

MARK WEST CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes, MARCH 9, 2022, 6:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

Video Available Send request to MarkWestCAC@gmail.com

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

1. Roll Call

Members present: Chair Karen Fies, Willie Lamberson, Brad Sherwood, Heidi Would, Stephanie Bisordi

Others present: Jen Mendoza, Field Representative Representing Supervisor James Gore, 4th District, County of Sonoma; Aggie Maggio, Secretary, Mark West Citizens Advisory Council (MWCAC)

2. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Would, second by Bisordi, the minutes of the regular MWCAC meeting, February 9, 2022, were approved. The motion carried on a voice vote. (5-0)

B) Presentations: Action Items

Procedure: 1. Presentation 2. Questions by council members 3. Questions/comments from the public

Amendment to the Agenda (First presenter not yet in attendance)

B 2. Blue Book Conversation Continued, Term Limits, Name Change – Fies & Mendoza

Name Change - Mendoza: Reasoning: This Council is technically not a Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC).

- Technically, it is a Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) which covers any number of municipal issues.
- A CAC is for one purpose/topic only; almost like an ad hoc, but is a Brown Act body.
- This definition is state defined and is in the government code.

Chair Fies: Any changes adopted by the Council have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS).

Council Suggestions

- Prefer "Citizens" as it is composed of real people.
- Mark West (MW) Area MAC
- MW/Fulton MAC
- MW Citizens MAC
- MW Area Citizens MAC
- So many are too wordy

On a motion by Sherwood, second by Bisordi, the Council voted to approve a change to the Blue Book changing the name of the Mark West Citizens' Advisory Council to Mark West Area Municipal Advisory Council (MWAMAC) as the revised name, to be presented to the BOS. The motion carried on a voice vote. (5-0)

Amendment to the Agenda (Back to B 1.)

1. Discussion of walking paths at Tom Schopflin Fields - Bob Cipolla:

Cipolla and his wife live in the Berry Brook neighborhood in the home they rebuilt after the Tubbs Fire. MW is not the same community as before the fires. People are more aware of community needs, neighbors and open spaces. He believes Schopflin Fields soccer park, on Old Redwood Hwy. can serve more community interests.

Currently the MW Little League has a five-year revocable license for use of the ball fields, due to expire on September 30, 2022. Bert Whitaker, Director, Sonoma County Regional Parks, has the authority to extend it for another five years. If it is renewed as is, the community will have no say in the near future best-use of the park.

It is currently dominated by two all-weather soccer fields, and one field used by the little league for practice. The master plan envisions more soccer fields and more parking area. There are plans to put down an all-weather surface next to the existing soccer field.

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Cipolla is asking the Council to join him in telling the County representatives that the existing plan for the community resource must be made current and is asking the community for their input for better ideas.

Council Comments

- Sherwood: There is a drainage ditch on the north side of the park, coming from Cardinal Newman, eventually flowing into MW Creek on the other side of the 101 freeway. Between the fields and that ditch are plans for a path around the fields. Staff at the Parks Department said that they could help complete an ADA path for about \$150,000 and he thinks the County is willing to put in around \$10,00 to \$15,000. The community would have to come up with the rest.
- Cipolla stated that Supervisor Gore was optimistic and willing to discuss having something representing the community versus the interests of a smaller group.
- Cipolla said that he knows there is money from the PGE settlement and other places.
- Plans for the field northwest of the soccer field? Response: More synthetic turf soccer field.
- Baseball diamond: Could it be used by 13 to 15 year old players? Response: Not sure; in rough condition.
- There is a very nice sidewalk path around the part of Maddox Park that is on Noonan Ranch Lane.
- Cipolla – Idea, separate issue: There is a sidewalk disconnect from Cardinal Newman School to Kaiser. It would be great to have a full safe sidewalk/bike path from Molsberry to Kaiser and maybe beyond.
- Tom Shopflin was the County Administrator for the County many years ago.

Chat

- Does Cardinal Newman use the field? Responses: Don't think so.
- Cipolla: Cardinal Newman has a community service requirement program for graduation. The principal indicated that they could mount a survey to learn how the community could benefit from the service.
- Is "all weather turf" plastic. Do not need more plastic. Response: Yes, it is plastic.

Sherwood: The park was partially funded through the Ag and Open Space District. It is County property.

- They looked into how much money they could get through Ag and Open Space.
- There are funding issues.
- This is another example of need for a Community Services District (CSD); more control over parks.

David Hansen – Background: He personally negotiated the acquisition of the park property, working with the City of Santa Rosa and Cardinal Newman; and on the plan with Cardinal Newman.

- There is a conservation easement over the property, with restrictions and limitations, like lighting, etc.
- It was originally designed to increase the number of ball fields in the city.
- County Parks eventually took it over.
- Hansen suggests that any designs or redesigns should adhere to the conservation easement. He recommends researching through Open Space to be sure.
- The ball field was a major issue back when it was acquired. Cardinal Newman was possibly going to manage the property once the City backed away from it.
- He is willing to work with anyone on this.

Cipolla: Bert Whitaker said that at this time they were not seeking community input. Cipolla says it's important that the community is able to voice their needs now.

