

MARK WEST CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes, February 10, 2021, 6:00 pm
Zoom Meeting

Video available. Send request to MarkWestCAC@gmail.com

A) Call to Order: Chairperson Fies called to order, the regular meeting of Mark West Citizens Advisory Council (MWCAC) 6:00 pm.

1. Roll Call: Council Members present: Roni Berg, Brad Sherwood, Karen Fies, Willie Lamberson, Pete Lescure.

2. Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Council Member Berg, second by Council Member Lamberson, the minutes of the regular MWCAC meeting, January 13, 2021, were approved. The motion carried on a voice vote. (5-0)

B) Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items: None

C) Pending Items: Updates when available

1. Utilities: Lynne Roselli, Airport Larkfield Wikiup Sanitation Zone
All information given in this presentation is on the web sonomawater.org/alwsz. There are about 2,000 customers. An annual service charge to each property is based on all the costs, divided by the number of single-family dwellings. This year there is a recommended 4% increase per single family dwelling effective 7/1/21. Restaurants are charged more. There is an annual newsletter put on the website each spring, around the end of March. The last one includes a Prop 218 notice. Go to the website to subscribe to it.

Discussion:

Some restaurants in West County have requested rebates or lower rates (none in the Airport Larkfield Wikiup Sanitation Zone) as a result of COVID-19 shutdowns. Sonoma Water is aware of the current impact and that they are not currently discharging into the system. They are looking for a fair and equitable answer.

Council Member Lescure said that the Mark West Chamber just approved a letter on behalf of the hospitality industry and asked that the Chamber be kept informed.

Vice Chair Sherwood reported that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) also took action toward Larkfield Estates. They approved of the charges for those who wanted to connect to the sewer system. That project is finalized and those who want to connect now will pay connection fees.

2. Speed Limits on Mark West Springs Road and Old Redwood Highway:

Council Member Lescure and concerned citizens want to address many concerns and complaints, including a request for a crosswalk across Mark West Springs Road, between Mark West Estates and Larkfield Estates. They would like to propose roundabouts and reducing some lanes to reduce speeds.

Discussion: Speed is an issue beyond Larkfield, including getting in and out of homes in various areas. This is a long-standing issue. Keep it on the agenda and in front of the BOS. There is support of the CHP patrolling the area.

3. Wikiup Commons: Council Member Lamberson would like to form a committee to create a series of workshops to address the future of the golf course. Need to define it as a community benefit. If not now, the opportunity will be lost. Need entity to take title and plan for operation and maintenance. The Jackson family is going to fence the property due to liability issues. Really calling out to community members to participate.

4. HAWK Light in Front of the Larkfield Shopping Center: Jen Mendoza, Aide to Supervisor Gore
The light has been approved and the final issues resolved. It is scheduled to be done in the next season (spring thru fall).

A suggestion was proposed to send a letter to BOS stating that we are looking forward to it being done.

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5. Sonoma County General Plan for Mark West Area: Council Member Lescure
The Mark West Chamber of Commerce formed a subcommittee of five, to work on the general plan. Council Members Lescure and Lamberson will report back to this group.

6. List of unmet needs projects for Larkfield/Mark West/Wikiup: There was a suggestion to add a request to widen the bridge over Mark West Creek.

D) Presentations: Information Only

To proceed as follows: 1. Presentation 2. Questions by council members 3. Questions and comments from the public

1. Vegetation Management & County Grant Application

a. Paul Godowski, President of Shiloh Estates:

Paul shared challenges, impacts and lessons learned in Shiloh Estates since the Tubbs Fire. Shiloh Estates has 900 acres of wild land/urban interface.

Challenges: forest and grass, large properties with wild lands, slopes to Shiloh Estates. Single way in and out and a 21-acre lake. Holding tanks with pumps. When lost power, had to have generators moved in - very dangerous.

Fire: impacted from North East. Fallen trees blocked entrance and exit.

HOA: Formed a fire committee for fire prevention management. Spent time and money to make the entrance safer, cut trees etc. to prevent ladder fuels. Had a positive effect on homeowners as they saw the impact.

Most important part of the team is a small tractor for clearing large areas. It can knock down and mulch 10'-wide trees and coyote bushes. Very cost effective versus manual labor. Point: Heavy equipment is a must.

Fire chief advised homeowners as to how to build with fire prevention in mind.

