation, but that no funds were allocated, although Supv Horsley said the County was willing to work with other organizations, including GCSD. Melinda asked if other organizations could be asked to look for funding and she is willing to help with that.

Cherie Daly said that she supports what Melinda said. She lives on Coronado. She is concerned about the other areas of Quarry Park that have not yet started. She's concerned about what the results will be.

Keith Mangold spoke about his petition with more than 450 signatures to ask the Board of Supervisors to reduce wildfire risk in Quarry Park. Keith said he'd hoped to do a presentation, but since it's not an agenda item, he said he's simply requesting that this petition be put on the agenda for a future MCC meeting. Michelle said that can be discussed under Future Agendas. Keith said his original idea was to find out community opinion, rather than gathering signatures. He thinks that about 95% of the people he talked to were in favor of the petition.

Danny said that the clearcutting on the medians was too extensive, and suggested staggering the clearcuts with gaps in between to leave trees in place. He agreed that the cost of disposing of the logs was significant, about 20% in his experience, so reducing that would help. He'd also like the County to give owners of vacant land one or two thousand dollars per lot to help cover costs.

Dan said that he'd like to see Keith's item on a future agenda, and that he's disappointed about the lack of information about what will happen with logs and chips from the trees being cut at Quarry Park.

Jill asked for the title of the petition. Keith had trouble bringing it up to give the exact wording, but summarized it's content. Gregg said it is "Quarry Park Threat Petition".

Len said that he had hoped the RFP would be available for this meeting, but since that it's not, people will be working on responses for the RFP. He looks forward to considering Keith's petition. He said he hopes that the median project will be wrapped up soon, and he would like the MCC to consider comments on how it went.

**(8:42) 4c. Hybrid Meetings**

Dave summarized the situation, and mentioned that the MWSD last week had discussed hybrid meetings. Their attorney said that as things stand, in-person meetings would be required. There are two bills in the assembly that could affect that. Unless those pass, the council will need to go back to meetings with at least a quorum (4) in person, and that the locations of those attending remotely would need to be published in the agenda, with the public allowed to attend (even at home).

So the question is how many on the council are ready to attend in person. If it's less than 4, then we need to consider our action, including if there are locations other than their home from which they can attend. He asked for a motion to allocate \$350 to purchase equipment for hybrid meetings.

Jill moved, Len 2nd.

Claire asked if hybrid meetings would affect the in-person requirement. Dave said no, if the bills are not passed, yes, if they are as they currently exist, and that would be October 1. Claire then asked why Harvey said they would consider hybrid meetings in November. Dave said he wasn't sure, but he might have meant October.

Michelle asked if there was anything preventing the Governor from extending the State of Emergency, or the remote meetings. Dave answered that the Governor had said he would extend the State of Emergency in June, but that he could, and if he did, yes, he could continue to allow remote meetings. Same thing if the bills pass, but Dave didn't think that they would be passed and signed before October 1st.

Gregg said he had the same question, and that perhaps politics related to the recall were stopping the Governor, and maybe that would change after. Dave agreed that was possible, but he didn't know if the count would be complete prior to October 1st, unless it was a landslide vote.

Dave addressed a chat question as to whether we could just continue remote meetings regardless of the laws. Dave said no, that we would be violating the Brown Act.

Michelle said she had no desire to attend in-person meetings. She hopes that a new order will be issued, or that the Assembly bills will help.

Claire does not want to do in-person meetings.

Dave said he was willing to have in-person meetings, with open windows.

Len asked if a hybrid meeting would require a quorum in-person. Dave said yes. Len said in that case he would be willing to do in-person meetings. Len asked if we could limit the number of attendees to maintain 6 foot spacing. Dave said yes.

Gregg would like in-person meetings, but feels that it isn't safe, so he isn't going to do it, even if he got a booster shot.

Claire mentioned that in chat no attendees had said they were willing to attend in-person. Dave said that we could limit the public to maintain 6 foot spacing, probably 6 or 7 people. Dave also clarified that he fully supports keeping hybrid meetings, even if in-person also.

Jill said she does not want to attend in-person.

Dan said he agrees with others, he doesn't think in-person is safe. He doesn't want to do something unsafe even if somebody in authority tells him that he has to. He would if somebody could prove to him that it was safe. He'd like to see how other districts do it.

## **Public Comment**

Karen said she is also on a board, and asked about holding meetings outside. She finds zoom meetings much more efficient. Michelle said she would be willing to meet outdoors, if we had a location. Dave pointed out that lack of power is an issue, because not everybody has a laptop that will run 4 hours on a battery. It's also a problem because of wind; it can be very hard to hear on zoom with strong wind.

## **Council Discussion**

Len asked for more clarification on whether 4 people, some remote, some not, would meet the Brown Act requirement (if the assembly bills allow that). Dave said yes. He also said that other locations could be found than councilmember's homes, but they would still be public, so have health issues.

Dave said one other option is that the MCC could cancel meetings until it was safe to meet in person. Not a great idea, but it could be done.

Claire asked if this meeting would be a hybrid meeting. Dave said yes, but that the definition he was using, and that he thinks others are using, a hybrid meeting would still require at least one person in a meeting room. Claire said people could even resign, and Dave agreed that those scenarios should be considered, even if not desirable. Len said he thinks that we should inform the County of our concerns. Michelle has reached out to Tim Fox, and he was confident that something would happen to allow us to continue remote meetings.

Gregg asked if we could hold unofficial meetings, and get around the Brown Act. Dave said no. The motion to purchase equipment for up to \$350 for hybrid meetings passes 7-0.

## **(9:11) 5. Council Activity**

Len talked to Caltrans about the Virginia Ave crosswalk. Caltrans says that they have a part of a pole that isn't available, so the crosswalk won't be completed for a while). Claire mentioned that it's now worse than before.

Dave reported on hybrid meeting equipment and process discussion with Jason Francisco at PCTV. Michelle mentioned that the County Counsel's office has said that there may not be a requirement for in-person meetings after Sept 30th.

Gregg said that he spoke as a citizen at the Board of Supervisors asking for a moratorium on new building. He also wrote an article requesting a moratorium on new water connections because of the drought. He's also written articles on drought impact on the Sewer districts.

## **(9:24) 6. Future Agendas**

September 22 nd – Moss Beach SR-1 Congestion & Safety Improvements Project, SMC Parks and Parking in Quarry Park

TBD – El Granada / Quarry Park Scoping Project, Lighting Code Compliance, Medio Creek Bridges,

MCC Website Upgrade

## **(9:48) Adjournment**

Moved Len, 2nd Gregg, Passes 7-0