



COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 4, 2009

Farm Bureau Office
180 Industrial Way
Buellton, Ca

APPROVED MINUTES

These minutes reflect the actions and general discussion of the Committee.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee was called to order by Kari Campbell-Bohard, Chair, at 2:00 pm at the Farm Bureau Office in Buellton.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: 8

Brian Caird
Kari Campbell-Bohard, Chair
Willy Chamberlin
Grant Cremers, Vice-Chair
Dorothy Laine
LeRoy Scolari
Paul Van Leer
June Van Wingerden

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: 3

Greg France
Richard Quandt
Carl Stucky

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: 5

Mike Hays, Derek Johnson, David Matson, & Stephanie Stark, Planning and Development
Bill Gillette, Agricultural Commissioner's Office

NUMBER OF INTERESTED PERSONS: 5

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Public Comment –

LAFCO will be voting on whether to expand the City of Goleta's Sphere of Influence into the South Patterson ag block.

Motion: Due to short notice of the LAFCO meeting tomorrow, Willy Chamberlin moved, seconded by Brian Caird and carried by a unanimous vote to add the City of Goleta's Sphere of Influence proposal to today's agenda.

III. Minutes:

Motion: Dorothy Laine moved, seconded by Leroy Scolari and carried by a unanimous vote to approve the January 7, 2009 and January 28, 2009 minutes.

IV. Report from Agricultural Commissioner & Planning Director

John Baker, the Planning Director/Assistant CEO, was not present. Bill Gillette, the Agricultural Commissioner provided both reports.

P&D

- AAC and Planning Commission Workshop – items that were discussed during the workshop are being addressed. Pat Saley, Noel Langle and the two Ag Planners are meeting regularly and will bring new proposed revisions to the AAC in April.
- NRCS Permit Coordination Program - John Baker assigned the program to Mike Hays, the new Agricultural Land Use Planner.
- Budget –The Agricultural Land Use Planner position is listed as one of the positions to be cut. However, the Director assured the Committee that the position will not be cut.

Ag Commissioner

- Lompoc office – the Ag Commissioner's Lompoc office has reopened at a new location, 401 East Cypress. Please call the Santa Maria for more information.
- Ag Promotional Program – this program was created to inform the public and decision makers about agriculture in the County through a series of brief educational videos featuring commodity groups. Videos are shown on Government Access and available online. Segments on grapes, cut flowers, and broccoli have been completed with lemons/avocados coming soon.
- Asian Citrus Psyllid- Last week an industry alert was sent to citrus growers to prevent the spread of the Asian Citrus Psyllid. The insect is a vector of Huanglongbing citrus disease (Citrus Greening disease) and has been found in San Diego and Imperial Counties. Bins leaving orchards should be clean and free of debris.
- Budget – The AAC fund and Oak Tree Program Specialist position are being proposed as cuts. Budget hearings are first week in June, and the AAC is welcome to speak on the proposed cuts. A member of the public asked why the AAC fund is under the Ag Commissioner's budget and what part of the Oak Tree program will be lost without the Oak Tree Specialist.

V. Report From Agricultural Planning – Mike Hays

- Permit streamlining process – Mike and Stephanie Stark are meeting regularly with Noel Langle and Pat Saley regarding the suggestions made during the PC/AAC workshop.

- Agricultural Buffer Policy - Mike is gathering information and still in the early stages of development.
- NRCS permit coordination – Mike has met with NRCS staff and attended a meeting in San Luis Obispo County about their NRCS master permit program. The draft ND is being circulated and much was gained by attending the meeting.

VI. City of Goleta proposed Sphere of Influence

During the meeting, the AAC learned of a LAFCO meeting on March 5th whereby the City of Goleta is proposing to expand their Sphere of Influence beyond the existing City limit to include agricultural land near the South Patterson Agricultural block. The AAC was concerned the City of Goleta and LAFCO were making such a proposal without input from the AAC regarding potential agricultural impacts. Staff from Long Range Planning informed the Committee the County wrote a letter stating their concerns with expanding the sphere, some of which were potential impacts to ag. Neither Ag Planning nor the Ag Commissioner's Office was aware of the proposal or County letter. The AAC requested LRP improve communication with the ag planners and involve them on projects with ag issues.