Photos and slides shared information:

- Fire breaks, multilevel land scaling etc. Essential and beautiful.
- Get community participation: emails, newsletters, have Cyndi Foreman (Fire Marshal) come out and speak to the issue. Hard to get qualified contractors > get community engagement.
- Focus has to be on honing in on the area around your house. Go out and look back at your house to see potential fire hazards.
- Remove flammable vegetation; use rock and metal fence for privacy.

Kincadee fire came from north and hit Shiloh Estates. With heroic efforts from fire fighters, the area was saved. They appreciated that large areas had been cleared. Made it safer for the fire fighters.

Lessons we learned.

- Set example and share how to do it.
- Make it easy for people to join in. Share your resources, including equipment. Try to plan so equipment can remain and save money.
- Make your property attractive to fire fighters. They do property triage and know which properties are easier to protect.

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Godowski is now focused on community outreach. Will work with others to protect all neighborhoods.

b. Permit Sonoma: Caerleon Safford:

Presented information on codes and regulations, and basic fire mitigation.

There are different areas of responsibility (local vs. state). Most regulations protect forests from house fires, not the other way around.

c. Lisa Hulette, Permit Sonoma Grants Manager. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

The County has submitted a \$50M grant request (BRIC grant) from FEMA for two types of fire mitigation efforts: 1) looking from the “outside in” and 2) looking from the “inside out.”

Can contact Lisa Hulette to get on lists to attend meetings.

Discussion: Continuation of this education and the work should be a standing item on the agenda.

Presenters and Council members expressed desire to work together to improve fire safety and community participation and communication in the future.

For more information, check out Fire Safe Sonoma. <https://www.firesafesonoma.org/>

2. Presentation of Map of Projects:

Council Vice Chair Sherwood created a map of the MWCAC projects accomplished so far, along with some Transportation and Public Works future projects. It will be posted on the new MWCAC website.

E) Presentations of Referrals from Permit Sonoma: ACTION ITEM None

F) Subcommittee Reports & Discussions: ACTION ITEM

Council Members added Wikiup Commons as a subcommittee. Also, the Council changed the name of the “Rebuild Committee” to the “Rebuild and Vegetation Management Committee.”

The Council designated members to the subcommittees as follows:

1. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP): Council Members Berg and Lescure
2. Rebuild and Fire Mitigation Subcommittee: Council Vice Chair Sherwood and Chair Fies
3. Community Services District (CSD) Subcommittee: Council Members Sherwood and Lamberson
4. Wikiup Open Space: Council Members Berg and Lamberson

Motion was made by Council Member Lescure and seconded by Council Member Berg. Approved 5-0.

Council Member Lescure will also report back on the Mark West Chamber’s General Plan Committee, as needed.

G) Correspondence: Information Only None

H) Council Member Announcements and Disclosures: Information Only

1. Council Member Berg: Jen Chamberlain has a high school student interested in an internship with the MWCAC. The last intern was a college student and having her was a great experience. Council Member Sherwood is willing to work with an intern, perhaps on a social media plan or online presence. Council Chair Fies, Council Vice chair Sherwood and Council Member Berg will discuss.

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2. Council Member Sherwood: Reported that 35 Mark West Union School District (MWUSD) students participated in the design of a logo for the MWCAC. The school district chose their top three and forwarded them to the Council.

Council Member Berg will provide a gift certificate from Cookie Take a Bite to the top three logos. Add to March agenda: Discussion to choose one of the logos for Council use.

3. Council Member Lescure is writing an article, about the Council in the Mark West Chamber newsletter, the Lark. It will be sent to law makers and others.

4. Council Vice Chair Sherwood recommends a monthly report/update from Cal American Water, Mark West Chamber, Supervisor Gore's office and the school district every month (standing items).

5. Council Member Lamberson also suggested a monthly report on the health of the business community.

I) Future Agenda Items: Potential projects for future meetings and suggestions for the next MWCAC meeting

1. Discussion and choose the MWCAC logo
2. Web site presentation
3. Update on subcommittees
4. Update on potential intern
5. Closed Session Report: Personnel Contract for Community Outreach Coordinator

J) Adjourn to Closed Session: ACTION ITEM

There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Council Member Lescure, seconded by Council Member Lamberson, the meeting was adjourned at 8.59 pm.

K) Closed Session: Council will consider the following in closed session: Personnel contract for public relations functions.

Approved Date:

Chair

MWCAC MEETINGS: 6:00 PM—SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
Zoom Meetings Until Further Notice
Be sure to check the MWCAC website for meeting agenda, location & time
sonomacounty.ca.gov/Mark-West-Citizens-Advisory-Council
markwestcac@gmail.com