



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council
Michael Nicholls, Chair

Members

January 13, 2020

Forestville

Lucy Hardcastle
Vesta Copestakes
Alternate: Gary Harris

Ms. Lynda Hopkins, Supervisor District 5
County of Sonoma
575 Administration Dr.
Santa Rosa CA 95403

Hacienda

Claudia Sisomphou
Alternate: Chelene
Lopez

Dear Supervisor Hopkins:

Pocket Canyon

Jeanette Dillman
Alternate: Bruce
McDonnell

The Lower Russian River MAC would like to summarize our activities and accomplishments over the calendar year 2019 for you and other members of the Board of Supervisors. Our summary is drawn from the complete record of activities extracted from our meeting minutes over the past year as well as from board reports.

Rio Nido

Pip Marquez de la Plata
Alternate: John Uniack

1. Bi-Monthly Meetings -- The Lower Russian River MAC generally convenes the third Thursday of every other month at 5:30PM, with special meetings, called as necessary, redeploying at various venues within the MAC boundaries.

Guerneville

Jeniffer Wertz
Jordan Lebovich
Alternate: Ron
Redmon

2. Organizational Year – 2019 was the initial year following MAC formation, therefore it was generally felt by the agenda ad hoc, staff and the chair to request key county department heads or designates to appear before the Council to introduce themselves and provide an overview of their departments' organization, mission and key objectives for councilmembers.

Monte Rio

Cynthia Strecker, Vice
Chair
Alternate: Kyra Wink

3. Presentations and Actions

Cazadero/Duncans

Mills
Michael Nicholls, Chair
Alternate:
Terry Gwiazdowski

- a. Establishment of a Community Engagement Guide
- b. Presentation by Sonoma County Human Services
- c. Presentation by Sonoma County Health Services, Behavioral Health Division
- d. Presentation by LRR Homeless Task Force
- e. Presentation on Rapid Rehousing by WCCS
- f. Presentation by Permit Sonoma – Tag Removal following February Floods
- g. Presentation by EDB – Emergency Flood Relief Loan Funding
- h. Presentation by Russian River Chamber – New Vision Foundation and other resources available to businesses following flood event.
- i. Presentation by TPW – West County Roads Update
- j. Presentation by Access Sonoma Broadband – Broadband project potential in West County
- k. Presentation by LRR Wastewater Citizens Advisory on TDML issues
- l. Sonoma County Sheriff – Security Overview in Downtown Guerneville

Clerk: Nance Jones
Staff: Elise VanDyne

- m. Presentation by Senator Mike McGuire
 - I. PSPS Event Updates
 - II. Legislative Update
 - III. Alert Notifications and 911 Upgrades
- n. Presentation by LAFCO
 - I. Fire Department Consolidation Update
 - II. Issues & Concerns re Consolidation
 - III. Benefits of Consolidation
- o. Presentation by Fire Safe Sonoma
- p. Presentation by Sonoma Clean Power – EV Charging Grant and charging location opportunities for West county.
- q. Presentation by Office of Recovery and Resiliency re Flood Recovery Funds and Distribution Planning in the LRR community.
- r. Presentation by Sheriff Essick re post PSPS and Kincade Evacuation
- s. Presentation by Fire Safe Occidental – establishment of fire safe council in local communities
- t. Presentation by WCCS – Winter Shelter Update and Homeless Statistics

4. Ad Hoc Committees

- a. Agenda – Jeanette Dillman
- b. Community Engagement – Claudia Sisomphou
- c. Flood Recovery – Michael Nicholls
- d. Flood Recovery Roads Prioritization – Pip de la Plata
- e. TOT Budgetary Steering – Jeniffer Wertz
- f. CAG Liaison – Cynthia Strecker
- g. Vacation Rental Exclusion Zone – Jeniffer Wertz
- h. Flood Mitigation Funding Distribution – Claudia Sisomphou

