

## Midcoast Community Council

An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar

PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038

<http://www.MidcoastCommunityCouncil.org>

Michelle Weil, Chair  
Claire Toutant, Vice Chair  
Len Erickson, Treasurer  
Dave Olson, Secretary  
Gregg Dieguez  
Jill Grant  
Dan Haggerty

### **Minutes for Meeting of September 22nd, 2021**

#### **Call to Order (7:05pm)**

All Council Members present except Jill Grant. This meeting was conducted virtually in compliance of State and County COVID-related orders.

#### **1. Board of Supervisors' Report**

Lena Silberman gave an update on the multi-modal trail that we are still waiting for Caltrans to sign a maintenance agreement. Lack of response has been escalated. The District 3 redistricting meeting is tomorrow at 6:30pm. Preparing for Covid boosters, currently 93% of the eligible population has at least one shot. Case rate has dropped slightly since last week. She said that a meeting with County Health will be held to discuss apparent low vaccination rates on some part of the coast. Virtual meetings can still be held, but will have to be approved each month, OK to do at the first October meeting.

Carlyle Ann Young asked about the redistricting meeting, Lena will put a zoom link in chat.

Dan asked planner Summer Burlison if there was an expert measurement of the lighting from the fire station, but hasn't had a response yet. He would also like the Cal Green title 24 report if it was done.

Sheena Sidhu, RCD reported on the El Granada scoping project. Funding approved by the Board of Supervisors and RFP released last week. Consultant will complete background research and site investigations to develop understandings of wildfire scenarios for El Granada and surrounding community, and to scope actions that would most effectively reduce those risks. 3 consultants are interested so far, and the responses will be reviewed by RCD and partners, including MCC. Selection is expected by October 14, and finalized at the October 22 RCD meeting.

Dan asked if there would be a chance for community input. Sheena said yes.

Harvey Rarback summarized the building electrification study session. It ran more than 2 hours, and it was not completed, so another session will be held on October 5. He invites anybody interested to review the documents on the city website. The council meeting last night also had a discussion about public safety, with one of the important things learned is the new mental health response program. The city has contributed \$75,000 to that program. The plan is to engage 911 response so that mental health experts can be sent instead of armed response. They hope to have the program going in the next few months.

Carlyle asked about the impact of the tree trimming along Hwy 1 on traffic, and asked that the city alert it's citizens when something like that is going to be done. Harvey said he was caught in the traffic too, and that Caltrans isn't as responsive as it could be.

Dan asked for more details about the electrification program. Harvey said it's a long ordinance, the main aim is to allow no gas in any new construction, residential or commercial. After 2045, all gas connections would need to be turned off, to comply with state goals. Dan asked where to find more information, Harvey suggested the city website about the ordinance.

#### **(7:30pm) 2. Public Comment**

Carlyle spoke about the car that went over the edge near the bunker last week. She thinks Caltrans should install K-rail there for safety, and asked if the MCC would write a letter to

Caltrans. Michelle said she had planned to mention it under Council Activities, and there will be a meeting with Caltrans tomorrow, and that is one of the projects that is in the works.

Carlyle asked about the new no left turn signs on red from 92 to Main St, and said that they seem to have been removed already, and asked if Harvey knew anything about it. Harvey said he didn't, but would check with the city engineer

Carlyle also said that there have been a lot of complaints about noise from the HMB airport due to touch and go landings outside the approved pattern.

(7:20pm) **3. Consent Agenda**

- a. Approve minutes for July 28, 2021 Regular Meeting
- b. Approve minutes for August 11, 2021 Regular Meeting
- c. Approve minutes for September 8, 2021 Regular Meeting

3b pulled by Dave because not complete. 3c pulled for a correction by Michelle. 3a pulled as well to have a single vote. Moved to first regular agenda item.

(7:35pm) **Regular Agenda**

**Minutes pulled from consent**

Michelle said that there is a statement from an earlier set of minutes under Council Activity that should be removed: the paragraph of her describing the newsletter.

Claire moved that July 28 and amended Sept 8 minutes be approved, Gregg 2nd, passes 6-0

(7:37pm) **4a. Moss Beach SR-1 Congestion & Safety Improvements**

Chanda Singh gave a presentation about a proposed letter of support for a grant application.

