

SONOMA VALLEY CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION
Minutes of the Virtual Meeting
August 26, 2020

1. Call to Order 6:30

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Secretary Spaulding

Acting/Vice Chair: Freeman

Present: Dickey, Pulvirenti, Ding, Curley, Martin, Cornwall

County Ex Officio: Carr

Emeritus: Bramfitt

County Alternate: Mullen

Excused absence: Silver, Kiser, Lely, Vella

Absent: Cook, Harvey

Present:

First District Director for Supervisor Gorin: Pat Gilardi announced the resignation of Commissioner Silver. Open position will be advertised.

Office of First District/Supervisor Gorin: Arielle Kubu-Johnson

Vice Chair Freeman explained virtual meeting regulations. Q&A and Chat will be turned off.

Update to the agenda: Request to switch Item #6 w/ Item #4. Resolution needed. Secretary Spaulding explained & made a recommendation: since both Applications involve heavy use of groundwater, would be advantageous to have related presentation first to better inform decisions. Commissioner Ding seconded. Approved unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Meeting of July 22, 2020

Commissioner Pulvirenti moved to approve Minutes. Secretary Spaulding Seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment limited to 2 minutes per speaker per item

(Limited to items not appearing on the agenda)

None.

4. Groundwater Sustainability Update Presentation by County Ex-Officio Carr w/ Andrea Rodriguez

Power Point Presentation.



Sent via email from Andrea Rodriguez: Link to the Sonoma Valley Groundwater website with previous presentations and recent community workshop.

<http://sonomavalleygroundwater.org/>

Ex-Officio Carr emphasized he is primarily speaking as a representative of the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

Three regions w/ groundwater sustainability plans (Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Sonoma Valley) are two years into their outreach plan. Have had previous presentations before SVCAC; one at initial outset & second 18 months ago regarding fees to support program. This is a midway update for educational purposes & to encourage involvement in the evolving plan. There is progress on substance of issues.

Serious groundwater level problems apparent in California; slide of statistics for groundwater extraction in Central Valley. Analysis focused the politics in CA. State decided to do something & implement new law.

5,000 people in the Sonoma Valley groundwater basin rely solely on groundwater for drinking and other basic needs. Thousands of others in city limits & in VoM Water District rely on surface water from Russian River, but also use groundwater for supplemental and emergency supplies. Not just for agriculture.

8500 acres of crops & vines depend on groundwater for irrigation in the Sonoma Valley.

3 plains in Sonoma County under California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2015.

Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Sonoma Valley, all in some degree of danger of not having sustainable groundwater supply.

Santa Rosa Plain, Petaluma Valley categorized by state as *medium priority basins*.

Sonoma Valley Basin, *high priority*. Has a voluntary groundwater management plan, still in effect. Monitoring has identified two areas below historic levels. Other two valleys have not identified this problem.

The State Law only applies to valley floors, not watershed that feeds the valley floors, in terms of policies, programs, regulations.

Potential for some action in future in upper watershed; currently no efforts in Law to identify the groundwater conditions, unless there is a relationship to the valley itself.

MAP: Sonoma Valley groundwater basin encompasses the valley floor, from south of Kenwood to San Pablo Bay. Not up in hillsides.

Most important: 2 areas identified in valley w/ lost groundwater levels – 1. Underlying south of City, 8th St to Fremont Dr. up into southern portion. 2. El Verano, golf course, that side of valley. These areas have come up in SVCAC deliberations over projects, due to development concerns.

In response to State Law & identification of valley areas & designation of priorities, county & various other governing agencies created new agency to comply & represent diverse stakeholder interests. For each of three Valleys, a Board of Directors, w/ Advisory Committees, people w/ various interests. Sonoma Valley - 6 member Board: Board of Supervisors, Water

Agency, VoM Water District, North Bay Water District, Resource Conservation District, & City of Sonoma. All elected officials, by design of CA State.

Advisory committee - 12 members, mostly interested people who represent various aspects of community i.e. County Water Agency, City, Valley of Moon Water District, agriculture, RCD, business, environmental, plus 2 at large general Valley interests, & North Bay Water. These folks responsible for carrying out State Mandate. Have been working up technical aspects of Plan.