5. Accomplishments

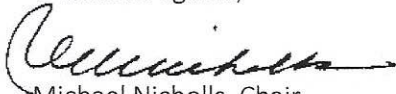
- a. Town Hall Meetings
 - I. Forestville – Fire Safe Town Hall
 - II. Hacienda – TPW Meeting and Website Development
 - III. Cazadero – MAC presentations following monthly Cazadero Community Club meetings
 - IV. Monte Rio – Fire Safe, Septic TMDL Meetings plus monthly meetings with key stakeholders in Monte Rio and Villa Grande
- b. Council Retreat – Review of Brown Act and Visioning
- c. Council Organization – Prepared for second year to act on MAC mission priorities and present recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on a regular basis
- d. Council Meetings – Council Members understand the public meeting process
- e. Facebook Outreach – Several Councilmembers erected MAC contact Facebook pages, encouraging and enhancing communication with constituents on local issues.

6. Communications

- a. WSCUHSD – Letter of Concern regarding discontinuance of Cazadero and Timber Cove school bus service.
- b. NBNCBC – Letter of Support
- c. TPW – Letter of Support – Hazard Mitigation, Westside Avenue.
- d. Board of Supervisors – Letter of Support for Russian River TMDL Project

Should you require additional detail regarding the 2019 activities of the LRR MAC do not hesitate to contact me.

Warmest regards,



Michael Nicholls, Chair
Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

Attachments – Ad Hoc Reports, Correspondence.

Cc: Council Members
Leo Chyi
Elise Van Dyne
Nance Jones

Ad Hoc Reports

(no report received from Flood Recovery Roads Prioritization Ad Hoc)



Lower Russian River Advisory Council
Ad Hoc Report - Agenda Setting
Jeanette Dillman, Chair
1/4/2020

The LRR MAC Agenda Setting Ad Hoc Committee has met its mandated obligation of bi-monthly meetings setting the agenda prior to bi-monthly LRR MAC meetings. It is charged with making recommendations on advisory topics including permit, rezoning and general plan amendment applications, prioritize transportation and transit improvements, health and human safety-net service and topics requested by the District Supervisor.

As stated in the protocol, "these topics both limit and drive the agenda requests that can be made and accepted by the LRR MAC."

The committee members include the LRR MAC chair (Mike Nicholls, Cazadero), three council members (Cynthia Strecker, Monte Rio; Pip Marquez de la Plata, Rio Nido; and Jeanette Dillman, Pocket Canyon) and the LRR MAC Secretary (Nance Jones, Guerneville).

The initial LRR MAC meeting was in February 2019. The next day another record setting Russian River flood occurred. Since that time the MAC was thrown into disaster mode, assisting Supervisor Hopkins in any way possible with flood and wildfire emergencies.

This first year has included, as well, many orientation presentations from Sonoma County departments. At this point the MAC is able to move on to other community issues.

The agenda setting protocol was established by the LRR MAC March 21, 2019. After working with this document the following recommendations are made:

- 1) Advise LRR MAC to set priorities for 2020 providing a solid base for agenda item consideration. Open discussion by all council members is critical to fair representation.
- 2) Include agenda setting protocol on the LRR MAC website with all other governing documents.
- 3) Maintain one week public notice of agenda prior to bi-monthly Council meeting in protocol.

Based on public comments, the protocol calls for public notice one week prior to the MAC meeting. Some suggest 2 weeks prior notice which is not recommended as this would make it difficult to complete a timely, comprehensive agenda. It is noted that agenda items can change as late as seven days prior to LRR MAC meetings.

Recommend that other public notice, such as posting agenda at a post office, is the responsibility of the council member.

- 4) Evaluate status of secretary as member of agenda setting committee. This is an appointed position and may not be appropriate as a decision making committee member.
- 5) Recommend inclusion of public education component regarding agenda setting process as a part of the implementation of the MAC Community Engagement and Outreach plan. Although this policy has been in place all along, no one has taken advantage of this process.
- 6) Develop a calendar which includes the deadlines for requesting placement of an agenda item.
- 7) Recommend committee meetings be held in the River area which is most appropriate for the council members.

