

MARK WEST AREA MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MINUTES, May 8, 2024, 6:00 pm  
Hybrid Meeting  
Video Available Send request to [MarkWestCAC@gmail.com](mailto:MarkWestCAC@gmail.com)

**A) Call to Order:**

Chair Fies called to order, the regular meeting of Mark West Area Municipal Advisory Council (MWAMAC), 6:02 pm.

1. Roll Call

Members present: Chair Karen Fies, Stephanie Bisordi, Ron Calloway, Heidi Would, Haley Skerrett, Becky Menzel

Others Present: Jenny Chamberlain, Chief of Staff for James Gore, 4th District, County of Sonoma; Aggie Maggio, Secretary, MWAMAC

2. On a motion by Bisordi, second by Would, the Minutes of the regular MWAMAC meeting of April 10, 2024, were approved with the following correction:

- E.2. should read "The Fire Department Mother's Day breakfast is at Keiser Park in Windsor, May 12, from 8:00 am to noon."

The motion carried on a voice vote. (6-0)

**B) Presentations: ACTION ITEMS**

To proceed as follows: 1. Presentation 2. Council Member Questions 3. Public Questions

1. Renter Protection Listening Session - Erik Romero, Policy Analyst, Sonoma County's Administrator's Office, conducted a listening session to hear community concerns and inputs around the state of rental housing in Sonoma County (SC). Comments will be presented to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) at their 5/21/24 meeting, to help shape the policy options.

- On 12/5/23 the BOS, heard and discussed options to augment protections for unincorporated residential tenants.
- The BOS is asking for community engagement: Romero and associates are visiting MACs, community meetings, etc.
- They are working with consultants who conducted a series of key stakeholder interviews and focus groups.
- No presentations, so as not to be of any influence; just listening sessions about the state of the rental market.
- Tenant protections, placed during the pandemic, are over, leaving none in place for SC unincorporated areas.
- Romero wants to hear ideas, criticisms and/or anything that you think would be helpful.

Council Comments/Questions (includes some comments from Romero, responding to some general questions)

- Romeo: Stakeholders are anybody with interest in proposed protection options, e.g. landlords, renters, housing advocates, etc.
  - The big issue here is the Just Cause ordinance.
- Question: Will State and County laws supersede HOA rules regarding renters? Response: Yes
- Question: How does it work when unincorporated areas are adjacent to incorporated areas?
  - Response: Often people don't know in which jurisdiction they live; nor the laws for either area.
  - Currently, there is no communication on this point.
- Question: In such situations, who takes responsibility for ingress and egress, for new housing in general?
  - There are concerns of additional roads in the Mark West area, due to new housing.
- Jenny Chamberlain says one common complaint she hears is that the new housing does not provide enough parking. The residents park in illegal spots, creating a problem.
  - Council comments:
    - State law has reduced the requirement for parking spaces.
    - Concerns that with the new apartment complex at Old Redwood Hwy. and Shiloh, for example, people will park at Esposti Park.
- There is a pending proposal for multiple residential homes on Wembley Ct. The biggest concern was ingress, egress and parking. Parking is already impacted by it being a court. Now there will be, potentially, four residences added; each having two cars.

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- As far as the appeal for this goes, how will the County communicate to the neighbors over their main concerns and with the property owner, trying to sell?
- Response: Also heard about apartments with two and three bedrooms but only one parking space.
- Additional comment: Especially in unincorporated areas where there aren't any overflow parking areas.
- Romero: We are reaching out to both tenants and property owners/developers. We understand that owners/developers provide housing to the community. All have rights and a voice.
- There are a lot of concerns about people not wanting to invest in the community because of their rights being taken away as property owners. A number of landlords are pulling single family homes from the market due to restrictions and the resulting loss of money.
- It's crazy to not allow owners to charge deposits for pets. They often cause a lot of damage.
- Housing is important but it can't be at the expense of property owners.
- It's also difficult to remove a tenant when they are breaking the rules of the agreement. The property owners need protection to be able to remove a tenant when it's appropriate to do so. It's private property.
  - Is it due to state laws?
  - Response: Yes. The State supersedes the County. That's what we've found about SB 9.
- This can all lead to more housing shortages.
- Question: Are we seeing an economic benefit for the renters due to the increase of the supply?
  - How can the general rental market data be communicated to the renters?
  - It would also be good to know if the increased housing was making a difference in the County.
  - Good idea to overlay a population growth with that. Then we would have data about revealing if more housing is for existing population or growing population.

