



SPECIAL MEETING
Joint Meeting of the SPRINGS MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL and
the NORTH SONOMA VALLEY MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
Minutes of Special Hybrid Meeting In person/Zoom
September 24, 2024



The Springs Municipal Advisory Council represents the people of the Springs in Sonoma Valley as the voice of the community to elected representatives. SMAC is committed to engage with all community members in meaningful and inclusive ways to promote the health and wellbeing of the Springs.

Contact: Zaira Enriquez, Field Representative to Supervisor Susan Gorin
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For viewing purposes: Supervisor Gorin’s YouTube page w/ all meeting videos.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AA_EnxdzEng

Springs MAC Meeting 09/24/24 - Sonoma TV You Tube
NO VIDEO AVAILABLE

1. Call to Order & Springs MAC Roll Call 6:06pm

Roll Call: Vice Chair Winders

Present: Lombard, Fernandez, Reyes, Norman, Dong, Iturri

Absent: none

North Sonoma Valley MAC Roll Call

Present: Arthur Dawson (Chair), Matthew Dickey, Mark Newhouser, Martin Peña

Absent: Kate Eagles, Angela Nardo Morgan

Staff Present: Zaira Enriquez, Admin/Field Representative to Supervisor Gorin

Lupe Alvarez Tovar, Field Representative, lupe.alvareztovar@sonoma-county.org

Hannah Whitman, Field Representative to Supervisor Gorin at Hannah.Whitman@sonoma-county.org, North Sonoma Valley MAC

Lin Marie deVincent, Minute Taker

[*Note from Minute Taker: due to zoom meeting video fail these Minutes are incomplete. When possible, additional info from source/s to augment the basic notes was acquired & included. So noted in each section. Apologies for any unintended omissions.]

Translators online: Lorna Silva & Anabella Tidona

2. Public Comment/zoom Items not on Agenda. 3 minutes

Dave Ransom, lives just outside the 1st Supervisorial District in Santa Rosa. Goes to church Sonoma United Methodist. Lots of friends in the Springs. Hope for the best, they say, but

prepare for the worst. We are a few months away from quite possibly seeing Donald Trump sworn in for a second term. Later that day, he and his advisors have pledged, he will sit down and sign an executive order beginning the arrest of millions of Americans, their incarceration in concentration camps and then their expulsion from the country. I say “Americans,” because what is more American than being an immigrant, whatever roadblocks have been thrown in front of becoming a citizen. And Trump is making threats to deport as many as 20 million of them — that’s the number that’s now being bandied about.

Not only that, he wants to change the Constitution to deport their U.S. born kids, too. And recently, he has been telling the crowds at his rallies that he will get rid of the legal immigrants who are breathing new life and doing the work in the aging small towns in the east and Midwest, where the young people have left for greener pastures — the Haitians. We live in just such a small town. Can you imagine the fear that will course through this community if Trump is elected on November 5! As Trump’s campaign spokesperson Karolin Leavitt has pledged, “Americans can expect that, immediately upon President Trump’s return to the Oval Office, he will institute the largest deportation operation in American history. The illegals should not get comfortable, because very soon they will be going home.” And Trump advisor Steven Miller has said, “If President Trump gets reelected, the border’s going to be sealed, the military will be deployed, the National Guard will be activated, and the illegals are going home.” At Trump campaign events, supporters wave bold red-white-and-blue placards — printed up by the campaign — reading, “Mass Deportation Now!” Mass deportations would be a physical, economic, and moral crisis in Sonoma Valley. What would it compare to? The enslavement and genocide of the native Pomo inhabitants practiced by General Vallejo? The starving out of the Chinese Americans from Sonoma in the 1880s? The rounding up and putting into concentration camps of the county’s Japanese Americans in WWII? Hope for the best, prepare for the worst. The Valley’s Municipal Advisory Councils are an official voice of the people. Perhaps clear strong voice from them would convince the Board of Supervisors to start making plans for what steps we will take to defend our community. Let’s don’t wait until November 6. Thank you.

Public Comment on zoom, none.