This has been a unique and interesting first year of the LRR MAC. The Agenda Setting Ad Hoc Committee has diligently pursued advancing the interests of our community. From this experience we can further refine and develop the foundation of the LRR MAC.



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council
Ad Hoc Report – Community Engagement
Claudia Sisomphou – Chair
1/6/19

The Community Engagement Ad Hoc Committee was established at the February 25, 2019, LRRMAC meeting for the purpose of creating a community engagement guide for the Council.

1. Councilmembers Claudia Sisomphou, Jeanette Dillman, and Lucy Hardcastle were appointed to the Committee.
2. Claudia Sisomphou was named Chair of the Ad Hoc.
3. The Ad Hoc held meetings throughout the year and successfully developed a draft Community Engagement and Outreach Plan.
4. The Ad Hoc presented the draft Community Engagement and Outreach Plan to Supervisor Hopkins and staff in August 2019.
5. The Ad Hoc solicited feedback on the Community Engagement and Outreach Plan from the public and Council at LRRMAC meetings and community events.
6. The Ad Hoc proposed for the final Community Engagement and Outreach Plan to be approved and ratified by the Council at the February 20, 2020, LRRMAC meeting.



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council
Ad Hoc Report – Flood Recovery
Michael Nicholls – Chair
12/27/19

The ad hoc was established at the post flood special meeting in March 2019, specifically for the purpose of coordinating with first responders in identifying issues related to recovery issues.

1. Met with Region 5 Fire Chief's and Fire Board Presidents in late February and early March to discuss critical shortcomings related to flood recovery.
 - a. Communications issues – failure of Comcast network
 - b. PG&E power failure experienced up to 3 ½ days in rural areas of the district
 - c. Evacuation complicated with Comcast failure – residents unsure of status
 - d. Cazadero VFD and Cazadero Cal Fire 'flooded-in' with no outside assistance
 - e. Non-strapped propane tanks floated down river
 - f. Mis-deployment of trash bins by TPW created issues in some areas – fire departments worked with TPW to correct placement issues.
2. Coordinated recovery issues with Supervisor Hopkins and her staff
 - a. Spoke with Supervisor Hopkins or her staff on a daily basis during the recovery process.
 - b. Was able to cut through 'red tape' on many issues simplifying the delivery of rapid county recovery services to needed areas.
3. Reached out to Marcos Suarez of EDB who provided FEMA Recovery information and communicated opening of Guerneville flood assistance office to constituents.
4. Communicated with TPW daily on road conditions and strategized on local vegetation debris collection sites.
5. Ad hoc completed its assigned work in June 2019.

Tourist Impact Fund Ad Hoc Committee Lower Russian River MAC 2019 Report

On September 12th, 2019, TIF Ad Hoc Committee members met at the Board of Supervisors caucus room. Present at the meeting were Vesta Copestakes – Forestville, Gary Harris – Alternate Forestville, Cynthia Strecker – Monte Rio, Jeniffer Wertz – Guerneville, Supervisor Hopkins, and 5th District Field Rep. Elise Van.Dyne.

TIF Committee members brainstormed on suggested areas for funding prioritiiy, as well as criteria, and identified the following:

- Funding Areas
 - Trash
 - Disaster Preparedness
 - Restrooms
 - Parking
 - Crosswalks
 - Security
 - Housing
 - Affordable
 - Vacation Rental X Zones
 - Prevention and Eviction
- Funding Criteria
 - Greatest Impact on Community
 - Multi-Community Benefit
 - Best Return for Dollars (Leveraging)
 - Geographical Fairness
 - Environmental Sensitivity

A presentation was made at the public MAC meeting at the Monte Rio Community Center on October 17, 2019. There have been no further meetings of the TIF Ad Hoc Committee.



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council
Ad Hoc Report – CAG
Cynthia Strecker – Chair
1/2/20

I have been attending the monthly Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) meetings regarding wastewater solutions for Monte Rio and Villa Grande. This has been slow, meticulous work like that which is generally required by a major project of this type and complexity.