Community Comments/Questions

- Question: What's the scope of the policy?
- Response - Romero: It's mainly about the Just Cause Ordinance. This came from protections during COVID. Just Cause is about needing a reason to evict. There are a number of exceptions to Just Cause. It's possible we could close loopholes through policies. They are trying to keep as many people, as possible, in their homes. There are options to things like discounts. Some components would be rent stabilization, rent control and such.
- Some provisions in the policy will need to be revisited regularly and be adjusted according to market dynamics.
- A smaller subset of people is at risk of losing housing for reasons beyond inability to pay rent.
- Clayton Engstrom, Landlord for 44 years: Tenant protections go well beyond state mandates. The law was established in 2019 (AB 1482). These things are very onerous. Nothing in these proposed policies will protect tenants or keep them in houses longer. Over 96% of evictions are due to lack of payment.
  - Having to move a tenant out, put them up in a hotel for the months it takes to renovate a place; then bring them back into the property for the same rent, after spending \$30,000 to \$50,000 in renovations is a ridiculous proposal.
  - Other things, like having to pay the tenant three months of rent because the owner wants to get out of the business is ridiculous.
  - How are the policies going to protect tenants or preserve their housing?
  - It's going to make it a lot more expensive for a landlord to vacate a unit.
  - If a tenant is being hostile to the community and you need to get rid of that tenant; we have these laws protecting the tenant and the landlord has to go through a court system, that can be very, very expensive and take many, many months.
  - This is not good for health of rental market. "Every municipality that has these protections has a more screwed up market than we do."
  - State recommendations are probably far enough.
- Looking at what has happened in other larger cities that have this kind of rent restrictions, more pro-tenant, is a really good way to see exactly how it will impact SC.

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- It's important to look at mobile home park situations. They are being forced to pay high rents. Mobile homes are one of the best affordable housing options.
- Renters can't find affordable housing, and be able to move, in the time allotted to report that they plan to move. Sometimes 60 days is not even enough. 90 days would be best.
- Question: What is the outreach for getting input? Response: District Staff. We've also been working with a number of CBOs. It's going to be from different areas of the County. We want it to be more community driven vs. the County.
- Anyone can send more comments to Eric Romero at [erik.romero@sonoma-county.org](mailto:erik.romero@sonoma-county.org). Those comments will also be shared with the supervisors.

2. Update: Mark West Area Community Park, 4614 Old Redwood Hwy. Property - Chair Karen Fies

The ribbon cutting for the park is Saturday, May 11, at 12:30 pm at the park. It is immediately following the ribbon cutting for the newly installed Mark West Springs Road sidewalks at 12:00 pm, on the corner of Mark West Rd. and Old Redwood Hwy., where the fire sign is located.

Supervisor Gore will be at the park. There will be an opportunity to see the park design plan, make donations and have refreshments. We are still fund raising for development of the park.

**C) Presentations of Referrals from Permit Sonoma: ACTION ITEM None**

Consideration of proposed projects will proceed as follows: 1. Presentation by project applicant 2. Questions by Council Members 3. Questions and comments from the public 4. Response by applicant, if required 5. Comments by Council Members 6. Resolution (ACTION, if indicated)

**D) Jenny Chamberlain's Announcements/Reports/Discussions: Information only, unless stated**

1. Tree Ordinance Update: It is very detailed. It's about cutting down trees and the type of trees you can use to replace them. You can look it up by googling "Sonoma County Tree Ordinance" for details.

2. Insurance Webinar Update: We had the first webinar on the what's going on throughout the state. It was great. The video is on the newsletter. If you don't get it, send an email to Jenny at [district4@sonoma-county.org](mailto:district4@sonoma-county.org). She will send you the slides and the video.

Chair Fies recommends signing up for the County email. It is full of interesting information.

If you need assistance with your insurance, United Policy Holders can really assist you. They're all up to date with the laws and what's going on in insurance.