Slide: the GSA is now in Step 2 of SGMA compliance. Required to complete Groundwater Sustainability Plan by 2022. Long term plan, to achieve sustainability 20 years after GSP adoption. Estimated at turn of 2021 will get into modeling of conditions, climate change, fire resiliency, etc. for water budget. 2021 time to talk about what to do w/ problems identified w/ data.

Commissioner Curley, how is Valley floor defined? What would happen if landowner straddled line? Ex-Officio Carr, basically determined by geology of valley, up Hwy 12. Not sure about second question. Possible there may be some recharge project, requirement for new wells. If on property straddling boundary, probably only affect flat, not hilly portion. If there was a restriction on well drilling, could apply in flat. Depends on geologic connections w/ valley. E.g. there is a deep aquifer depletion in El Verano area. Maybe the solution is on top of Sonoma Mountain, due to geologic formations that triangulate up hillside. If recharge was decided to be best solution to recharge deep aquifer, that might affect nearby landowner/s. Hard to tell at this point. People mostly affected will be on flatlands.

Slide. **Six aspects of groundwater. Indicators.**

1. Groundwater level
2. Land subsidence
3. Sea water intrusion
4. Water quality
5. Levels of streams & wetland
6. Groundwater storage

For each of these six Indicators, the Plan has to identify existing problems & *set sustainable management* criteria. Have to use these to analyze groundwater sustainability.

E.g. Seawater Intrusion. Evidence of it in past, affecting wells in southern Sonoma Valley. Is it moving currently, has it been stabilized? Once identified, need to determine what level is acceptable. Ok today, or move it back towards Bay? Acceptable further to north and into freshwater?

Vice Chair Freeman, is each area responsible for its own decisions & plan for each Indicator? Ex-Officio Carr, yes, w/ caution. State has review authority over any proposed groundwater plan. Law set up to give leeway to local decision making, since groundwater conditions vary. Need to establish good scientific, economic and political basis for what is chosen. Will have to be justified in terms of groundwater sustainability. Refer to website to see additional documents. Project is locally driven, Sonoma Water is the staff, so far everything scientifically based. Haven't gone into political or economic, but will happen since there is an eventual cost to fixing any problems encountered. If dissatisfied, State could impose own plan on each area. Also, the 3 basins each have its own governing entity. Possible each basin will have a different plan. Already seeing similarities in thinking re criteria; solutions being discussed generally could apply to all. Helpful that Sonoma Water is staffing for all 3.

Have looked at Sustainability Indicators for first three criteria: Lowering groundwater level. Seawater Intrusion. Land Subsidence. Have not addressed other three. Have made preliminary criteria for the first three areas.

Lowering Groundwater level: shallow aquifer in Sonoma Valley, stable, no serious drops showing yet, want to keep it there. Look at lowest level of seasonal drop in groundwater table; allow a few extra feet below that level.

Then another 400-500 feet down, the deep aquifers, under El Verano & south of City. Want these deep aquifers to return to historic level, i.e. history that we know of. Data goes back to 1940s, if groundwater now is approx. 10-15 feet higher, want it to return. Further back, perhaps to '70s, use whatever data we have. They have identified a couple of technical criteria for determining monitoring of wells to show condition.

Land subsidence. There is no land subsidence in Sonoma Valley that is known. If anything even slightly starts to look like this, need to address & be restrictive. Don't see any action mandated for future, as long as groundwater development is within reason.

Seawater intrusion. Don't know how much it has encroached into valley. Selected a particular level of chloride, 250 milligrams per liter, anything below would still accommodate AG and residential wells. Area encompassed w/ it is up to about Fremont Dr., near to city further north, only 2-3 wells in that area, known to have seawater intrusion. Quite a few more wells north. Difficult to deal with, important since serving AG & residential use; an unknown area. Ready to defend the line but limits may be expensive.

Other 3 Indicators haven't been completed.

Possible solutions: groundwater recharge could be piping water to new areas. Could be regulatory measure, e.g. restrictions on wells. More in depth & more restrictive conservation programs. Uncertain outcomes at this time.

Main takeaway: Get involved, follow this issue. Sign up for monthly updates.

Review the July 20 Virtual Community Workshop online. More workshops in future.