The CAG consists of community members from several lower river communities and staff representatives from both county and state agencies which are involved with implementation of new septic regulations. We have learned about the state-proposed TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) regulations - how they differed from the current Basin Plan regulations which are based on fecal coliform rather than levels of e-coli bacteria; how these regulations interact with the new county OWTS (Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems) regulations; and how they are governed by the state plumbing code.

This step included attendance at the state Regional Water Quality Control Board meeting where the TMDL regulations were adopted. A number of comments were individually submitted by members of the CAG as well as other individuals and the county itself which questioned aspects and conclusions of the Staff Report, especially the Streams of Evidence design of the study. However, the State Water Board felt the design was acceptable, made minor changes, and adopted the TMDL regulations. They will become law when they are passed by the state Legal team and adopted by the State Water Board — most likely this summer.

Probably the most important aspect of the TMDL regulations on which the CAG was able to effect change was the list of types of Qualified Professionals the county would allow to certify OWTS compliance at the regular 5-year assessment intervals. The adopted TMDL regulations were modified to note that the local agency managing the planned project will be able to modify the requirements needed by individuals performing these assessments. Possible suggestions from the CAG included licensed septic system contractors or a septic pumper who is certified by the National Association of Wastewater Technicians.

Shortly before the meeting with the State Board the county hired an ombudsperson, Alisha O'Loughlin, to help with community outreach. After the new regulations were adopted the CAG put effort into outreach materials, especially a flowchart designed to help citizens understand whether they will need to make changes to their current systems and what those changes will need to be. The flowchart also delineated how those determinations will be made. Members of the CAG made a presentation to the MAC in which they outlined the three possibilities contained in the Plan of Study and compliance deadlines.

It became clear that it was imperative for the CAG to explore the type of management district we will recommend. A district is necessary to apply for grant funding for construction, to manage the resultant project (whatever it may be) and also to apply for funding from the State's Division of Financial Assistance. Funding assistance will be necessary to offset at least some of the financial burden which the citizens of this economically depressed area are being asked to shoulder.

To this end Mark Bramfitt, the head of LAFCO spoke to us. The four options he outlined are:

- (1). Form a local district comprised solely of Monte Rio and Villa Grande,
- (2). Form a larger local; district with the ability to include other towns such as Occidental and Cazadero,
- (3). Implement one district for all the services in the region (a Community Services District - CSD). CSD's have latent powers to include the services of other districts such as Recreation and Parks.
- (4). Join the County Service Area (CSA) 41. This would be governed by the Board of Supervisors and includes a number of small, miscellaneous districts within the county.

Mark Bramfitt will be attending our Jan. 23rd meeting to talk with us further about the ramifications of each option.

The other issue we have been addressing is community outreach and future community meetings. This is something that Alisha has been spearheading. We have been assisting by compiling a list of the questions and concerns we have been hearing from community members.

Much of the CAG's work has been hampered by uncertainty. For many months we did not know exactly what the affected area would consist of or how that was determined. We didn't know what the TMDL regulations would be. We didn't know what the new OWTS manual would include. We know that cesspools will be prohibited, but we don't know how many cesspools our communities contain. We know that there will potentially be money made available to us from the state's Division of Financial Assistance but only recently we learned that none of that money has been dispersed to anyone at this point so that means there are no clear examples of application procedures. All of this means that persistence is required in order to make progress.

Vacation Rental X Zone Ad Hoc Committee Lower Russian River MAC 2019 Report

On October 17, 2019 at the public MAC meeting at the Monte Rio Community Center, MAC Chair Michael Nicholls appointed the following MAC Representatives to the Vacation Rental X Zone Ad Hoc Committee:

- Cynthia Stecker – Monte Rio
- Lucy Hardcastle – Forestville
- Jeanette Dillman – Pocket Canyon
- Jeniffer Wertz – Guerneville

A meeting was scheduled for this Ad Hoc Committee to take place on December 16th, 2019. Jeanette Dillman attended the meeting in person at the Board of Supervisors caucus room, along with 5th District Director Leo Chyi, and Jeniffer Wertz attended via WebEx. The other two committee members were absent. Due to the absence of two members, it was decided that the meeting should be postponed to a later date when all members could be present. No future meeting date has been scheduled at this point.



