



Mariposa County

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FINAL MINUTES OF THE MIDPINES PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APRIL 9th, 2025 (Technical Approval)

TIME: 6:00 P.M.
LOCATION: JUNE BUG CAFE
6979B HIGHWAY 140
MIDPINES, CA 95345

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

Seeing a quorum, the regular meeting of the Midpines Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC) was called to order by Chair Huppe at 6:11 PM.

Present: Gary Francisco, Adam Ferguson, Heather Huppe, Charles Lammers, Rosemarie Smallcombe (Supervisor), Caroline McGrath, Art Baggett (Planning Commissioner), Angela Heiss

Excused: Candy O'Donel-Browne, Eileen Collins, Nancy Parke

Staff: Polina Pivak

B. Approval of Minutes

1. February 19th, 2025

By a unanimous vote, the MPAC approved a motion by Ferguson, with a second by Francisco, to accept the minutes with corrections.

Corrections:

Item 2, Page 4 – delete “of,” add period

Supervisor Update – Fix redundancy on “organizational structure.”

C. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Smallcombe provided information on upcoming Ferguson Slide workshops on April 17th at the Bug Hostel and on April 24th in El Portal. Huppe asked when the project proponents expect to begin and Smallcombe responded that it depends on when a contract can be signed but they are aiming for late summer. Huppe asked if there will be any disruption to traffic. Smallcombe stated that there might be and encouraged attendance at the workshops for any questions.

D. Discussion and Potential Action to Define Future Status of Midpines Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC)

Pivak and Huppe introduced the item. Pivak provided clarity on the potential action items. Lammers stated that he would like to see the advisory nature of the committee remain in some capacity by removing the word “Planning” from the name to continue to advise the Board of Supervisors. Pivak clarified that removing the word “Planning” from the name of the committee does not change the

requirement for County staff to serve the committee and compliance with the Brown Act. The committee would still be board-appointed.

Baggett asked how the advisory committee in Yosemite West runs. Smallcombe stated that the committee is board-appointed to advise Public Works on its responsibilities in Yosemite West.

Francisco agreed with Lammers that being a board-appointed committee makes their work and the committee official.

Huppe directed the group to consider the two potential actions.

Lammers stated that the new purpose of the committee would be to advise the Board of Supervisors on issues relating to the Midpines community.

Baggett stated that you may not need staff to serve the committee. The committee can take its own minutes and be self-sufficient, while still complying with the Brown Act.

Heiss stated that the issue is whether the committee is board sanctioned or not and what the committee's responsibilities would be.

Huppe asked Smallcombe if it would be possible to recommend that the Board of Supervisors continue to sanction and appoint members to the committee under a new purpose.

Smallcombe stated that it is important to define the purpose of the committee and determine whether the committee should meet under the hospice of the Board of Supervisors to best serve that purpose. Smallcombe stated that she does not feel that the discussion of the usual updates and activity reports is effective under the Brown Act.

Francisco asked whether the Board of Supervisors would allow the committee to meet without complying with the Brown Act as a board-appointed committee. Smallcombe stated no.

Francisco stated that there were other Mariposa County communities that served in an advisory capacity for creating Special Plans and then changed their status over time as the planning responsibility was completed. Francisco stated that the purpose of the committee will need to be defined whether there is board support or not. There are plenty of ongoing issues for the committee to continue to discuss.

Heiss asked if the committee is board-appointed would they be taken seriously. Smallcombe responded yes. Smallcombe stated it is important to determine what structure would be best to achieve the goals of the group. There can't be political advocacy on the important community issues as the Midpines Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC).

Smallcombe reiterated that there is not a nexus between issues being voted on and considered by the Board of Supervisors on the regular agenda and the purpose of the Midpines Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC).

Baggett stated that the committee doesn't have to be official to provide input on important community issues and can have influence, citing how the wild and scenic status of the Merced River was achieved. Heiss asked how the structure of the committee would work as a non-board-appointed committee. Huppe stated that Smallcombe has committed to helping the committee get off the ground and establish a structure. Heiss clarified whether a quorum would be needed. Huppe said no. Huppe said that the group can organize and advocate at the Board level without board-appointment. The identity of the group does not go away if the committee is no longer board sanctioned. The important task would

be to gather community members to engage and be involved in the work of the committee. Smallcombe agreed and said that there is great work to continue to build upon.

Lammers stated that there are ongoing issues that need to be officially recognized by the Board of Supervisors by remaining as a board-appointed committee. Smallcombe stated that advocacy and change has to happen as a non-board-appointed committee, because the MPAC cannot take political positions. Lammers disagreed, because there cannot be official recognition of the committee's position. McGrath stated that if the committee is not board-appointed they can write a letter to the Board of Supervisors on issues of interest and have more impact.