<http://sonomavalleygroundwater.org/>

Talk to Board and Advisory Committee, attend meeting; these are folks doing the work.

Dreamt Land, Cadillac Desert, King of California, good books on water in CA. Problems in Central Valley incredible.

Contact him for information.

Vice Chair Freeman called for Public Comment

None

Public Comment closed

Commissioner Curley, these large aquifers in City of Sonoma & el Verano - are they monitored to see fluctuations throughout year, e.g. a rainy and dry level? Ex-Officio Carr, the Groundwater Plan that was started 2012 has good monitoring network in Sonoma Valley, and constantly adding monitoring wells. Staff got grant to put in bunch of wells. Part of solution discussion - where do we need additional wells? Must be in a right spot. Yes, a good network of wells, not complete.

Commissioner Dickey, re sea water intrusion. Are there projections used about seawater rising in conjunction w/ intrusion? Ex-Officio Carr, yes, written into state law must address climate change & seawater rise. They haven't addressed that yet, these criteria still preliminary. Will be a climate change scenario, once there's a model, regulated by state. Once sea level rises in bay margins, potential very likely to go north. Will need serious actions to keep at bay. Roger Peters, article on *shoaling* – a situation where seawater rises till it pushes groundwater tables inland upwards, making them shallow, affecting flooding. Unknowns at this point; beginning of next year, start to see modeling of this.

Commissioner Dickey, seems water quality will be tied to study. Of 6 items, 3 are related to water quality. Will water quality degradation follow? Ex-Officio Carr, yes, haven't looked at that. All six, except perhaps land subsidence, are interrelated. Then add sea rise. New well-drilling restrictions seem necessary. AG is pushing for recharge. There are recharge areas; things can be done for infrastructure.

Commissioner Martin, what kinds of sanctions are being considered? Knows about west side, wells are difficult, bad water quality. Sanctions against over use? Ex-Officio Carr, not now. Need a few more months identifying additional preliminary criteria. Then analyze whether optimistic or pessimistic. Other 2 basins already initiated well registration programs. Talk in all valleys of potential water metering, nothing specific yet. If you have ideas, send to him, website or Permit Sonoma. He will bring to group. Get involved. Welcomes all suggestions.

Vice Chair Freeman introduced Item #5.

Commissioner Vella recused due to conflict of interest. Mathieu a former client.

5. File Number: PLP17-0031

Applicant & Owner Name: Jacques Mathieu

Site Address: 457, 565, 700 Mountain Ave, 17384 Hillcrest Ave and 220 Hemlock Ave, Sonoma

APN: 056-231-002, 056-281-001, -050, 052, 053 and 056-351-041

Project Description: A request for a planning project to allow a Zone Change on multiple parcels, from Rural Residential (RR) B 6 5-acre density with Riparian Corridor 50-foot setback (RC 50/50) to Agriculture Residential (AR) B6 5-acre density with RC 50/50, and a Use Permit for a small winery with a maximum annual production of 1,000 cases and no onsite tasting or events on a 6 acre parcel.

Jacques Mathieu to present. Family moved to Sonoma Valley 1992, Mountain Ave '96, vineyard planted '99. Currently processing grapes in custom crush facility, 14-15 tons. Importing 4.5 tons grapes. 1700 sq. ft. winery would be on lower floor of structure under construction, 80%

complete. Winery will be hidden from most of neighbors – closest are 500', 800', 1200' away. Across Mountain Avenue on east side. Winery water usage, est. 14,500 gallons per year. Comparable to a single household person use of less than 5 months. Will be using steam to sanitize equipment to significantly diminish water consumption. Will recycle water as much as possible. Have 800' well, over 100 gallons a minute. Good quality. Waste water treatment: contracted w/ Adobe & Assoc. to design facility once use permit is on its way to being granted. Expensive, so will wait for approval. Operating hours 8am-5pm weekdays, some light weekend work, during crush/harvest, 4/5 weeks. One employee in vineyard, no intention to add more employees. Family does most of work themselves. Neighbors' concerns on Mountain Avenue are about traffic. Traffic study in packet, shows operation will have no impact on Mountain Avenue traffic.

Vice Chair Freeman called for Commissioners' questions.