Motion: Leroy Scolari moved, seconded by Willy Chamberlin, and carried by a unanimous vote to authorize Stephanie Stark to speak on behalf of the Agricultural Advisory Committee during the LAFCO meeting and request LAFCO to not take action on the item regarding the City of Goleta Sphere of Influence in order to allow adequate time for the AAC to review the potential impacts to agriculture.

VII. Rural Regional Plans Potential Projects - Derek Johnson and David Matson

Derek Johnson, Deputy Director of Long Range Planning, provided an overview of current LRP projects and the annual Work Program process. The Rural Region Plan (RRP) is included as potential new projects in the upcoming Work Program. According to LRP, the RRP the concept was mentioned in the Ag Element and would divide the agricultural areas into 10 different rural planning regions. The Gaviota Coast and Santa Ynez Valley would be the first two regions to be addressed. The intent is to strengthen existing rural land policies and provide a forum for the community to discuss issues such as urban/rural conflicts, intensification of ag, appropriate locations of coolers, etc.

The AAC voiced concerns about separating agriculture into regions and community members making decisions for ag. Most members of the community don't understand the ag issues and the Ag Element does not discuss the concept of a RRP. The County's Greenhouse Study was cited as an example of good intentions that ultimately hurt ag through added restrictions. The ag industry needs more flexibility, not restrictions, to meet the demands of a rapidly changing market. The AAC had questions about terms such as community, bioregions, study, etc. A project such as the RRP should also be reviewed by ag planning, not just LRP. As an alternative, the AAC suggested the County update the Ag Element.

Motion: The Agricultural Advisory Committee inform the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission they strongly oppose any work being done in the Rural Regional Plan. The Agricultural Advisory Committee feels the money could be better spent on other needs such as public safety or other projects of immediate benefit. The motion was made by Leroy Scolari, seconded by June Van Wingerden and carried by a unanimous vote.

VIII. Rural Agricultural Diversification and Intensification Study Potential Project – Derek Johnson and David Matson

The project would review the needs of agriculture and identify ag zoned parcels which could support ag infrastructure or an intensification of agricultural uses. Following the analysis, a series of policy recommendations would be developed. The project was a suggestion by the Planning Commission in response to the Hunter La Purisima project and the AAC comments. The AAC had questions about who would work on the project and recommended the scoping document be initiated by Ag Planning, not Long Range Planning.

Motion: In lieu of the Rural Agricultural Diversification and Intensification Study Project, the Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends the Agricultural Element be updated with an additional emphasis on current constraints that hinder the diversification, expansion and intensification of agriculture in the County. The analysis of alternative land uses (including non-agricultural uses) should be included in the Agricultural Element and reflected in the policy framework of the Land Use Element. The AREA study should be utilized to the maximum extent feasible. The motion was made by Leroy Scolari, seconded by Willy Chamberlin and carried by a unanimous vote.

IX. Reports from Committee Members

Leroy Scolari - Building on prime soils should be floated so as to preserve the soils.

LAFCO subcommittee – The LAFCO subcommittee (June Van Wingerden, Paul Van Leer, Kari Campbell-Bohard, and Willy Chamberlin) met with Bob Braitman, the LAFCO Executive Officer, to discuss LAFCO’s policy regarding extending services onto prime agricultural land. Mr. Braitman and the subcommittee crafted a solution to extend services to a portion of the parcel. The extension of new services would be restricted to serve only permitted uses on the parcel.

X. Adjourned at 5:00 pm.

NEXT MEETING: The next AAC meeting is on **Wednesday, April 1st** from 2:00 – 4:30 pm at the Farm Bureau Building meeting room located at 180 Industrial Way in Buellton. *Remember parking is allowed along Industrial Way or in one of the few parking stalls located in front of the building to the left of the sycamore tree.*

Items for next meeting:

- LAFCO
- County Workplan
- Environmental Thresholds Weighted Point System