Funds come from local sales tax measures via the Transportation Authority. Projects have very specific requirements, with applications due by Friday. See the presentation for details. The grant is for the phase after planning, called Project Initiation. That is required to move a project forward with Caltrans. She summarized what should be in the MCC letter.

(7:50) **Council questions**

Gregg asked if a simulation of the traffic will be part of this grant. Chanda said it would be more detailed than what is in Connect the Coastside, but she wasn't sure if simulations would be part of it.

Dan also would like traffic simulation, and he wants to be sure that the community isn't worn out by another set of long studies, and that there is plenty of opportunity for community participation.

Chanda said yes, there will be community engagement. She expects it to be a 12-18 month process.

Len asked about the 3 potential intersections with controls, and whether they are looked at separately or together, and would it include an intersection control evaluation. Chanda said that the whole corridor would be looked at as a unit. Preferred alternative would be a separate and later step. The PID primarily compares the possibilities.

Michelle read questions from chat. First is whether the project would include pedestrian access crossing and safety to facility pedestrian crossings. Chanda said yes, they heard that loud and clear in Connect the Coastside, so pedestrian safety would be part of the PID.

2nd is whether roundabout and other lighting would be part of this. Chanda said yes, to at least some degree.

(7:58pm) Michelle shared the letter and quickly walked through it.

(7:59pm) **Public Comment**

Carlyle shares Dan's concerns. She mentioned the 7 highway lights in Montara, even though almost everything is on one side of the Hwy, while there is only 1 in Moss Beach, and that it's hard to see pedestrians at night. She wants more lighting if they put in more cross-traffic. She'd like for any meetings on the PID to be in-person. She also asked if an attempt could be made to put in 2-way left turn lanes in Moss Beach if the PID grant isn't won.

#### **(8:04) Council Discussion**

Claire said she's not too worried about the details, just that we support the grant. She's OK with it. Dave said he feels the same way.

Len also agreed.

Gregg made an amendment to add "the dominant flow of highway one traffic and disaster evacuation burdens and desired more evaluation of potential alternatives" after "potential environmental constraints". Dan 2nd

Dave does not agree with the amendment. Claire did not either. Len also didn't.

The amendment fails 2-4, Claire, Len, Michelle, Dave opposed.

Dan made an amendment to add "with simulations" to the 3rd paragraph, Gregg 2nd.

Dan said that he wants that because it is otherwise hard for the community to understand the effects of the alternatives.

The amendment fails on a 3-3 vote, Claire, Dave, and Michelle opposed.

Kimberly raised the point that we don't emphasize pedestrians.

Dave made an amendment to change "walking" to "pedestrian" and "pedestrians" in the 2nd and third paragraphs respectively. Len 2nd, passes 6-0.

Gregg moved to approve the letter as amended, Len 2nd. Passes 6-0.

#### **(8:20) 4b. El Granada Wildfire Preparedness**

Len Erickson gave a presentation, stating that winds drive wildfires, both prevailing NW winds and Diablo onshore winds during hot periods. Diablo winds are a risk multiplier.

He mentioned that 20 acres in Quarry Park near El Granada Blvd were dropped due to access difficulty. That was originally part of Project 16 noted as unfunded. It was not included in the Coastal Conservancy grant.

Khoa Vo, Public Works spoke on the median project. Updates are available on the county's project website. Anticipated completion is still at the end of September. All tree removal and trimming will be completed by next week, but removal of cut wood will continue into October. Len asked if the community had an opportunity to for rehabilitation of the medians that were cleared. Khoa said yes, if there is a maintenance agreement, and that possibly GCSD could take that on.

Len asked Sheena if the MCC members on the RCD project partners meeting can organize community meetings to develop input and feedback to the consultant. Sheena said yes, that's what she was hoping for.

(8:33) Nicholas Calderon said he hadn't prepared anything on wildfires. Nicholas said that start of construction on the pump track will have to be delayed, in order to do more clearing, using the meadow area as a staging area. The new plan is to send the pump track out to bid in January, with it being completed in June or July 2022. He said that the Parks department is starting a discussion about using the Columbus Plaza (C-1 on clearing diagram) as additional parking for Quarry Park. He showed a picture of what that might look like.