3. Safety Element Update and New Environmental Justice Element of the Sonoma County General Plan Presentation by: Permit Sonoma Staff

Background is available on the General Plan Update website:

<https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/proposedlongrangeplans/generalplanupdate/environmentaljusticeandsafetylelementupdate>

[General Plan Environmental Justice and Safety Element Updates \(permitsonoma.org\)](https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/proposedlongrangeplans/generalplanupdate/environmentaljusticeandsafetylelementupdate)

Additional materials, including presentation, will be added no later than 72 hours before the meeting

Project Description: The County’s General Plan is the blueprint for land use, development, and public action in the unincorporated County. It provides policies for balancing change and preservation within our communities, fostering healthy communities, and protecting environmental resources. At a July 23, 2024 meeting, the Board of Supervisors held a workshop

on the General Plan 2020 Safety Element Update and New Environmental Justice Element. The workshop presented the status of the update process, identified communities of focus for the elements, and included a discussion on policy approaches for prioritizing improvements in disadvantaged communities (known as Environmental Justice Communities) and how best to incorporate climate adaptation and resilience policy into the General Plan. The agenda materials for the Board of Supervisors workshop included Policy Frameworks that outline potential policy strategies to address hazard safety and environmental justice issues in Sonoma County. The Policy Frameworks were developed from community input obtained throughout the planning process thus far and are intended to facilitate the policy development process. The Board workshop agenda materials can be found [here](#) and a video of the workshop can be found [here](#).

On September 24, 2024, Planning staff from Permit Sonoma will 1) present an overview of the requirements for the Safety and Environmental Justice Elements, and 2) seek input from the North Sonoma Valley MAC, Springs MAC, and members of the public on Sonoma Valley's policy priorities and ideas to protect the public from hazards and prioritize the needs of environmentally-burdened and under-resourced communities. Permit Sonoma staff will facilitate a discussion with MAC members and listen to comments from members of the public in attendance. Feedback from the meeting will inform the draft Safety and Environmental Justice Elements that will be released for a public review period prior to adoption.

These two element updates will be completed in advance of a comprehensive General Plan update process, which has recently begun, in order to comply with State mandates. The Board of Supervisors will hear an update from Permit Sonoma staff on the status of the comprehensive General Plan update process at their October 15th meeting in advance of the General Plan 2020 Safety and Environmental Justice Elements going before the Board for adoption.

GeneralPlan@sonoma-county.org

Presenting: Katrina Braehmer, Supervisor Permit Sonoma & Claudette Diaz, Project Manager

Katrina.Braehmer@sonoma-county.org Claudette.Diaz@sonoma-county.org

Power Point 41 pp (See full presentation in Supplemental doc file)

Katrina Braehmer, General Plan, Planning & Land Use, guides public action which affects public life.

SVCAC meeting Oct 23rd further comments. Directed community to updates on website

MAPS

Five Topics to prioritize derived from BoS packet. Discussion on potential policy ideas.

GENERAL PLAN definition

<https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/adoptedlong-rangeplans/generalplan>

Describes the community's vision for Sonoma County

Includes goals, policies, implementation strategies

Identifies strategies for managing preservation & change

SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE

In 2020 Ten Elements; Safety Element = natural hazards.

Environmental Justice Element is new: disproportionate impacts from environmental pollution.

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

<https://permitsonoma.org/Microsites/Permit%20Sonoma/Documents/Long%20Range%20Plans/General%20Plan/Environmental%20Justice/General-Plan-Safety-Environmental-Justice-Fact-Sheet-20230421-English.pdf>

PROJECT HISTORY SLIDE, Community Engagement Strategy

Background analysis, enviro justice tech report, climate change vulnerability assessment

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES (EJ)

Fetters Hot Springs - Aqua Caliente

Issues affecting the Sonoma Communities:

25% of population within this census tract is affected by housing cost burden

86th percentile for housing burden across all census tracts in CA

Highest rates of overcrowding – 29% of household deemed overcrowded

72nd percentile for linguistic isolation in So CO

Next step: Draft Elements

1. Development of draft policies & measures for the elements
2. Release draft elements for public review
3. Planning commission & BoS public hearings for adoption

Policy Framework Purpose and Structure p12 in doc

Issue statement

Key existing plans

Desired outcome

Community input

Strategy ideas

Environmental Justice Element policy frameworks

Key thoughts Review Policy Frameworks: priorities, concerns, what's missing

Safe and Sanitary housing: housing quality and overcrowding

CHAIR DAWSON CALLED FOR COUNCIL COMMENTS

PS (Permit Sonoma) replies

FIRST ISSUE: HOUSING QUALITY and OVERCROWDING

What are criteria to create “being overcrowded?” PS: at federal level, census data.