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council
Ad Hoc Report – Flood Mitigation Funding Distribution
Claudia Sisomphou – Chair
1/6/19

The Flood Mitigation Funding Distribution Ad Hoc Committee was established at the October 17, 2019, LRRMAC meeting, specifically for the purpose of defining projects that would qualify for the County's \$1.5M flood recovery funds.

1. Claudia Sisomphou, Michael Nicholls, Jeanette Dillman, and Jeniffer Wertz met with Supervisor Hopkins and District Director Leo Chyi on December 16, 2019 to discuss the parameters for funding consideration.
 - a. Projects within the following categories may qualify for the available flood recovery funds:
 - i. Improved communications during floods and disasters
 - ii. Fire department and first responder needs
 - iii. Economic resilience for local businesses
 - iv. Water runoff and pavement mitigation for roads
2. Claudia Sisomphou was named Chair of the Ad Hoc.
3. The Ad Hoc will meet in early January prepared to discuss potential projects for consideration and submission to Supervisor Hopkins in early February.

Correspondence



LOWER RUSSIAN RIVER MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, ROOM 100A
SANTA ROSA CA 95403

January 11, 2020

Cynthia Walker, Director - Communications Division
California Public Utilities Commission.
505 Van Ness Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94102
Re: Support Continuation of NBNCBC

Dear Ms. Walker:

It is increasingly impossible for people to live and work in the 21st century without adequate broadband access. Along the Lower Russian River, we face major infrastructure issues which impact first responders' ability to communicate in times of emergency; farmers' ability to adopt modernized farming practices (e.g. AgTech); students' ability to do homework effectively at home; healthcare patients' ability to utilize telehealth; and tourists' ability to explore our County effectively using mobile applications. Our communities are also restricted from broadband access due to digital illiteracy and unaffordable internet services/devices, which hinder the expansion and retention of our local workforce and discourages disadvantaged communities from receiving equitable opportunities.

To help address this problem The Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council strongly supports Sonoma County's membership in the North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium (NBNCBC).

NBNCBC's goal is to bring fast, affordable, and reliable broadband services to all communities, in each county, and across the region by tackling broadband issues and finding sustainable long-term solutions. In addition to their work on broadband infrastructure and adoption projects, The Lower Russian River MAC strongly urges CASF to approve and fund the NBNCBC proposal, and its plan of action.

Thank you for your past efforts in supporting the NBNCBC's formation in 2014/2015, again in 2017/2018, and hopefully now from 2019-2022! We trust that you have recognized NBNCBC's past achievements and support its ongoing efforts in working to close the Digital Divide.

Sincerely,

Michael Nicholls, Chair

Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

Sonoma County Fifth District Supervisor Lynda Hopkins
575 Administration Drive, Suite 100-A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

June 28, 2019

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Attn: Alydda Mangelsdorf
5550 Skylane Blvd.
Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: Russian River TMDL

To the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board:

I am writing on behalf of the Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council in support of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors' comments submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding the proposed Russian River TMDL.

The proposed regulations, while necessary for the health and wellbeing of the Russian River, do not take into consideration the needs of those who have made this area their permanent home. While many local residents are stewards of the land, numerous property owners do not have the financial means to make the changes the state will be requiring in the coming years.

The Lower Russian River MAC, supports the comments submitted by our Board of Supervisors, recommending adoption of a phased approach for implementation of the TMDL regulations. Furthermore, until improved monitoring data is available, we recommend the Regional Water Board focus on properties within 600 feet of the Russian River and phase in actions on tributaries at a later date. As funding will be a major burden for a majority of the members of our community, requirements should be phased in based on remediation funding availability.

