



Mariposa County

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Mariposa County DRAFT Minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Committee



FINAL MINUTES OF THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 3, 2024 (Approved as Amended 10/30/25)

TIME: 8:30 A.M.

LOCATION: GOVERNMENT CENTER UPPER FLOOR

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAMBERS

5100 BULLION STREET, MARIPOSA

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Tony Toso called the meeting to order at 8:30 am and called for the roll:

Members present: Tony Toso, Jordan Cory (alternate), Carla Kelly, John Shimer, Kelly Williams, and Lyle Turpin (alternate).

Members excused: David Mecchi.

Planning Staff: Steve Engfer, Sophea Craighead, Hannah Harrison, and Ben Goger.

Other County Staff or Representatives Present: Monica Nielsen (Ag Commissioners Office), and Mick Herman (District 3 Planning Commissioner).

B. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Persons wishing to speak on a matter not on the agenda, but within the jurisdiction of the committee. None.

C. Approval of Minutes

1. **September 28, 2023** (Clarification needed on approval from June 20, 2024 meeting)

Kelly Williams made a motion to approve the September 28, 2023 draft minutes at the June 20, 2024 meeting when he was not yet a member; therefore, he could not vote. Staff requested clarification as to whether Williams was in attendance or had listened to the audio of the meeting and read the minutes in its entirety for a technical vote.

Toso noted that he found errors in the minutes and requested the following items be corrected:

- Lyle Turpin's name was misspelled on the agenda.
- Identify the alternate members (Jordan Cory and Lyle Turpin) on the agenda.
- Correct "ACC" throughout the minute as it should be "AAC".
- To include the vote count.
- Item #3 Elections, replace "appointed" with "elected".
- Page 2, Item 5a, change the language from "The parcel being undersized and not in

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- compliance on its' own" to "The parcel being undersized and not substandard to minimal 160 acre requirement".
- Page 2, Item 5a, change the language from "Concerns were raised about the neighboring parcel, under separate ownership which is also undersized and cannot stand on its own for compliance" to "Concerns were raised about the neighboring parcel under separate ownership which is also undersized and not substandard to the minimal 160 acre requirement".
 - Page 2, Item 5a, remove "a" before Non-Renewal and replace "were" with "where" to state "The option of Non-Renewal was suggested for the applicant where they could come back after the orchard....".
 - Page 2, Item 5a, amend "By Motion of Kelly, Seconded by George, the ACC was unable to support a recommendation at this time to allow for a building permit for a residence , application was denied" to "By Motion of Kelly, Seconded by George, the AAC voted that they were unable to support an approval recommendation at this time. Application was denied". Also, to include the votes.
 - Page 2, Item 5a, last paragraph, change "After the vote, Toso stated that it is the Department of Conservation that sets the rules and is our duty to support the program" to "After the vote, Toso stated that it is the California Department of Conservation that sets the base LCA guidelines and the county is obligated to follow them."
 - Page 2, Item 5b, to include "approval of " before the project as presented, and to include the votes.
 - Page 3, Item 5c, replace "agricultural operations" with "LCA contracted property".
 - Page 3, Item 5c, last paragraph, to include "an approval for" before the project as present. Also, include votes after motion moved.
 - Page 3, Item 5d, change "By Motion of Kelly, Seconded by George, the AAC recommended to retain the \$3,000 minimum income requirement for intensive use" to By Motion of Kelly, Seconded by George, the AAC recommended for approval to retain the \$3,000 minimum income requirement for intensive AG use for properties in an LCA contract". Also, to include votes after motion moved.

Engfer suggested bringing the draft minutes back for final approval at the next meeting. Toso agreed and requested for a motion to table the September 28, 2023 draft minutes to the next meeting.

By Motion of Carla Kelly, seconded by Kelly Williams, the AAC approved to table the September 28, 2023 draft Minutes to the next meeting for final approval with the recommended amendments. Motion passed. 4 Ayes, 0 nays, 1 excused (David Mecchi), 1 abstained (Lyle Turpin).

2. June 20, 2024

Toso recommended the following corrections to the June 20, 2024 draft minutes:

- Identify Lyle Turpin as an alternate.
- Item 3, Election, replace "John Shimer is the Vice Chair" with "John Shimer has

- been the Vice Chair”.
- Correct “ACC” throughout the minute as it should be “AAC”.
- To include votes for all motions passed throughout the draft minutes.
- Item 3, Election, replace “re-appointed” with “re-elected”.
- Item 3, Election, last paragraph, identify that Kelly Williams is representative for the Farm Bureau, and Jordan Cory is the alternate for the Farm Bureau.
- Page 2, Item 5a, 4th paragraph, 1st sentence, change “approving” to “recommending the approval of” the draft.
- Page 2, Item 5a, 4th paragraph, 2nd sentence, include “AWLCP” before recommendations.
- Page 2, Item 5a, last sentence, replace “farming area consisting of cattle ranchers which is the most natural form of farming” to “is an area primary consisting of cattle ranches which is the most common agricultural practice”.
- Page 2, Item 5b, 1st sentence include “made a motion to” after Shimer, to state: “After discussion, Shimer made a motion to nominate Toso to be on the Ad-Hoc committee”.
- Correct the spelling of Shimer.