Commissioner Mullen, numbers of grapes to be brought into site now vs. what you are taking offsite? Jacques, producing 14-15 tons in vineyards; these are potential numbers, historically less. 800 damaged plants replanted, 25%. Allowed to bring in 30% from other vineyards. 4 to 4.5 tons. Commissioner Mullen, shipping more grapes off than bringing in later? Jacques, correct. 4.5 tons will come from 2 different vineyards. Picks them up himself now. Routine will not change.

Secretary Spaulding, re neighbors' traffic concerns; applicant did a study. Is there still resistance from neighbors? Or have they agreed to study? She has driven up there, it's a tightly packed neighborhood, could understand their concerns. Jacques, a few years ago a neighbor applied for use permit for winery & neighbors were concerned. The new study shows no increased traffic from his operation. There is a further study commissioned that will address road condition, public & fire safety. Just asked by county to provide this a couple weeks ago; results not in, will be part of packet. Secretary Spaulding, re fire safety. When she drove side road, noticed dry undergrowth & brush perhaps on his property. In preparation for application will he do substantial undergrowth clearance to meet Cal Fire recommendations? Jacques, that is not his property. Two vineyards on Mountain Ave; one to west has undergrowth. He does systematic weed whacking from road to fence line & beyond. Invited visitors to inspect. Concerned about fire hazard. Never leaves his property on July 4th due to fire concerns. Secretary Spaulding, thank you, could not tell which property was his.

Commissioner Martin, the winery will not be visible from Mountain Ave? Jacques, correct. Winery will be facing east. 3 neighbors on hills. On Mountain Ave will not see the winery. Will see residence, not winery. Commissioner Martin, entrance at 565? Jacques, yes.

Commissioner Dickey, discussed truck trips. What about vehicle trips related to bottled wine? 1,000 cases leaving property. How will that be handled? Jacques, have counted trips generated by bringing empty bottles and exporting full bottles. 2 trips a year, one each. Study shows that from the credit of not exporting their grapes, to the credit of importing glass & exporting case goods, they are generating fewer trips. Commissioner Dickey, once it's bottled, it leaves permanently & is stored at a separate location? Jacques, yes. Will keep some wine at winery. Commissioner Dickey, re traffic study in process. Are fire safety, road quality etc. part of secondary study? Jacques, yes, those are new requirements from county. Experienced &

qualified firm he hired had never heard of requirements. Commissioner Dickey, when will it be complete? Was he waiting to know if he's approved before commissioning study due to cost? Jacques, no, study is commissioned. The Planner has left temporarily for emergency services; delayed, but it is commissioned. Commissioner Dickey, how long before results are available? Jacques, hoping within 4 weeks. Commissioner Dickey, could applicant clarify water use. 14,500 gallons annually? Jacques, yes. Commissioner Dickey, total to bottle and process? Jacques, rule of thumb 6 gallons per bottle of wine. Commissioner Dickey, question about riparian corridor. Is that a zone change? Jacques, no.

Vice Chair Freeman called for Public Comment

None

Public Comment closed

Vice Chair Freeman called for Commissioners' Comments

Secretary Spaulding complimented the Applicant on a well thought out proposal. Expressed concern about water use. Appreciated Ex-Officio Carr's earlier presentation relating to water issues. Unsure if this property is in Valley, or if it's above Valley floor; could be a property that is straddling the line. Wondered if the packet figure of 14,500 gallons will be a realistic water use estimate. Eventually will need to restrict new groundwater but this Applicant seems very conscientious.

Ex-Officio Carr, good to be alert to water issues including groundwater, but each property is individual. Highlighted an issue for Applicant. Property designated residential in General Plan. AR Zone allowed in rural residential category; zone change for purpose of doing AG production at more than a hobby level. Very small project, other bigger vineyards on Mountain Ave. so not dissing this project. But within zone change, 3 sides are dense residential use. He will be looking at compatibility of neighborhood when it comes before the Commission. Don't have benefit of notice to the neighbors, not surprising no one at this meeting, may turn out fine. Zone change for an AG production in a dense residential area is a question. But is a small project, well hidden, can't see site from road.

Secretary Spaulding thanked Ex-Officio Carr for comment regarding density of neighborhood. Would like to hear from Applicant, other than traffic concerns, if neighbors are concerned about zone change. Do they understand he will be running a business where it was previously mostly residential? She is concerned about this.