#### **(8:39) Council questions**

Dan had heard about the idea of parking at Columbus Plaza, and had heard some community opposition. Dan said he'd like to see a number of smaller parking areas. He asked Nicholas to provide documentation on how the costs of clearing in Quarry Park were calculated. Nicholas said that will be part of the RCD scoping. Dan asked if it's a clean slate. Michelle said yes. Khoa said that the \$450,000 spent on the median worked out to about \$5600 per tree for the 80 trees total cost, including some savings from the tree company selling chips to a power plant in the central valley.

Gregg thinks that a fire break along El Granada Blvd would be a priority, and asked if that wouldn't imply that the meadow should remain available for staging for that. Len answered that he had discussed it with Rich Sampson, and that Rich thought the logs would need to be lifted up onto El Granada Blvd. Nicholas asked which part of El Granada Blvd. Gregg said the lower part, near the meadow. Nicholas said that's the opposite side from the pump track, so the track wouldn't be in the way.

Dave asked if County Counsel had been consulted, due to their opinion that adjacent property owners owned to the center of the median. Nicholas said that because parking is considered a right of way use, that issue doesn't arise.

Dan asked about the cost of the eucalyptus chip trucking vs the amount the power plant paid for chips, compared to the cost of bringing new mulch. Khoa said that in some areas, chips are being kept as mulch to a depth of 6", and Calfire didn't want more than that due to fire risk. He said he couldn't comment on relative costs, because it was internal to the tree company. He did say that the lowest bid was about \$260,000 less, and that perhaps the chip sale offset part of that difference.

Sheena clarified that the current project is an RCD/Parks project, funded by the Coastal Conservancy, rather than a Coastal Conservancy project.

Supervisor Horsley said that he didn't remember just where the \$0.5 billion amount came from. He does remember a number of \$100 or \$200 million to remove all eucalyptus from Quarry Park. He also mentioned that climate change with longer term drought and sea level rise was a wider spread issue, putting something like 100,000 people at risk. So that's going to be a much larger cost than 1/2 billion. He mentioned that the county is working with the Firesafe Council on a number of projects that aren't related to County Parks. He said that Quarry Park issues occurred over a hundred year period, and will take a while to deal with.

#### **(8:57) Public Comment**

Carlyle asked how many cars could be parked on the Columbus circle. Nicholas said about 20. Carlyle said that CFPD had passed an ordinance tonight to allow them to assess property owners who don't take care of wildfire issues themselves, so that CFPD could have it cleared. She asked Don if he was talking about a property tax for sea level rise. Don said it's not yet clear if it would be a tax, a bond, or something else. She felt that measure AA for sea level rise was unfair, because it affected everybody, but only benefited people near the bay

Melinda MacNaughton does not like the idea of parking on Columbus Circle. She asked if some of the chips and some of the stumps and logs could be left to make wedges, benches, etc. Khoa said no, stumps have to be ground down, and Calfire had concerns. Any changes to the contract would result in additional costs to the County. Melinda asked that future contracts consider leaving more on site. She feels it's lucky that not everything can be clearcut at once, because she's not in favor of it. She asked if the parking lot isn't put on the circle if the community could plant there. Khoa said the community could propose anything, but GCSD or somebody would have to take on the responsibility of maintaining it.

Graham Wood read a statement by Kevin Sniecinski. It said that numerous critical issues have come to the attention of residents and they are deeply concerned. He appreciates the progress made by the MCC and hopes to build on it. Plans were approved and assigned funds to abate trees that are considered fire hazards, but those plans changed, by whom and for what reason are unclear. The overgrown eucalyptus in Quarry Park and incomplete firebreak has caused residents to lose their homeowners insurance. Some residents have had property damage. Yet there are no plans to address re-vegetation. He said we need to mitigate fire risk in a carbon neutral way by replanting fire resilient plants. He formally requests a reinstated plan and budget for fire hazard abatement in the El Granada Highlands, and the replanting of the medians.

Steve Terry said he is opposed to using the median as parking, that it's a block away from the park. He said that there is plenty of room for more parking inside the park. There is already parking all

around the Columbus circle. He suggested requiring the bicyclists to park at the school as overflow parking.

Jane Praysilver raised the same issue of median ownership that Dave raised. She asked who would have liability if something happened to cars parked in the median, given that issue. She asked if easement rights can be transferred. She is against parking on the median.

Melinda said she was in support of the letter that Graham read.