We are working on two new webinars. The first one will be on homelessness; then two weeks later one will be on climate and wildfire protection

3. Progressive Tribal Alliance is having its first annual festival in Windsor, Saturday May 11. It's a great non-profit. There will be social dances, vendors, food, etc. Supervisor Gore will also be there.

**E) Council Member Announcements/Information/Discussions/Disclosures: Information only, unless stated**

1. The Mark West Chamber Social is always the second Thursday of the month. See <https://markwest.org> for location and host.

2. The Fire Department Mother's Day breakfast is at Keiser Park in Windsor, May 12, from 8:00 am to noon. It is free for all attendees. There will be fire fighter and CPR demonstrations, a helicopter and a raffle. Donations are welcome. The fire fighters support a lot of causes.

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3. Menzel reported that the walking path around Schopflin field was approved by the BOS.

4. Karen Fies read an email sent by Willie Lamberson stating that citizens of Wikiup appreciate the new paved roads and thanking all those involved. It is attached to the minutes.

5. Calloway: Mark West Union School Board sent a letter to the Santa Rosa City School Board stating that they do not wish to participate in consolidation.

**F) Subcommittee Reports & Discussions: ACTION ITEMS**

1. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP) Subcommittee (Fies) **None**

2. Sonoma County General Plan for Mark West Area (Would)Lori Barber:  
Lori Barber reported. She sent the Request for Qualifications (RFQ), for seeking qualified persons, to create and administer a survey for the Mark West Area, to the General Council.

Fies: She reviewed it answered the County Council's questions, and thinks it's good to go. Johannes Hovertsz has agreed to be our department sponsor, because we're not a legal entity. Paul Hower, the accountant for this MAC, will be the fiscal agent.

Barber reported that they have a few prospects in mind to receive a RFQ, asking them to provide background information.

- They are planning to have the survey sent to all residents, including business owners.
- We have access to some questions, that we can use, from a 2015-16 survey.
- The existing conditions report will also be included.
- Overall cost of the proposal is a consideration for being chosen.
- We are asking for a timeline and references.
- Other details are being discussed and will be reported as they solidify.
- The RFQ can go out when it's ready, however the start date for the chosen bidder July 1, 2024, or later.

On a motion by Calloway, seconded by Skerrett, the RFQ is to be released, pending administrative details, to be added, with a start date for the vendor being no earlier than July 1, of the fiscal year 2024.

Comments: None

The motion carried on a voice vote. (6-0)

3. Community Development (Bisordi/Would)

There will be a letter going to all residents and businesses, informing them that the survey will soon be mailed. It will also introduce the MWAMAC. After the survey for the general plan goes out, the MAC postcard will go out.

**G) Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

This time is set aside to receive comments from the public regarding matters of general interest, not on the agenda, but related to MWAMAC business. Pursuant to the Brown Act, the MWAMAC cannot consider any issues or act on any requests during this comment period. Each person is usually granted three minutes to speak; time limitations are at the discretion of the Chair.

1. Pete Lescure would like to hear what the Mark West Union School District is planning to do about the traffic congestion.

**H) Future Agenda Items:**

Potential projects and/or suggestions for future MWAMAC meetings

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1. Community Services District (CSD)
2. Possibility of an update: COPE program (being prepared for emergencies) in Wikiup (or possibly Map Your Neighborhood - knowing where resources and/or community needs are) (TBD)
3. Possible speaker on home hardening and vegetation management (TBD)
4. Possible community clean up? Maybe in partnership with the Chamber (TBD) – Bisordi to take the lead
5. List of unmet needs projects for Larkfield/Mark West/Wikiup (TBD)
6. Discussion: Impact on Mark West area concerning the consideration of a casino on Shiloh Rd. (TBD)

**I) Adjournment:** ACTION ITEM

There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Would, seconded by Menzel, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17pm. The motion carried on a voice vote. (6-0)

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Approved Date:

Chair

**MWAMAC MEETINGS: 6:00 PM—SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH**

**Hybrid Meetings until further notice**

**Mark West School District Office, The Learning Center, 305 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa**

**(NOTE: Location or time may change due to anticipated greater community participation.)**

**Be sure to check the MWCAC website for meeting agenda, location & time**

[sonomacounty.ca.gov/Mark-West-Citizens-Advisory-Council](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Mark-West-Citizens-Advisory-Council)

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