By Motion of Carla Kelly, seconded by John Shimer, the AAC approved the June 20, 2024 draft Minutes as amended. Motion passed. 4 Ayes, 0 nays, 1 excused (David Mecchi), 1 abstained (Lyle Turpin).

D. Actions Items - Recommendation Requested

Toso opened the Action items and provided a brief introduction noting that the first four applications the committee will be providing recommendations, the fifth application is for discussion and providing input, and the sixth item will be covering the Agricultural and Working Lands Conservation Plan (AWLCP).

1. Land Conservation (Williamson) Act Application Number 2023-143; APNs 017-090-015, 017-070-002, 017-090-002, 017-090-011; 3000 Old Highway; Craig Mathis, applicant.

Prior to Planning Director, Steve Engfer’s presentation, he introduced the applicant, Craig Mantis, who was on the phone.

Applicant is proposing four parcels to be included in the new Land Conservation Act (LCA) contract for a total of 750.69 +/- acres that exceeds the requirements of 160 acres minimum size that has been used for cattle grazing and will continue to be used for cattle grazing in the future.

There was no public comments received.

Committee member Turpin questioned why the 11 acre parcel wasn’t included in the map that should have been presented to the committee. Engfer explained that there was an error when

the map was generated. Williams noted that this was not noted in the project description.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the error when the map was generated showing the 11 acre parcel being separated from the other parcels.

Williams made an amendment to the previous motion to include this 11 acre parcel, Assessor's Parcel Number 017-070-002-000, should have been listed in the project description as not being separated as showed on the map and should state contiguous.

By Motion of John Shimer, seconded by Carla Kelly, the AAC recommended the approval of the LCA application 2023-143 as amended with clarification for Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors appropriately included in the recommendation. Motion passed. 5 Ayes, 0 nays, 1 excused (David Mecchi), 0 abstained.

2. Land Conservation (Williamson) Act Application Number 2024-085; APN 017-080-059; 3520 Ben Hur Road; Matthew Dimmick, applicant.

Applicant proposed one parcel to be included in the new Land Conservation Act (LCA) contract. This parcel has 210.09+/- acres and currently being leased as rangeland for cattle grazing for three years and he plans to continue this use with a shop on the parcel.

Steve Engfer, Planning Director, presented the project and noted that the Agricultural Preserve questionnaire was not included in the agenda packet, but was provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

Williams noted that the vicinity map included in the packet is not for this parcel.

Toso noted that the Assessor's Parcel Number listed in the resolution is incorrect and not for this parcel. Engfer noted that these will be corrected.

A discussion occurred regarding the acre number listed per pair on the Ag Preserve questionnaire provided by the property owner. Dimick (on the phone) stated that the information was provided by a cattle guy and explained that he hasn't seen a fluctuation in the cattle numbers which have been consistent.

Committee member, Turpin expressed his concerns regarding the biennial report. Engfer explained that there is an evaluation base on the carrying capacity for different lands throughout the county, and noted that in the future, staff will take into consideration for the information provided by the land owners, in response to the biennial report to meet the reasonable assessment.

There was no public comment received.

By Motion of Kelly Williams, seconded by Carla Kelly, the AAC recommended the approval of the LCA application 2024-085 as presented. Motion passed. 5 Ayes, 0 nays, 1 excused (David Mecchi), 0 abstained.

3. Land Conservation (Williamson) Act Application Number 2024-095; APNs 017-580-003 & 017-580-004; 3397 Ben Hur Road; Galen Alldrin, applicant.

Applicant proposed two parcel to be included in the new Land Conservation Act (LCA) contract. This parcel has 445.21 +/- acres and currently being leased as rangeland for cattle grazing and will continue this use.

Engfer presented the project and noted that the Ag Preserve Questionnaire was not included in the agenda packet, but provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

There was no public comment received.

By Motion of John Shimer, seconded by Kelly Williams, the AAC recommended the approval of the LCA application 2024-095 as presented. Motion passed. 5 Ayes, 0 nays, 1 excused (David Mecchi), 0 abstained.

4. Land Conservation (Williamson) Act Application Number 2024-099 & Zoning Amendment Application Number 2024-119; APNs 014-290-020, 014-290-021, 014-300-027, 014-300-028, 014-300-029, 014-300-031, 014-300-032 & 014-300-034; 4282, 4284 Triangle Road; Frederik Rodenhuis, applicant.

Applicant proposed 8 parcels totaling 638.93 +/- acres, currently zoned Mountain Home or Mountain General, to be included in the LCA Contract. The applicant is required to rezone all proposed LCA parcels to Agricultural Exclusive within one year of the LCA contract being executed. The parcels have been used for grazing in the last 3 years.

Engfer presented the project and announced that the property owner is present at the meeting to answer any questions.

No public comment received.

By Motion of Kelly Williams, seconded by Carla Kelly, the AAC recommended the approval of the LCA application 2024-099 and Zoning Amendment application 2024-119 as presented. Motion passed. 5 Ayes, 0 nays, 1 excused (David Mecchi), 0 abstained.