Graham said that a large part of the Governor's Project near El Granada Blvd that wasn't completed, despite it being high priority, and from Len's presentation he understands that it is no longer part of Project 16.

Nicholas said that the reason the parking proposal was brought to the MCC meeting was to get community feedback. He clarified it wasn't him saying it was going to happen, it was to get feedback. Given what he has heard, they won't plan parking on Columbus Circle (C-1). With regard to Governor's Project and Project 16, he asked Len to show his slide on that issue. He said the missing swathe along El Granada Blvd was dropped because it wasn't shovel ready, that is, it hasn't gone through CEQA. The other portions that remain are part of the overall CEQA in the routine maintenance area that allows for clearing within 100 feet of roads. The dropped portion is not accessible from a road, and hence couldn't be part of the current project. The original map was inadvertently dropped from Project 16, and will be restored by later in the week, although not part of the current project. Nicholas said that he doesn't know when funding will be available for that portion. He said that Quarry Park is getting more funding than any other county, and that the County is spending more money in El Granada than any other part of the County

Susan Casey said she understands the limited budget, but does not include money for El Granada Blvd. Nicholas said that there is no allocated funding for that swathe in Project 16, and a number of other projects in the list aren't yet funded either. Right now the focus is on this fiscal year. Parks has \$1.5 million this fiscal year. The 18.6M number is if everything was funded, which is not the case.

#### **(9:34) Council Discussion**

Len asked about the \$5600/tree, and Khoa confirmed. Len said that he and Matthew Clark counted 546 eucalyptus on all the medians, so that would be about \$3M to do them all.

Gregg said that parking concerns may be early, but that perhaps the pump track will eventually require a lot more parking. He sees an action item that we need to re-vegetate the medians and also to create a fuel break along El Granada Blvd.

Dan asked about the contract requirement about chipping left on site, and whether it was just C-1. Khoa said no, it's C1 and 2 and R1-4 where they were clearcut, and all stump grinding material will be left on site.

#### **(9:38) 4c. Quarry Park Threat Petition**

Keith Mangold gave a presentation on his petition. He said the intention of the petition is to inform the Board of Supervisors that El Granada residents are extremely concerned about the wildfire danger in Quarry Park, and that the MCC accept the petition, and send it, with signatures, to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. He said that Quarry Park is one of the most hazardous fires in the state. He is particularly concerned that a fire with Diablo winds could destroy the town before evacuation is possible, particularly the 120 homes on upper El Granada Blvd. He said that during the 600 hours of the worst fire danger over the last 15 years, it's always come from the northeast, at 40mph and higher, and that endangers all of the town. He thinks that reducing sufficient canopy to prevent a firestorm is the only answer.

#### **(9:48) Public Comment**

Susan Casey quoted the RCD project that Quarry Park has 20,000 stems per acre and that 25% are dead or dying, and that no management had been done prior to 2019. She says that the

Parks prioritization doesn't take into account the risk due to Diablo winds. She asks that the County leaders and the MCC for their support.

Carlyle said that Calfire has said that wood chips are a fire danger. A neighbor of hers used eucalyptus chips, and that brought in a lot of eucalyptus sprouts. She thinks the County needs to step in because residents are losing their fire insurance.

Melinda agrees that it's a huge problem, but that because we are in a very bad climate condition that we need to think carefully about replanting and keeping the soil moist after clearcutting. If not done, it may affect our marine layer, and reduces absorption of rainwater. She doesn't want to see cutting without replanting.

Jane is concerned about the effects of cutting on wildlife, and we need to track the health of wildlife and predatory birds.

Karen Allanson thanked Keith, and shared a quote in chat with a scientist that agreed that Keith is on track. She agrees that replanting is important, but that wildfire is even more catastrophic to wildlife, and is more urgent.

#### **(9:57) Council discussion**

Dan said that in GG Park they advocate for using eucalyptus chips, and have been doing it for 50 years, and he has heard a fire captain say that eucalyptus chips are much lower risk than the trees. He asked Keith for the total number of signatures. Keith said it was 560. Dan said originally he was for full clearcutting of the eucalyptus with replanting, but now he thinks that we should leave at least some of the trees as anchors. He asked Keith what he wanted. Keith answered that he wants enough trees to remove the risk of canopy fire.