Commissioner Mullen asked if Applicant isn't already running a business on that property as a grower?

Commissioner Dickey agreed w/ observation. Sees the situation as a net-net. Wine will leave property & be stored & shipped elsewhere. Likes that the project is smaller rather than larger. Similar to smaller European sized family wineries, unlike many local grand wineries. It's a family run operation, seems similar to supporting local farmers. Doesn't usually like changes to property use, & agrees w/ density of residential use; it's complicated in that respect.

Vice Chair Freeman invited Jacques back to reply.

Jacques, Commissioner Mullen answered question. 1999 planted vineyard; not changing any

aspects of residential density w/ winery. Most neighbors are supportive. Sent letters to all neighbors before they started project, some have been concerned and spoken to his planner. But had positive replies in support. Would not say that the end of Mountain Ave is highly residential. Close to him on Hwy 12, is 6 acres, more residential farther west. Mountain Ave mostly dog walkers & joggers in open area at end of road.

Commissioner Martin, lives a mile away, travels over Mountain Ave, project seems to be an appropriate request.

Vice Chair Freeman returned Jacques to Applicant status.

Vice Chair Freeman called for motion or further discussion.

Secretary Spaulding made a Motion to recommend approval of project. Commissioner Curley seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

All in favor, Aye.

Opposed. None.

Resolution passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Freeman announced recommendation to allow Applicant to move forward.

Acknowledged Mr. Mathieu for fine presentation.

6. File Number: UPC20-0002

Applicant Name: Lunar Ridge Farms LLC Owner Name: Mitchell & Jenny Ming

Site Address: 4800 Cavedale Road, Glen Ellen APN: 053-051-038

Project Description: Request for a Use Permit for commercial cannabis cultivation.

Commissioner Vella recused due to conflict of interest. Owners are clients.

Korbin Ming presented Power Point

Lunar Ridge Farms started by him & 2 sisters, joined by husbands. 4800 Cavedale Rd, Glen Ellen. Intersection of Cavedale & Trinity. Property in family since '99.

Planted 20 acres grapes 2000, started making wine in 2004, active members of Sonoma Valley wine community.

Has Masters in viticulture & enology. Important to farm responsibly at a high level. CCOF certified organic

Proposal 35,000sq ft. cultivation (.8 acres) for cannabis. Plus 1,400 sq. ft. propagation

All on Cavedale Road parcel, 132 acres total

Use permit for cultivation only. No processing or manufacturing on site.

Will sell plants fresh frozen to manufacturers, reducing need for extra labor, and reduce traffic to site. Will have to bring on contract labor during key peak season, i.e. harvest & planting, only few days

Water usage & availability

Zoned RRD 40; Zone 3 groundwater availability

New well drilled 2017, for agricultural use. Second/original well on different parcel for house, drilled in 1970s, for residential

Cannabis 1 acre ft/low, 2.2acre-ft/high

Vineyard, .0004 acre ft/low, .084 acre-ft/high

This is significantly lower than conventional industry standards. Farm organically.

441' depth, 223' static water level, 28.5 gpm

Dry farming. Don't irrigate unless needed, if it's very hot. Approx. 1 gallon water per grapevine/low, 20 gallons for entire growing season.

Don't have updated hydrological report, in process

Dry weather well test, 7/21/20 results in slide

County geologist approved 8 hour test. Results showed no change in water level.

Water would be sustainable even during extreme peak months.

Environmental Impact/Farming

Vineyard, CCOF certified organic & Fish Friendly Farming Certified

Same methodology for cannabis farming

Will plant Insectary for beneficial insects

Compost teas for soil microbial health, modern biodynamic practices

Only organic fertilizers, no residuals

Using technology to test for plant water needs, avoid wasting water

Security, under county guidelines/ordinance, plus more

8' perimeter deer fence

Security cameras real time motion alert, DVR backup

Downward facing motion sensing lighting

Alarm system, all Electronics completely solar powered

Estimates for security staff

Setbacks, 1200 ft. setback from Cavedale

Nothing visible from street, large buffer w/ trees

No nearby schools or parks, remote, ideal location

Vice Chair Freeman called for Commissioners' Questions

Commissioner Mullen asked how often they will be trucking marijuana offsite? Ming, twice a year. Harvests in July & October.