In closing, the River MAC strongly urges, in full agreement with the Board of Supervisors, initial property owner inspection costs be minimized. Many septic systems in West County are known to be unidentified and hiring certified consultants for inspections is a cost that many of our residents on limited incomes cannot afford. Please consider alternatives to minimize or reduce inspection costs to assist our community in supporting the Regional Water Board in its effort to bolster the health of the Russian River.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Nicholls", written over a horizontal line.

Michael Nicholls, Chair
Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

Cc: Supervisor Hopkins



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council
Michael Nicholls, Chair

Members

August 5, 2019

Forestville

Lucy Hardcastle
Vesta Copestakes
Alternate: Gary Harris

Mr. Johannes Hoevertsz, Director
Department of Transportation and Public Works
County of Sonoma
2300 County Center Drive, Suite B 100
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Hacienda

Claudia Sisomphou
Alternate: Chelene
Lopez

Dear Mr. Hoevertsz:

Pocket Canyon

Jeanette Dillman
Alternate: Bruce
McDonnell

The Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) formally states its support of the County of Sonoma's Department of Transportation and Public Works Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program application for the Westside Avenue Road Project.

Rio Nido

Pip Marquez de la Plata
Alternate: John Uniak

After the extensive damage caused by the February 2019 Storm (see Major Disaster Declaration for California Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides, And Mudslides (DR-4434 & DR-4431)), the stability of Westside Avenue has been of tremendous concern to both the neighborhood and County personnel. The narrow public road serves as the only way in and out for fire and emergency vehicles. The structural integrity of the adjacent hillside is also of concern, where two homes remain red-tagged and yellow-tagged since the storm.

Guerneville

Jeniffer Wertz
Jordan Lebovich
Alternate: Ron
Redmon

While the site has received temporary mediation, there are still major repairs that must be made to widen the road for the passage of emergency vehicles, prevent the movement of the hillside, reinstall the neighborhood's water system, and divert the flow of water runoff. This situation is already troubling, as the entire Lower Russian River area is at risk of wildfires but becomes even more critical as the rainy winter months approach.

Monte Rio

Cynthia Strecker, Vice
Chair
Alternate: Kyra Wink

Cazadero/Duncans

Mills
Michael Nicholls, Chair
Alternate:
Terry Gwiazdowski

The completion of a geotechnical report for the road and the hillside is a matter of public safety, as are the vital road repairs. Therefore, the Lower Russian River MAC stands in support of the Department's request to include the hillside in the County's application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program.

Clerk: Nance Jones
Staff: Elise VanDyne

Sincerely,

Claudia Sisomphou, Hacienda Representative
Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

Michael C Nicholls, Chair
Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council



LOWER RUSSIAN RIVER MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, ROOM 100A
SANTA ROSA CA 95403

October 17, 2019

Tony Beal, Superintendent
West Sonoma County Union High School District
462 Johnson Street
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Dear Superintendent Beal:

Quite frankly we were shocked and disappointed to learn in late August of the school bus schedule realignment affecting students in Cazadero, Ft Ross and Timber Cove. These communities generally fall below published county household income averages and parents/guardians are absorbing additional costs transporting their high school students to the Jenner or Rien's Beach stops.

Many of our students come from households with both parents working to make ends meet. Parents in some cases have to rely on friends, parents of other students or relatives to drop off or pick up students at the remote stops. Traveling from Cazadero to Rien's Beach can be a 15 to 30-minute one-way drive, depending upon where students live in the Cazadero community and up to four trips a day for those responsible for transport.

Looking to the next academic year 2020-2021, we expect up to ten students from the Cazadero community and their families to be economically impacted due to a lack of bus service without a return to prior service routes.

Our hard-working families certainly deserve the same level of service from the WSCUHSD their peers in served areas receive for their tax dollars.

Sincerely,

Michael Nicholls, Chair

Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

cc: Mary Schafer – CBO mschafer.do.wscuhsd.k12.ca.us

Lynda Hopkins – lynda.hopkins@sonoma-county.org

Lori Bruhner – Board Vice President lbruhner.do@wscuhsd.k12.ca.us

Diane Landry – Board President dlandry.do@wscuhsd.k12.ca.us