Dave said that he can't support saying that the petition is fully supported by the MCC, because the wording in the petition isn't what Keith has answered. Dave would support sending a letter to the County, mentioning the petition and it's signatures, but with different wording. He also pointed out that many other areas in the County are at similar risk.

Len said he believes that Keith is asking for the Supervisors to address the urgency of the situation and bring expertise to bear. So he thinks that's a major step that we should take.

Supervisor Horsley spoke, and said that he regards eucalyptus as a noxious weed, and he'd like to get rid of them. He said chips aren't a major fire risk, they won't lead to canopy fires. He said that the scoping project will address exactly these issues. He said to send the petition to the Board, and that they would answer and respond. He reiterated that the scoping project is the next step.

Gregg does think we should forward the petition to the Board, and he doesn't think we should split hairs on the wording. He said that the County could regard this as homelessness prevention. He isn't sure that the stumps should be ground down, that keeping them higher might reduce the cost and help reduce erosion. He applauds Keith and everybody else working on this. He thinks we should start the El Granada Blvd fuel break as soon as possible.

Claire appreciates Keith's hard work and efforts to bring this to us. She's happy to forward it to the Board, but it should be sent without MCC comment, that we don't need to be part of the petition, but that it's representing the community.

Michelle appreciates Keith's work, but with Supervisor Horsley here that the message has been communicated, and she would be in favor of Claire's idea, without writing a letter, and that would allow us to send it right away without waiting for another meeting.

Dave made a motion to forward the petition without comment, 2nd Len, passes 6-0.

#### **(10:18) 4d. MCC Website**

Michelle summarized the work that Lisa has done to bring the current site forward to Squarespace 7. She shared a link and password to view the new site. It's not 100% done, but it's almost all there and working.

Lisa Ketcham said the new site would cost \$216/year, while bringing a number of new features, especially mobile friendly. Moving to the new version would make any future changes easier and simpler. To cut over, we need to add posts and new files since Sept 8th, and then over time fix any broken links. On backups and file storage, she recommends that all MCC documents be stored on a backup drive, or some other online storage. Michelle showed some of the pages on both old and new, and what the new site looks like on a phone.

Lisa said that the search button on the new site is just the Squarespace search, and as on the older version, that won't search pdfs. That's why the old site used google search, so that pdf content could be searched. She said that on Squarespace 7, there is a lot more online help, and the chat support is very good, 6 days/week.

Michelle said that she'd like to switch as soon as possible.

Lisa said that with Squarespace 7, there are a lot more privilege levels, so it's easier to let more people edit the site, not just blog postings.

Dave said that he'd like to see us move as soon as possible, and fix things up afterwards. He really wants to see us buy storage from google or dropbox to backup all of the files, and to continue doing that (unless there is a plugin to do it for us, and that doesn't appear to be the case).

Gregg mentioned putting it on a flash drive, and Dave said that even if it's on flash, it needs to be online so everybody can get to it.

Lisa said that she found out that if you change domain names on a site, all the "external" links no longer work, and that includes links between blog posts, etc. So yes, you can change the domain name or the template at any time, but if you do that, you'll lose content, not always in an obvious way. So she discourages doing much playing around or staging.

Dan thanked Lisa, and for her words of caution.

Councilmember Len Erickson left the meeting

(10:41) **Public Comment**

Carlyle really appreciates the resources on our website, and Lisa's efforts to make that happen.

Dave moved that we start paying \$216/year immediately. Claire 2nd, passes 5-0

(10:51) **5. Council Activity**

Dan went to the Coastal Cleanup day in Pacifica. He met somebody that he'd like to invite to a future MCC meeting.

Dave mentioned attending the StarVista tour. It's a good resource for mental health, particularly children and young adults.

Michelle met with Caltrans and heard about the Highway projects, including guardrail on Devil's Slide. The City of HMB contacted her about the Resiliency Initiative. She heard from Tim Fox on what we need to do to continue with virtual meetings. The Board is going to do that, and we can use their motion as a template for us. We'll need to adopt a motion each month.

(10:58) **6. Future Agendas**

October 13th - Resolution on Virtual Meetings, El Granada Scoping Project, Highway 1 Multi-Asset Roadway Rehab Project, Fall MCC Newsletter

TBD Presentation on Plastic-free San Mateo

TBD Old Costanera site, SB9/10, related court cases on housing

(11:03) **Adjournment**

Dave moved, Gregg 2nd, passes 5-0