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Mendoza: The purpose of this presentation is to get a conversation started.

- The County is currently in the budget request stage of the year.
- If the community, as a whole, wants to have a say in this and research how to get the money, now is the time to make those statements.
- Send a letter to Supervisor Gore, asking for financial support
- Even if it is not in the normal budget request, you can write an official request to Supervisor Gore, stating that you are interested in having community outreach to determine how is the best way to move forward for this lease agreement.

Mendoza and Chair Fies will explore the issue and the process.

Amendment to the Agenda (Back to B 2.)

2. Continuation of Blue book discussion)

Term Limits – Chair Fies: She added a suggested edit to the Blue Book. “The MWMAC members shall have term limits of 6 years in 3 two-year terms. There shall be an exception for the member appointed by the Mark West Union School District Board, who shall not have a term limit, but shall serve at the discretion of the School Board. All other members can be reappointed to the MWMAC if they have a break of service of two years.”

She will change “MWMAC” to read “MWAMAC”.

Council Conversation

- The original is two years or until a successor is appointed and qualified. It is too open ended.
- Like the two-year term to keep new members on the Council. Same for the school board.
- Would like 2 two-year terms.
- Support for a total of four years. If no replacement, the member can stay two more years, for a total of six years. Same for school board.
- Mendoza: She is in favor of term limits. They give community members encouragement to participate.
- Reminder: The discussion on expanding the boundaries of the Council is next month and therefore looking at possibly increasing the number of members.
- Mendoza wants these changes to be one package (all the changes submitted together) because it takes months to go through the process of changing the Blue Book.
- Should officer terms be two years? Should they be offset or include some language to make the vice chair become chair, in order to keep some experience in the leadership.
- Keep elections every two years for chair and vice chair positions.

Community Discussion

- How about four consecutive years, not limiting future involvement?
- Could County Counsel attend the meeting?
 - Responses: They need to be paid.
 - Mendoza recommends “no”. It’s over \$250 per hour. They are not the ones making the decisions. MWCAC is, and then the County Counsel will make sure the writing of it is legal.

Mendoza: Recommended a pre-term to finish up an existing term, when a new member replaces another before the term is up. She is trying to have the terms run from January 1 to December 31. The Council agreed to add the suggestion to the motion.

On a motion by Lamberson, second by Would, the Council voted to approve changing the term limits in the Blue Book to read, 2 two-year terms for members, with the possibility of extending that for two more years, until a successor is appointed and qualified and two-year terms for the officers with an annual election in January. Add a pre-term, when a new member replaces an out-going member prior to the end of the existing term. Terms are to run from January 1 to December 31. The motion carried on a voice vote. (5-0)

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C) Presentations of Referrals from Permit Sonoma: ACTION ITEM **None**

Consideration of proposed projects will proceed as follows: 1. Presentation by project applicant 2. Questions by Councilmembers 3. Questions and comments from the public 4. Response by applicant, if required 5. Comments by Council members 6. Resolution, ACTION, if indicated.

D) Council Member Announcements/Information/Discussions/Disclosures: Information only, unless stated

1. April meeting will be hybrid at the Learning Center at the School District.
2. Chair Fies shared a video on the Lavell Road sidewalk repair of the area that was flooding when it rains. It is on the MWCAC website. Council members thanked Pete Lescure for his persistence. He has been advocating for this repair since 2014.

E) Subcommittee Reports & Discussions: ACTION ITEM

1. Neighborhood Improvement Funding Program (NIFP) Subcommittee (Fies/Sherwood) **None**

2. Rebuild/Fire Mitigation Subcommittee (Sherwood/Fies)

Chair Fies reported that she is working on the grant request for technical assistance from The North Coast Resource Regional Fire Capacity Technical Assistance Program. She is getting help from Sherwood, Mendoza and Lamberson.

- The request is for help with Mark West Creek between Mark West Estates and the flood plain area (formally the golf course), up to Carriage Lane, on flood plain restoration, erosion control and vegetation management.
- There is no guarantee, but worth the try.

Sherwood:

- He referred Larkfield Estates residents to a letter they should have received from Transportation and Public Works, roughly two weeks ago, about the establishment of a Larkfield Estates Underground Utilities District, to begin the permitting process for PG&E to underground distribution lines in that neighborhood. The BOS will be taking up this item in about two weeks.
- He and a few others went to Colorado to meet with the Marshal wild fire survivors. Northbay Rebuild Foundation is now called After the Fire USA. Their mission is to bring volunteers to different impacted disaster areas, to provide survivor services and advice. He and Jeff Okrepkie invited the survivors to come to this area where homes will be open to them for tours. Many of them are from the bay area in California. He may be asking people from this Council to participate in those tours.
- A board member of After the Fire, an expert in fire prevention, works for a non-profit that will come to California and do fire safety assessments on communities. She may include MW. He will keep reporting.

3. Wikiup Open Space (Lamberson/Would)

The appraisal is complete. It was presented to the Jackson family on Friday. Waiting on results. It will take time.