Francisco recommended a standing town-hall committee that meets on a quarterly basis that is appropriately advertised to the broader community, which would better represent the community. For example, based on the consensus at a town hall meeting, the group could advocate on the issue of Muir Lodge to the Board of Supervisors. Francisco feels that the ongoing issues are not being resolved due to a lack of community involvement and this could be improved by a free-standing, but structured, committee that represents the whole community. Bylaws could be created, and the Brown Act would not have to apply, while being more effective as a legitimate community group.

Smallcombe reiterated that the kind of advocacy that is needed cannot be done by a board-sanctioned committee.

- Potential Action to Recommend Dissolution of MPAC to Board of Supervisors

With a motion by McGrath, a second by Heiss, the MPAC voted to recommend that the Board of Supervisors dissolve the MPAC.

Aye: Heiss, Ferguson, McGrath, Huppe, Francisco

No: Lammers

5-1-3

- Potential Action to Establish New Status of MPAC

With a motion by Heiss, second by McGrath, the MPAC voted unanimously to continue as a town-hall structured committee that is made up of its current members, meets quarterly, and defines its rules once effective.

Francisco clarified that that this would be effective upon dissolution by the Board of Supervisors. Lammers asked what are the chances that the Midpines Community Plan would need to be brought back for consideration by the committee. Pivak explained that the chances are low, because any further changes would be based upon the recommendations of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

July 9th would be the next meeting.

E. Further Discussion on Next Steps to Establish Additional Uses, Like Trails, at the Midpines County Park

Pivak passed out maps of the site north of Midpines County Park. Smallcombe stated that she would ask the County and PG&E about their plans for the site. Francisco stated that the committee may be a bit premature on planning, because more help would be needed and the status of the committee would need to be made clear. Huppe stated that they can begin planning and understand what steps need to be taken. Maybe by the fall some work can be done. Francisco recommended presenting the plan to the Parks and Recreation Committee. A meaningful plan must be made by walking the site, which means the

site must be cleared just enough to allow for planning. Huppe stated that this project would likely cost money.

Smallcombe and Pivak stated that the Midpines County Park was included in a Master Recreation Plan for the County. Francisco stated an Americorps team has previously done clearing and trail work for the County and any existing plans could be the basis for funding this project. A plan for the trail is needed first.

Huppe committed to speaking with Bill King of Mariposa Trails to become involved in the project. Lammers stated that Americorps and Mariposa Trails would be great starting points to get the project off the ground.

F. Discussion on Potential Bear Creek Clean-Up

Lammers stated that about a week ago he spoke with the Upper Merced River Watershed Council on cleaning up the creek. They examined different areas of the creek that need cleaning up. Lammers stated that it is in the hands of the Council to organize a clean-up of Bear Creek. The clean-up would likely take place along approximately 3 miles of Bear Creek from Outward Bound to just past the Bug as the river canyon begins. Lammers stated that Outward Bound needs to be engaged, because the trash in the creek is theirs. January and February are the best times to do the clean-up. Huppe asked if property owner authorization is required. Heiss stated that yes. Lammers said that most of the property owners are known and would likely support the project.

G. Updates and Activity Reports

1. Community Plan Draft Update

Pivak stated that approval of the plan is expected in the summertime after the formal public comment periods.

2. Muir Lodge Site Update

The group discussed existing options and a lack of progress on the site. There is not an enforcement mechanism to resolve the issue of the site. The County does not want to take legal action. Another email was sent to the property manager, but there was no response. There were plans to schedule the demolition of the last two structures.

3. Oak Fire – Update, Evacuation Routes, and Lessons Learned

No update.

4. KOA/Terrramor Update

No update.

5. Whispering Pines/Bear Creek Cabins Update

No update.

6. Oak Road Bridge Project Update

No update.

7. CALTRANS Project/Study Update

Another email was sent to Caltrans. No updates.

8. Planning Commissioner Update

Title 17 was finished at the last meeting and just needs to be formally voted upon. The next area of review is Title 16. There was a joint meeting with the Code Compliance Advisory Committee, which has recommendations ready to go. A contract would be needed to write the code language to write the modifications to Title 1 on code compliance.

9. Supervisor Update

Smallcombe stated that the first session for the budget for the next fiscal year was held on 4/8. Some Departments presented; the others will present next week. There is a lot of uncertainty around revenue. Hiring for the Development Services Director is underway. Approximately 3 individuals will be selected from the ongoing interviews and will be interviewed by the Board of Supervisors in June. John C. Fremont is taking on a large remodeling project and it will be important for Development Services to be effective.

H. Future Agenda Items

None.

I. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Huppe adjourned the meeting at 8:14 PM.