



COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 3, 2008

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 Bill Giorgi, Chair, at 2:00 pm at the Farm Bureau Office in Buellton.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kari Campbell-Bohard
Grant Cremers
Greg France
Bill Giorgi, Chair
Dorothy Laine
Andy Mills (alternate)
Richard Quandt
LeRoy Scolari
Carl Stucky, Vice-Chair
Paul Van Leer

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Brian Caird
June Van Wingerden

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

John Baker, Planning and Development and CEO's Office
Stephanie Stark & Dave Ward, Planning and Development
Bill Gillette, Agricultural Commissioner's Office

NUMBER OF INTERESTED PERSONS : 6

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Public Comment

Re: Wall Street Journal article – Bill Giorgi

III. Minutes:

Motion: Leroy Scolari moved, seconded by Dorothy Laine and carried by a 5-0-3 vote to approve the November 5th, 2008 minutes with suggested amendments to Item VI. Rosemary Farms and Item VII. Fish and Game Commission Wild Fire Task Force. Andy Mills, Kari Campbell-Bohard and Greg France abstained.

IV. Report from Agricultural Commissioner & Planning Director

Bill Gillette, Agricultural Commissioner, addressed the Committee:

- County furlough is 12/22/07 until 01/04/09. The Ag Commissioner's Office will be open on a limited basis. Please contact the Ag Commissioner's Office for details.
- Light Brown Apple Moth – No additional LBAM specimens have been found and the end of the quarantine has been extended until July 2009.
- Budget cuts – the State may reduce the Williamson Act subvention funds for Counties as a cost saving measure. However, this may not affect those enrolled in the Ag Preserve program.

John Baker, Planning Director and Assistant CEO addressed the Committee:

- Tea Fire- County staff has been focused on disaster recovery and serving Tea Fire victims.
- Rosemary Farms project - The pre-application has been withdrawn and the applicant is not pursuing the project further.
- The Agricultural Land Use Planner - The vacant position has been filled. Michael Hays currently works with P&D as a senior planner. His management and ag experience coupled with excellent interpersonal skills will bring a lot to the Ag Planning program and policy development.
- Planning Commission Ag meeting on Jan 28th – Committee members had questions and concerns about the topics and why the AREA study is on the agenda. Time is limited and a long presentation could use a significant amount of time. Bill Gillette and John Baker agreed the meeting should be focused on ag issues and the AREA study may not be included.

V. Report From Agricultural Planner – Stephanie Stark

- Bailey Ave Specific Plan – Project related documents were included in the pre-meeting packet and Stephanie solicited Committee comments. Ag Planning will continue tracking the project and will review the Draft EIR when it is released.

- Central Coast Ag Planning Roundtable meeting – The meeting will be on 12/11/08 with Stephanie, John Baker, and a Long Range Planning staff person in attendance. Agenda items were discussed and Committee members are welcome to send Stephanie suggestions.
- Land Use webpage - Plumas-Sierra County has a Land Use webpage with easy to understand fact sheets. Information on the website was provided.

VI. NRCS/RCD Permit Coordination Project – Richard Quandt

Tom Lockhart summarized the Permit Coordination Project and informed the Committee that P&D recently commented on RCD's draft Mitigated Negative Declaration document. P&D's main concerns are with inconsistencies with County policy and the Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual. RCD and the agricultural community were surprised by the comments because they thought the issues were already worked out. The document does not reference specific policy and the level of environmental review is not required. Other environmental agencies have approved the project and are ready to proceed. RCD is running out of resources and needs to either proceed without the County or resolve the issues quickly. Dave Ward, Deputy of Development Review South, explained County perspective and policy is broader, more global policies than that of other agencies. Although the permits are site specific, the environmental review of the Permit Coordination Project needs to be County-wide. County policies and thresholds are adopted by the Board and P&D applies them. John Baker assured the AAC the County wants to resolve the issues and agreed to provide RCD staff with specific policies of concern. Committee responses included: The project should proceed without the County; Working through the County process is important; The experience is frustrating because it has very time consuming; The process is disappointing: The projects are beneficial and should not be treated as development; The Board may be able to override the thresholds: The County should have brought their issues to the table sooner.

Motion: Leroy Scolari moved, seconded by Andy Mills and passed by a unanimous vote for the AAC to reaffirm the importance of the Permit Coordination Project for Santa Barbara County's agricultural industry and the environment. The AAC requests the County and the Resource Conservation District to quickly resolve their differences and move forward to complete the project.

Motion: Richard Quandt moved, seconded by Bill Giorgi and passed by a unanimous vote for the AAC to recommend the County, Cachuma Resource Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Sustainable Conservation to continue to pursue discussions and resolve their substantive differences. Specifically the County needs to 1. Identify which of the proposed 18 practices would require a permit from the County and the authority for such conclusion. 2. Identify which specific policies have the county concluded is inconsistent with the proposed practices agreed to by the other agencies and 3. Explain the basis for using the Environmental Thresholds and Guideline Manuel for biological surveys for non-discretionary projects, and which practices exceed those thresholds. The AAC would also like a progress report during the next AAC meeting on January 7th.

VII. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Committee thanked Bill Giorgi, the Chair, for his leadership and efforts as Chair. Bill appreciated Committee members for their commitment and time.

Motion: Richard Quandt moved, seconded by Andy Mills and carried by a unanimous vote to elect Kari Campbell-Bohard as Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. **Motion:** Carl Stucky moved, seconded by Greg France and carried by a unanimous vote to elect Grant Cremers as the Vice Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting.

VIII. Reports From Committee Members

LAFCO subcommittee – Paul Van Leer attended the last LAFCO meeting that discussed the LAFCO policy for extending Services to agricultural parcels. However, Paul has not been contacted and needs clarification on what the next step is. Bill Gillette agreed to follow up with Bob Braitman, LAFCO Executive Director, to discuss putting the topic on an upcoming AAC agenda.

RAU subcommittee – Andy Mills reported that Santa Cruz County is currently going through a process of evaluating their RAU program. It appears the Farm Bureau is involved and on board with the RAU program.

Agricultural Futures Alliance – Richard Quandt reported one of their issues they are focusing on is agricultural buffers. He is hopeful the new agricultural land use planner will have an opportunity to join efforts with AFA and develop an agricultural buffer policy.

UCSB Oak Tree Restoration Report – Bill Gillette has received no comments from AAC members but they are still welcome to do so.

IX. Adjourn

NEXT MEETING: Next meeting is on **Wednesday, January 7th** 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.*

Suggested Agenda Items:

- Special AAC meeting on January 28th
- LAFCO policy for extending Services to agricultural parcels
- RAU ordinance in Santa Cruz County
- Housing Element
- APCD's new requirements for diesel engines