What is data for English? PS: 70% linguistic isolation, 72 percentile.

Can today's comments affect relevant issues? PS: will connect to actions over 3 year period.

Public Comment, zoom, none

13 key aspects of housing quality

DISCUSSION: which strategies are highest priorities?

COUNCIL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/RECOMENDATIONS

How can strategies be ensured? E.g. Renters are having to do own home repairs, should be landlords' responsibility. Need teeth and funding.

Renter protection & Legal Aid. Community members BIPOC, experiencing racism. Lack transportation, on long wait lists, need experienced advocates. Once renters are locked out, can't return. Must prioritize access to renter protection, keep them in homes. Rental support if needed. Language challenges. Dealing w/ families, children. Schools declining enrollment, no housing.

Smoke detectors requirement - how to enforce? Look at Code requirements, remind landlords. #1 ensure homes are sound and comfortable. Seems unrealistic. Should be mapped out, list of tasks in a timeframe. Have 2 years.

Require landlords to translate into Spanish any eviction notices.

How to monitor improvement in housing quality over time? How is info relayed to public? Is Plan going forward? PS: not specifically addressed. Code violations. This first time addressing in GP.

Residents going against big corporations, E.g. Mission apartments, Aqua Caliente - how does county hold corps accountable? Causing lead issues. How to provide resources in face of threats? Need a backup.

Next step? Metrics used?

Aspirational info in presentation - no practical value. Need specific way to do inspections, etc. Community Development Commission has a program; manage rental assistance.

Identify objectives within strategies.

EJ community, re Glen Ellen, apply to other places.

ISSUE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND LANGUAGE ACCESS, Limited or non-English Speakers
COUNCIL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/RECOMENDATIONS:

Ballot proposition; provide election materials in different languages.

Literacy problems, assuming all can read. Consider AI options to assist w/ document access.

Springs is high non English speaking, create neighborhood services liaison, at new East County Services Center. Provide direction to helpful agencies. Takes funding. Also, many nonprofits, e.g. La Luz, Asian American org, native speakers. Not just for translation.

There is fear in community. Families unaware of options for help. Afraid to ask as immigrants. Important this work reaches people.

Timeline for this? Community outreach? Revisit? PS: Draft Policy by end of 2024 for public review. 4-5 days to review. Open to feedback, hold workshops. Focusing now on ideas.

Is this plan for all county councils? Office of Equity. Translate documents, but not accessible, can't use computers or smart phones. Need regular printer flyers again. Access to agencies. Also, need a bilingual person in each 27 departments. Nonprofits in middle. How to create better bridges?

Require landlords or corporate to give to renters in translation. Provide other legal forms.

Berkeley has a Housing Board, hand over renters' rights, check smoke detector, etc.

Money will be saved by better application of programs; in terms of health benefits.

ISSUE: Infrastructure & Utility Resilience sewer roadways bridges etc.

COUNCIL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/RECOMENDATIONS

County needs countywide Evacuation Plan. Identify wider roadways, etc. County should be funding. Bridges, major obstacle. PS: General Plan not creating new sources of funding but recognize necessity.

Earthquake concerns. Just redid several bridges, analyze process. Work w/ Dept. of Emerg Mgmt., FEMA, Emerg Services could fund. 2 year process to write a report. Also, building stock, how many before 1994, subject to collapse?

Urban Initiative, zone report, highest earthquake risk zone

Responsibilities, when power goes off.

Will county consider use of private Evac Study for future studies? PS: unsure.

Power outages create problems w/ health/medical equipment.

Water system? Potable water during shelter in place critical. Much water comes from Russian River. Only a few wells. Safety of pipeline. PS: in another section, overlaps, relevant.

20 years ago Report, noted turbine under El Verano Bridge; if it breaks, no water delivery.

ISSUE: Safety Element Policy Frameworks

Public Comment

Jim McFadden, Boyes Hot Springs, member of Sonoma Methodist Church, in Sonoma Valley Housing Group. Grateful County is developing new General Plan w/ Social Equity, especially affordable housing; important to prioritize. Housing burden household spends greater reading material in packet, repeated phrase, as required by law. CA 2 bills sponsored show consequences. Better to work w/ than against. Could include developments, e.g. Hanna, SDC. Maybe tied up in court for years. Could be done quickly, interim use of SDC dormitories, growing number of valley homeless. SDC did detailed plan, by general contractor and engineer. Plan available.

