
Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee

DRAFT MINUTES - WORKSHOP #1

***Saturday March 20, 2010
Goleta Union School District Board Hearing Room***

Workshop Called to Order: By Chair Kim Kimbell at 9:05 a.m.

1. Roll Call

GavPAC Members Present: Baer, Boise-Cossart, Bowman, Kimbell, Lloyd, McGinnis, McKenna, McNabb, Tautrim, Van Leer

GavPAC Members Absent: Feeney

County Staff Present:

Derek Johnson, Office of Long Range Planning Director

Vicki Parker, Office of Long Range Planning Deputy Director

David Lackie, Office of Long Range Planning Supervising Planner

Brian A. Tetley, Office of Long Range Planning Senior Planner

Katie London, Office of Long Range Planning Assistant Planner

Greg Wiley, Office of Long Range Planning Extra-Help Planner

2. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda: None.

3. Meeting Minutes from March 3, 2010

Minutes will be considered at the next GavPAC meeting on April 7, 2010.

4. Welcome and Workshop Format Overview

3rd District Supervisor Doreen Farr: Supervisor Farr welcomed workshop attendees and thanked the GavPAC for their hard work on this planning effort. She recognized the beauty and diversity of uses on the Gaviota Coast and believes that now is the time to take measures to protect the Coast. She acknowledged the GavPAC's diverse backgrounds and broad experience as well as in-depth knowledge of issues related to the Gaviota Coast. She also recognized landowners who have been good stewards of the land and those individuals who feel passionately about protection of the Gaviota Coast.

Staff: Derek Johnson stated that this planning process is proceeding faster than anticipated, largely due to the enthusiasm and knowledge of the GavPAC and that this workshop was designed to elicit public input on what Staff and the GavPAC should be thinking about in the process of developing the Gaviota Coast Plan. He explained the workshop format: "World Café" discussion in the morning and open forum/public discussion in the afternoon. GavPAC members will listen to the public and facilitate discussions during the morning session. He also explained the workshop ground rules.

5. Table Discussions. The workshop continued with discussions at six tables on six different issue areas: Keeping Agriculture on the Land; Resource Stewardship & Open Space; Public Recreation; Plan Area Boundary; Transportation, Energy, & Infrastructure, Zoning, Land Use & Housing.



A complete tabulation of notes from the morning session table discussions is available on the County's Gaviota website as part of the GavPAC Meeting # 9 packet.

6. Reporting & Open Forum Discussion Session

Table facilitators reported back to the public on their respective table discussions, summarizing input received from the public during the morning session. The following is a summary of the reports by issue area.

Public Recreation – McKenna reported what was discussed at the Public Recreation table: Stakeholder interests include: the public, the landowners, and the environment. There are conflicts between these interests, including that public demand for recreation can overwhelm supply. The small percentage of the public who are irresponsible create the majority of the issues. Landowners fear loss of control over their land, and that the environment can become degraded by overuse. Cooperative engagement can create a solution where every interest wins (i.e. restore the estuary at Gaviota State Park, move Park access to Calle Mariposa Reina, and enhance access for Hollister Ranch residents).

Bowman also reported that the question of what is meant by "improved access" was often raised; does that mean maintain public access or increase public access? She added that participants were interested in knowing how landowners can be protected from liability, expense and hassle from potential incidents on private property and means to address unsanctioned coastal access.

Land Use, Zoning, & Housing – Mark Lloyd reported what was discussed at the Land Use, Zoning, & Housing table: Overall, people seem to like the zoning ordinance from the land use standpoint (they like the rural and open space setting), particularly agricultural zoning; and want to see more flexibility with the rules and how development rights are conferred to owners, including transfer of development rights, clustering, etc. People want to balance landowners' property rights with preservation of land through conservation easements, and it is more important is to develop a set of guidelines and standards than implement protectionist policies for resources and viewsheds, and those will dictate what optimal house sizes should be. And, although progressive development standards and LEED design should be voluntary, there should be benefits and incentives for landowners.

There is a desire to see flexible regulations that would allow generational and occupational housing.

Most people expect visual resources will be protected.

The idea of having alternative zoning to "non-agriculturally viable" or "potentially agriculturally viable" was discussed and there was not much support for re-zoning or a zone district that would regulate areas by watershed, although watersheds should be protected.

Boise-Cossart also reported that incentivizing good management practices, having more flexibility in regulations and the use of zoning overlays were common topics of discussion.

Resource Stewardship and Open Space – Baer restated the Discussion Questions/Subtopics used to facilitate discussion at the table. Baer then reported what was discussed at the Resource Stewardship and Open Space table: Most people expressed a desire to keep things the same and protect the viewshed in the Plan Area, but recognized that conflicts between agriculture and visual resources can occur. Permits for beneficial projects are currently hard to obtain and there is interest in permit streamlining for beneficial projects. In addition, there is an interest in developing an inventory of natural resources.

There should be flexibility in setting buffers and boundaries because of the uncertainty about what the Gaviota Coast may be like in the future due to factors such as climate change. Generally, people think that existing stewardship is good and that private property rights have been the best protection for the land but that there needs to be a "safe harbor" or



indemnification for landowners who create additional resources as a result of good stewardship, and that overall, public resources and property rights should be integrated (i.e., use of TDR, etc).

McGinnis also reported that landowners within a watershed may need to work together for watershed protection and that projects on public land could be used as pilot studies for watershed management. In addition, while second units could be used as a source of additional income on agricultural land, they would not necessarily harm resources.