Commissioner Dickey, is product frozen on site? Ming, no, trucks take plants to facility & flash freeze. Commissioner Dickey, transported fresh, then frozen for processing? Ming, yes.

Commissioner Dickey, 2 harvests per year? Ming, yes. Commissioner Dickey, have neighbors been notified, any comments? Ming, yes, contacted neighbors, have invited 3 to visit, have support of those they have contacted. Other neighbors supportive. Commissioner Dickey asked about water & terms: recharge. As water is drawn down does it recharge the aquifer? Ming, when running the dry water test, running pump out of well. During test, first five minutes, dropped 4' 5" then stabilized. Until then no fluctuation. To recharge after test, you stop

pumping water, calculate how many minutes it takes for well to recharge. Took 25 minutes. Commissioner Dickey, so that is what the recharge/draw down refers to. Process of water being taken from ground, stop pumping, how long for draw down to recharge. Ming, yes. Very conservative use. Minimal draw down. So aquifer is recharging faster than they are pumping. Commissioner Dickey, last year a proposal projected they needed 8 gallons per plant per day to process. Mike Benziger submitted a proposal, said they needed 1 gallon per plant. What is the range for this project? Ming, similar to Benziger, planting smaller plants that require less water, using device for water testing in plants. If you are farming conventionally you irrigate on a schedule that wastes water. Compared to conventional grape growing, their numbers are drastically lower for irrigation. They are set up to dry farm. Similarly with cannabis. Not on a commercial schedule. Better to monitor. So closer to one gallon figure. Commissioner Dickey, they have equipment to manage on requirement rather than schedule? Ming, yes, the pressure bomb. Take a leaf off plant, at different times, check for water content status. Tells you when to water the plant. Commissioner Dickey, how often do you monitor? Ming, once a week or every other week, depending on climate.

Commissioner Pulvirenti asked for clarification on another application, from Feb 2019 by Mr. Gardner, nearby @ 4600 Cavedale. Does Mr. Ming know if he is proceeding w/ his application? Ming, not sure. He was invited to site for neighborly approval.

Commissioner Curley, saw in documents plants are grown in 45 gallon pots? Ming, that is an old application. They have amended application. Spoke to Pat Gilardi, submitted updated application on Monday to be sent to Commissioners. Commissioner Curley, why would you consider pots, rather than directly into ground? Ming, that original proposal was from 3 years ago. The plants are going directly into the ground.

Commissioner Ding, which road does he use, Trinity or Cavedale? Cavedale, one lane is dangerous. Ming, yes, they use Trinity, site 1 ½ mile up. Commissioner Ding, how about in a fire? Difficult for a truck to get up there. Ming, there are volunteer fire depts. up there. Have a fire & safety plan being submitted to county. Satisfactory for emergency vehicles. Commissioner Ding, re water use, suggests commonly accepted formula. Question on spread sheet, is there an error in calculation? Ming, yes, rounded the figure on irrigation schedule. Commissioner Ding, any plans to expand further? Ming, no.

Commissioner Martin, on p. 1 in proposal, comment in letter, says "irrigation water supplied by existing well", but on p 2. it says "water will be drawn from new well". Are they using one well? Ming, referencing the 2017 new well. No plans to drill additional well. Commissioner Martin, asked for a definition. What is a "Water course Class 1, 2, 3"? Ming, a water course level is more or less if perennial or not, can it hold any fish. Water course level 3 is no fish. Commissioner Martin, confused about how much water is being used per plant. Have figures

from CA Fish & Game, other studies, 900 gallons per plant, in Washington Post, an article that it's 887 per plant. When you divide into total projected the numbers don't jive. How did he arrive at figure of numbers of gallons per plant? Ming, the studies Martin referenced are from large massive plants, which require lots of water. They do smaller plants, subspecies evolved, adapted to grow small, using less water. Resulting in two harvests. Those numbers are not their type of operation. Commissioner Martin, it's understood that cannabis uses greater amounts than other plants, grapes. The creek up Cavedale Road is major tributary of Sonoma Creek; don't want to see reduction in flow, already low.