Caitlin Cornwall, [comment provided via email] Extreme heat is missing! (Staff says it's in the safety element draft but after consulting with MACs they didn't highlight it tonight) It's a major safety issue for several categories of vulnerable populations (including all outdoor workers: construction, landscaping, agriculture), and it's an EJ issue, so it needs to be on the list of major topics.

Goals should not just be about reducing bad things for disadvantaged communities, they should also be about fairness in distributing the benefits of SoCo's world-renowned environmental goods and services.

What types of policies could help advance a future where the east county hub is functional, staffed, effective?

On housing:

- Problems will not be tackled unless they are measured and therefore quantified.
 - Many groups including SVC have been pushing the County to establish a rental registry. A registry that tracks evictions, landlords who have a lot of evictions, buildings with repeated habitability violations or reports, and related data is something the County can create and manage.
 - Quantify investor ownership of single family homes
- [Permanent, better just-cause eviction protections: apply the protections to single-family homes \(which are 60% of Sonoma County's rental stock\) and to homes newer than 15 years.](#)

Community Engagement and Language Access

If this is not still happening, County should pay public-facing staff a premium for language proficiency.

Infrastructure and equity

Prioritize equity in capital improvement process. Example: Sewer overflows in the Springs during rainstorms. Natural infrastructure like trees and creeks for swimming should be invested in. Parks, Roads. Prioritize infrastructure limitations that support affordable housing projects, public parks, and other public-benefit and equity improvements. Infrastructure for extreme heat.

Dave Ransom, Sonoma Valley Housing Group, grateful for Joint MAC session; North MAC combining w/ Springs MAC. Concerned whether the county can enforce its laws; the SV Housing Group learned 12 years ago that laws aren't enforced. During 2017 fires, it came in both ways

on Hwy 12, w/ Springs in middle, & county not transmitting any info in Spanish. People were frantic. Neighbor Mario Castillo drove around & reported in translation, also live on Facebook. Evacuation Planning needs to start w/ Springs & must be bilingual. Springs is 15 thousand, city of Sonoma 10 thousand. There can be 4 people to a room in the Springs. How to help these folks? Re evacuation, if Hwy 12 cannot accommodate then perhaps it should be expanded into 4 lanes.

ISSUE: Emergency Prep & Response, alerts & evacuations

COUNCIL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/RECOMENDATIONS

Concerned about adequate fire prep. Need more grant funding. Study done. Springs MAC advocating.

Springs not along Hwy 101 corridor for evacuation. Would need to prioritize. Re Alert programs - not effective. Other agencies passed bond measures to install systems. LRAD- long range announcing devices. Bilingual needed. In Mexico City, 7. Earthquake, had loudspeakers. Springs, needs to do drills. Relies on Fire Dept., doesn't have staff. Who announces, is it coordinated? Also, coordination w/ Emerg Prep. SCORE, sirs, core, 3 different programs. Need one training program, bilingual, community organized. Generators, helmets, walkie talkies, crowbars, shut off gas devices. Train people to sustain.

Ag Pass programs re vineyard, vs livestock. Wildfire season coordinates w/ harvest season. Vineyards prioritized over safety of people/workers. Suggested penalties to vineyard owners if risking workers. Hold accountable, fine. Discussion that dismissed workers safety. Also compensate workers.

Safety equipment, masks. Homeless people. Did MYN, still going. Harder to mobilize low income hoods, less time.

Re elders dependence on phones. 2017 fire disaster.

Shelter location/s. ADA signed off w/ Red Cross. Problem if they have pets.

Returning people to homes, lives, jobs after fires? Recovery.

Training programs. SCOPE, other models MYB. Community organizing at neighborhood level to prep for Emerg. Organizing critical. Need a devoted leader. Do it on a small scale, 15-20 homes. Sebastopol successful. Re evacuation, traffic studies, could take up 4-6 hours. Need preordained sequence of evacuation. Leave early. Have better communication now, levels in place. Elderly, disabled, families, pets. Evac Study will reveal what is needed.

Need to collaborate w/ different Fire Districts.

Security of property that is vacated? Heard stories of break ins, etc. Other property lost.

ISSUE: WILDFIRE

COUNCIL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS/RECOMENDATIONS

Regulate new development. Research in fires shows happen in same place. Why rebuild in same place? Make fire zones.