Chat

- Will undergrounding include wired internet to the premises internet? Response: Do not know.
- Have the Jackson family boundaries changed? Response: No

4. Sonoma County General Plan for Mark West Area (Lamberson/Would)

Lamberson:

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- The General Plan ad hoc committee is established: Pete Lescure, Heidi Would, David Hansen, Lori Barber, Barry Hirsch and Jen Mendoza. Anyone interested in the General Plan Amendment is welcome.
 - It will most likely be April before the General Plan goes to the BOS meeting. Maybe a month or two after that for a strategy for public workshops.
 - He is tentatively asking committee members for any and all ideas for all the MW areas.
 - Lamberson talked to Gore about a CSD versus a non-profit district committee. He said Gore has found some money to create a government board.
 - Lamberson requested that the Council re-establish a permanent item on the agenda for formation of a CSD and create an ad hoc committee.
 - Those interested in being on the committee: Lamberson, Sherwood, Catherine Dodd, Bob Cipolla.
- Lamberson would like to invite Walter Keiser back for a short refresher presentation on CSDs.

Community Question

Does this mean more government and cost for us? Responses:

- Yes. We have to assess ourselves X amount of money (a yearly item on tax bills) unless there is some other funding mechanism.
- It means more local control and the ability to find more money in other places.
- Mendoza: You can do an assessment, if voted on by the community.
 - Basically, a CSD gets the community money back into the community. There are tax agreements where funds that are coming out of the neighborhood can be shifted back in. MW area already has assessed items, such as lighting fees (pays PGE - street lights) and Cal Am Water Franchise fees.
 - This Council is an advisory, not a district, so it has no authority, even to spend money.
 - A CSD would have the opportunity to actually cut checks without waiting on the County. It would go through the auditor, be regulated and reviewed.
 - A CSD can be somewhat limiting. Once a community becomes part of a CSD, it must follow some pretty heavy regulations. It is not a predecessor of incorporation. MW area is too small to incorporate.
- A CSD could actually enable the community to solve problems.

F) Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items:

1. Update email from Carol Eber, Mark West Cemetery: Chair Fies summarized
 - The land use attorney suggested to monitor the site for activity. He will do research if needed.
 - There is nothing the County can do until an application comes from Permit Sonoma.
 - The media will be the most powerful.
 - Some believe native Americans might be buried there.
 2. Red arrow light at Mark West Springs Road/101 off ramp – Aggie Maggio: It is changed back to a red light.
 3. Catherine Dodd: Asking
 - for regular updates on the proposal of an Indian Casino.
 - for an assessment of adequate water for a 200-room spa and convention center.
 - about applying for the fire mitigation money coming from the state.
- Responses:
- There is still PG&E and lawsuit money out there.
 - Mendoza: Supervisor Gore may come and talk about those issues, sometime between spring and fall. If not able to attend himself, he will have the correct staff people to do so.

Mendoza also brought up two Fulton issues:

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- Someone commented that day laborers in Fulton have no porta potty and are voiding on the street. She is trying to get one out there. She thought the Council might want to have a conversation about the subject, ie. NIFP money and/or where would a porta potty be placed?
- Homes for Homeless Group: It is a non-profit, started by a Tubbs fire survivor who owns a lot in Fulton. He is going to ask Permit Sonoma to allow modified shipping containers there for housing. She told him the next step forward was to talk to neighbors and MWCAC.

G) Pending Items: Updates when available

1. Utilities & Water - Sherwood:

- Announced a Drought Townhall March 10, 6:00pm. Go to <https://www.sonomawater.org> for Zoom link or recording.
- We are looking at a third dry year.
- Cal Am is doing a turf removal rebate program.

2. "HAWK" light in front of Larkfield Shopping Center, Mendoza: No report until probably May

Announcement

Sherwood: The artists for the MW sidewalk met with students. Common terms used by the kids: "climate", "resilience" and the biggest one was "the unknown".

H) Correspondence: Information Only **None**

I) Future Agenda Items: Potential projects and/or suggestions for future MWCAC meetings

1. Possibility of an update on the COPE program in Wikiup (TBD)
2. Possible speaker on home hardening and vegetation management (TBD)
3. Possible community clean up? Maybe in partnership with the Chamber. (TBD)
4. List of unmet needs projects for Larkfield/Mark West/Wikiup (Presentation: Sherwood/Lamberson) (TBD)
5. Water Conservation Presentation (April)
6. Conversation Continue-Blue Book: NIFP (April)
7. Conversation Continue-Blue Book: CAC boundaries (April/May)
9. Homes for Homeless presentation (TBD)

J) Adjournment: ACTION ITEM

There being no other business to discuss, on a motion by Lamberson, seconded by Sherwood, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Approved Date:

Chair

MWCAC MEETINGS: 6:00 PM—SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

Hybrid Meetings until further notice

Mark West School District Office, The Learning Center, 305 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa

(NOTE: Location or time may change due to anticipated greater community participation.)

Be sure to check the MWCAC website for meeting agenda, location & time

sonomacounty.ca.gov/Mark-West-Citizens-Advisory-Council
<https://markwestcac.org> markwestcac@gmail.com