Vice Chair Freeman called for Public Comment

None.

Public Comment Closed

Vice Chair Freeman called for Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Dickey, seen many of these proposals over last 12 months, & are increasingly aware of associated complications. Also the presentations are increasingly more science based. Good indication, not changing status of cannabis as a cultivated crop. Acknowledged applicants making good efforts to provide information on how to responsibly grow these crops. Has recently learned a lot about cannabis as AG product.

Commissioner Ding, re water, right now almost no regulations. In this kind of situation, property owner needs to self-enforce wise use of water. Get connected to local nonprofit groundwater.org. Noticed in program he has a pond. Will they be using the pond for irrigation? How big is it?

Commissioner Cornwall, in project materials shows property is one mile from main course of Stewart Creek, which is a long distance. Relatively minimal use of water proposed for use shouldn't have noticeable effect on Stewart Creek, which is a valuable stream w/ steelhead, & restoration efforts over the years. Hydrologically, this property is far away.

Secretary Spaulding suggested adding another water saving technique - rain water catchment. Would they consider this?

Vice Chair Freeman, expressed appreciation for more scientific methods, tools, e.g. measuring water in leaf of plant. Encouraging to have new water saving techniques.

Commissioner Martin, still concerned, has read in Emerald Growers Assoc., Washington Post, re volume of water needed for these plants. Doesn't find consistency, what scientific analysis? How many gallons per plant? Effect on water flow? One well in operation now, second going in but states it will not be used. Finds contradictions. Need uniformity on numbers for approval.

Vice Chair Freeman invited Ming to return to reply to questions.

Ming, yes, have considered rain water storage. But also rebuilding house, not proposing any new buildings. Other buildings on site would need additional permits. Not feasible.

Re the pond, it's a coy pond w/ fish, not usable for watering.

Commissioner Mullen, clarified, they have been using 2017 well since 2017 for grapes? That is the 2nd well. Ming, correct.

Vice Chair Freeman called for Commissioners' Comments or Motion.

Secretary Spaulding made a Motion to recommend approval. Re Commissioner Martin's concerns about water use - the important factor is that these are smaller plants, not the typical 6-8' plants that require more water. She accepts Applicant's estimate of using minimal amount. There aren't a lot of standards for the smaller plants; that information would be helpful. Commissioner Mullen seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

All in favor: all but one

Opposed: Commissioner Martin

Vice Chair Freeman, proposal is approved. Congratulated Mr. Ming & thanked him for presentation.

7. Consideration of items for future agenda

Ex-Officio Carr, inquired re the dispensary application at former Mexican restaurant on Hwy 12 from City of Sonoma. Could Pat & Chair find out from city? Have selected the operator, but still have to go through approval process. Since project is close to city/county boundary, almost in Boyes Springs, good to bring before SVCAC. Hopes City is agreeable. Pat Gilardi recommended one of the city liaisons - Commissioner Ding or Commissioner Pulvirenti reach out to city on that suggestion. Vice Chair Freeman, agreed.

Commissioner Pulvirenti, does not need to be on immediate agenda, wants to better understand relationship w/ SVCAC and MAC. What is uniqueness, how do they complement?

Vice Chair Freeman announced Commissioner Vella was promoted to meeting.

Commissioner Ding, today's discussion on water reminds him about UGB, which is on ballot in City of Sonoma. Possible to get educational presentation for SVCAC - a technical person. Pat Gilardi has reached out to city, asking city representative to ask city manager to bring forward educational presentation. It's a ballot measure, they must be cautious, can only be educational. Vice Chair Freeman, agreed w/ suggestion, growth boundary being moved an important issue. Pat Gilardi, yes, encouraged city representative to reach out to city. Commissioner Cornwall, if city isn't interested, there are other knowledgeable, technical people in community who could give a neutral presentation, worth exploring, better than nothing.

Commissioner Pulvirenti, will call Commissioner Ding re approaching city. Commissioner Ding agreed.

8. Adjournment 8:24

Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Board of Supervisors' Office located at 575 Administration Drive, Room 100-AI, Santa Rosa, CA, during normal business hours.

LINK TO YOUTUBE SVCAC AUGUST 25, 2020

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=YgXIAImuZwE&feature=emb_logo