5. Pre-Application Number 2024-062; APN 008-030-006; 4816 Telegraph Hill Road; Shantikunj of North America, applicant.

Prior to Engfer's presentation, he introduced the applicant who was present and announced that this item is for discussion and possible recommendation. Then stated that the letter from UC Davis Ag Extension was not included in the packet, but provided to the committee prior to the meeting, and noted that today's goal is to request that the committee consider the pre-application proposal.

Engfer presented the project along with a PowerPoint presentation. He spoke about the parcel originally having a LCA contract until December 2016, a notice of Non-Renewal for the LCA was recorded by the previous owners. Then spoke about the proposal from the applicant for improvements on the property:

- Solar farm and power bank for electricity
- Wind mills for electricity
- Gazebo/monuments for religious symbols
- Learning and training center/residence for residence and ancillary religious training
- Sheds for dairy, nursery, spice, organic fertilizer
- Parking areas with accessible parking
- Septic tank with bio digester for bio gas
- Bio fuel storage tank
- 70,000 gallon water storage tank

Engfer recommended that staff and AAC members conduct a site visit for a better understanding of the project.

Travis Van Ligten (Land Use Attorney) introduced himself and his client, SONA (applicant) noted that they are here to address any questions and have no problem with a site visit. He stated that they are hopeful to run those efforts conjointly with staff's processing of the ultimate determination letter on whether certain usages are compatible and which usages are not. They are asking for clear directions so they can potentially move forward with some of the project. Then he spoke about some of the work that has been done on the property and address the monument, gazebo and housing plans.

After a lengthy discussion, the AAC recommended that County Council review the proposal and advise if this project is appropriate with the Williamson Act and will maintain the integrity. Engfer noted that staff will work with the applicant and Council and bring the project back to the committee.

Recess was taken at 10:27 AM and reconvened at 10:36 AM.

6. Discussion, Direction and potential recommendations on the Agriculture and Working Landscape Conservation Plan (AWLCP) DRAFT #4

Engfer introduced Planning Staff: Ben Goger, Senior Planner and Hannah Harrison, Community Design Development Planner, who presented the AWLCP draft #4 with a PowerPoint presentation.

Harrison introduced the AWLCP Draft #4, noting that this draft included the changes recommended by the AAC members and the Farm Bureau. Then provided a quick recap including the background of plan, why the plan was developed, and the key changes to Draft #4, review the table activity, discussion and direction from the AAC.

Goger spoke on the back ground intent of the AWLCP when they applied for the Agricultural Planning Grant Resolution 2019-522, and the specific Task 3.1 (General Plan Strategic

Implementation Plan (GPSIP). Noting that Task 3.1 consideration of the impacts and benefits of the forest and agriculture on Mariposa GHG Reduction Program. Then noted that information was given on State executive orders and subsequent legislative actions that set Green House Gas.

Goger noted the key changes in draft #4:

- Remove language in the General Plan to focus on the General Plan Implementation Study.
- The GH Reduction Plan was not previously noted in a couple of the drafts, it was important this be noted, along with the reasons for why they applied for the grant.
- Incorporated the noxious weed management plan.
- Removal of obligatory language to voluntary language.

Goger spoke about the 2A (explore meat and animal product sales) and 3A (analyze viability for local beef processing) in Draft #4, and briefly noted the role that the USDA plays in the meat and animal product sales.

The AAC expressed their concerns and noted that the sale of meat is a private regulation and that the role of government in this instance should focused on the health and safety of the meat sales. The AAC does not understand why this item would need to be included in the AWLCP plan and feels that this item is not agricultural.

Also, the AAC shared positives about the AWLCP and concurred to move forward to receive the grant to fund the agricultural needs and be incorporated into the General Plan. They noted that they are passionate about agricultural issues and the ag industry. In addition, they understand that this is not a regulatory document but a collection of suggestions, recommendations based off the community's input and research. The AAC would like to come to a common ground to recommend the approval of the AWLCP without compromising Agricultural.

Chair called for Recess at 12: 13 PM and the meeting reconvened at 12: 20 PM.

After a lengthy discussion, staff recommends following the AAC's recommendations of "Recommend acceptance (not approval) of the AWLCP Draft #4, conditioned that it is only a source document to help formulate the General Plan, and that the Agricultural Advisory Committee advise the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on the sections of the AWLCP that will benefit the General Plan."

There was no public comment received.

By Motion of Kelly Williams, seconded by Carla Kelly, the AAC recommended the acceptance (not approval) of the AWLCP Draft #4, condition that it is only a source document to help formulate the General Plan, and that the AAC advise the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors on the sections of the AWLCP that will benefit the General Plan. Motion passed. 5 Ayes, 0 nays, 1 excused (David Mecchi), 0 abstained.

E. Informational Items: no action will be taken by the Committee
None.

F. Set Next Meeting (if necessary) and Adjournment

Chair Toso adjourned the meeting at 12:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Sophea Craighead, Acting Secretary for Agricultural Advisory Committee