Home hardening, buffering, vegetation mgmt. around homes, need a balance. Cut down all the trees, unlivable. Need more balance, habitat for birds, etc. also, trees keep ground cooler.

People want to take trees out, can't afford. Landlords need to help. County help homeowners. Insurance being cancelled. Also, extreme heat, and extreme cold. County cooling heating centers, requires 3 days to open. Many Springs houses old ones don't have AC. Open centers right away. And stay later if needed.

Infill housing in Springs. Road widths terrible. ADU. E.g. Donald Gap project to add 400 new units. Highest fire area. Restrict housing

Fire insurance. Tied to equity, enviro justice.

Vegetation mgmt. resilient landscaping. Protects homes. Compatibility w/ elements in GP. Recognizes sincere concern by county to address. Suffering net loss of vegetation. Can't do carbon sequestering. State is recognizing extreme measures. First 5 feet most important. Most fires are from embers, burning inside out. There's a push to incentivize this preventive work. Educate.

Public Comment.

Received via email from Dave Ransom; his notes on MACs JOINT MEETING ON SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE. Prepared for presentation to the Sonoma Housing Group.

In many ways, this meeting was a result of the Spanish-language hearing that Mario made happen, and the Springs MAC meeting that followed it, where our input helped bring about its ad-hoc housing committee (Celeste, Iris, Gil Dong).

Permit Sonoma staff outlined the requirements for the two general-plan elements (safety and environmental justice) and asked for input, saying draft policies would follow. Council members from both MACs asked how the elements were going to implemented and funded, what the next steps were going to be, and how the outcome would be measured. Apparently, there will be another event, October 23, for more (and more detailed) input.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The members of the Springs MAC brought up housing needs, including renter protection, additional legal aid, and rent support (Celeste), active enforcement (Gil Dong), translation of documents (Teresita Fernandez), and the landlord required to pass documents outlining rights to their tenants (Gil). Maricarmen said that renters (mobile-home owners?) were going up against deep-pockets corporations and asked how they were going to be held to account. Iris pointed out that tenants are afraid to go up against their landlords.

The North Valley MAC folks wanted the county to get involved as a mediator in issues between landlords and tenants (Matthew Dickey) and said they needed more detail to comment, plus info on where they money is going to come from (Mark Newhouser).

Permit Sonoma staff said that they didn't have a draft element yet, but hope to have one by the end of the year, after which there would be a public-review period — and that they plan to do another public survey.

SAFETY

Folks pointed out that the County shouldn't assume that people are literate (Celeste) or that they have a computer or cell phone and that services like the Health Center need text files that they can print out when they need it (Maricarmen). North Valley's Matthew Dickey then said that broadband access (for all) was necessary.

Arthur Dawson wondered whether the county will consider the privately-funded evacuation study under way. Dickey noted that a lot of what was being discussed would require studies. Who will pay for them? How will they be prioritized?

Celeste wanted vineyard owners fined for putting people in danger. Iris wanted the homeless taken into account and noted that low-income folks have less time to mobilize and otherwise be involved because they are working so much. Maite wanted the elders taken account of, and others who don't use cell phones.

North Valley's Mark Newhouser argued for community organizing at a neighborhood level to prepare for ordered evacuations.

Celeste said folks in the Springs need financial assistance to trim trees for fire safety, and called for the county to open up centers for the homeless on the first (not third) day of extreme cold or heat. She pointed out the problems power outages make in the Springs. Gil Dong worried that apartments built before 1994 might not be resilient to quakes. Maricarmen asked about the quake readiness of the bridges. Mark Newhouser wondered about an earthquake's effect on the water system. Arthur Dawson thought maybe the county ought to be ready to truck water in.

Adjourned 8:36pm

Contact: [Zaira Enriquez, Field Representative to Supervisor Susan Gorin](mailto:Zaira.Enriquez@sonoma-county.org)
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NONE AVAILABLE

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Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Springs Municipal Advisory Council after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Board of Supervisors' Office located at 575 Administration Drive, Room 100-A1, Santa Rosa, CA, during normal business hours. You may also find them on the Springs MAC website at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/springs-mac>

Note: Consideration of items will proceed as follows:

Presentation by proponent 2. Questions by Commissioners 3. Questions and comments from the public
4. Response by proponent, if required 5. Comments by Commissioners 6. Resolution, if indicated

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