Keeping Agriculture on the Land – Tautrim restated the Discussion Questions/Subtopics used to facilitate discussion at the table. Tautrim then reported what was discussed at the Keeping Agriculture on the Land table: People overwhelmingly supported incentives, especially for landowners who are good stewards of the land, but also expressed that current County policy can make incentives infeasible. “Safe Harbor” agreements are needed to provide protection to landowners who may create additional biological resources as a result of their good stewardship. In addition, many beneficial projects exclude the Coastal Zone from involvement because of the red tape associated with dealing with the Coastal Commission.

Flexibility for active agriculture is necessary (site specific) and a majority of people agreed that allowing multiple, compatible uses on agricultural land would help keep agricultural operations viable.

The State is reducing local Williamson Act funding and as a result the County Assessor may be reassessing Williamson Act land at different rates than in the past, which may influence agricultural viability.

The inheritance (estate) tax is detrimental to keeping agriculture on the land, and the County should support Federal legislative efforts to change estate tax laws. Processing facilities and energy generation (i.e., solar, wind) need to be community-scaled. In addition, mapping of active agricultural areas should be based on more than just the location of pesticide application (as is the current practice), and that mapping the location of actively grazed lands would be difficult, but would facilitate development of a more effective Gaviota Coast Plan.

Transportation, Energy, & Infrastructure – Kimbell reported what was discussed at the Transportation, Energy, & Infrastructure table: There were several themes routinely discussed, including creation of a bike trail along the Highway 101 corridor, and conflicts between protection of resources and infrastructure (i.e., the railroad and seawalls). Someone mentioned the idea of promoting commuter rail along the Coast.

The role of oil and the prospect of continued oil activity and decommissioning of old facilities, as well as renewable energy resources were discussed.

There is concern over road standards required by the fire department, particularly required minimum road widths and maximum road grades.

There was interest in undergrounding utilities. The County can influence Caltrans project design through creation of comprehensive requirements (i.e., requirements for bike trails, creek crossings, etc), as there is a fair chance Caltrans would implement these types of requirements.

McNabb also reported that the question of how to deal with jurisdictional problems and coordination between private landowners, State Parks, and the railroads was discussed, as well as who takes ownership and supplies funding for maintenance of bike paths and land that becomes vacant as a result of decommissioning. There is little, if any, fire protection for private homes in this region.



Public Comment:

Bill Giorgi. Stated that he had previously asked for information on what the impacts have been from oil extraction in the area. He said that Vista de Las Cruces School receives a significant amount of revenue from oil extraction activities.

Member of Public (name not stated): He stated that if Fire Station 18 closes, it will have a major impact on fire protection in the community. He thinks the best approach to fire protection is for people to come together to create community wildfire protection plan(s). We should embrace what the County Fire Department is doing regarding comprehensive evacuation plans. He also supports streamlining NRCS grants for fire protection and defensible space.

Anne Coates. Supports NRCS streamlining and believes locally-grown food is an important component and asset of the Gaviota Coast.

Nathan Alley. Asked how the Climate Action Strategy, which is also currently under development, would intersect with the Gaviota Coast Plan.

Mike McGinnis. Stated that biodiversity protection should be included in the Climate Action Strategy and the Gaviota Coast Plan, particularly to protect endemic species; and policies in these plans should be flexible and adaptive.

Plan Area Boundary – David Lackie reported what was discussed at the Plan Area Boundary table: Many of the concerns about the Boundary related to the Boundary following the Gaviota Creek Watershed, which extends approximately 5 miles from the Coast. Landowners will be kept informed on the progress of the GavPAC and the benefits and incentives that would be involved with inclusion in the Plan Area. Areas east of the Gaviota tunnel and west of the Tunnel could potentially be made into sub-areas, and not all tools would be necessarily applied across the entire Plan Area. There was some concern that the Plan Area was unnecessarily large and would create additional layers of regulation on landowners. GIS mapping could be utilized to help inform decision making and the resources and connectivity of the area directly outside the Plan Area should be considered when developing the Plan.

Public Comment:

Lee Moldaver. He said that over the long-term, climate change could change species migration patterns, the shape of the coastline, and other facets of the planning area, and that therefore the current Plan Area Boundary is temporary and in-flux.

Continuing with the open forum, public input was received on the following focus questions:

1. *What are the common threads among the goals and issues expressed for the topic areas?*
2. *What are the tensions that exist in achieving some of these goals or addressing issues?*
3. *What are the important goals for this Plan to achieve?*
4. *What are the roles of the various entities involved: landowners, government, community/visitors?*
5. *What tools could be developed to help achieve the goals?*

Staff: Derek Johnson stated that the County is looking at ways to incentivize green building strategies through their Climate Action Strategy (CAS), happening concurrently with the Gaviota Coast Planning process.

The Gaviota Coast Plan could use adaptive policies to accommodate the uncertainty of impacts from Climate Change on the Plan Area.



On April 6th, 2010 Staff will present, to the Board of Supervisors, the California Coastal Commission's (CCC) Staff Report on recommended modifications to the County's LUDC in the Coastal Zone.

The AAC could work with the legislative committee to lobby for bill(s) before Congress regarding inheritance taxes on agricultural land, and/or other pertinent legislative efforts.

Resource conflicts can arise when looking at areas viable for alternative energy; the planning process will have to take this into account.

A recreation management plan could be a tool for the Gaviota Coast Plan.

The next CCC Hearing will be located in Ventura at the Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, on April 15th, 2010.

Public Comment:

Anne Coates. On March 26th, the CCC Staff Report should be posted on the CCC's website

A complete tabulation of notes from the afternoon open forum discussion session and audio recording is available on the County's Gaviota website as part of the GavPAC Meeting # 9 packet.

7. Wrap Up & Next Steps

Table facilitators will type up notes from the round table discussions and provide them to Staff. These notes will be provided on the County's website and at the next GavPAC meeting.

8. Adjournment – 3:36 p.m.

