
Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES MEETINGS No. 17 & No. 18

Wednesday September 1, 2010
Wednesday September 15, 2010
Vista de Las Cruces School Auditorium

Meeting No. 17 Called to Order: By Chair Kimbell at 6:34 p.m.

1. Roll Call

GavPAC Members Present: Boise-Cossart (arrived after roll at 6:41), Bowman, Feeney, Kimbell, Lloyd, McGinnis, McKenna, McNabb, Van Leer

GavPAC Members Absent: Baer, Tautrim

County Staff Present:

David Lackie, Long Range Planning Division Supervising Planner

Brian Tetley, Long Range Planning Division Senior Planner

Allen Bell, Development Review Division Senior Planner

Katie London, Long Range Planning Division Assistant Planner

Guest Speaker(s): Bethany Clough, CBAR Chair

2. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda:

Bill Giorgi: Acknowledged the high public turnout for the Plan Area Boundary discussion during Meeting 16 and opposition from landowners north and west of the Gaviota Tunnel to inclusion in the planning area. The GavPAC should make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to terminate the planning area at the Gaviota Tunnel.

3. Administrative Briefings

Staff: Santa Barbara County's Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) went before the California Coastal Commission (CCC) for certification at a hearing on Thursday August 12, 2010. The CCC granted a continuance until the November hearing, which will be in the Los Angeles or Orange County area, to allow time for additional public outreach and continued negotiation with CCC staff. Action has to be taken by January, otherwise the County's application for certification would have to be withdrawn and the County would have to re-apply for certification.

The BOS is considering options for public hearings on the proposed LUDC modifications. It is not yet certain whether the GavPAC would host an informational session.

Committee: Van Leer attended the entire CCC hearing on August 12th and remarked that the Commissioners seemed amenable to supporting agricultural operations. McGinnis said the CCC also recognized that it would be difficult to implement some of the exemptions it proposed with the modifications.

4. Meeting Minutes from Meeting No. 16 on August 9, 2010

Deliberations: Change "Mrs. Parsons" to "Mrs. Hansen" on page 2. Remove the word "flexible" from Goal 6.



ACTION: Lloyd moved, seconded by Feeney, and carried by a vote of 8-0, with Boise-Cossart abstaining, to approve the minutes with modifications.

5. Discussion of Existing Visual Resource Policy

Deliberation: Staff described the County's visual resource policy approach to development in rural areas as requiring development to be subordinate to natural landforms. There is no County policy regarding new development maintaining or conforming to rural character. In addition, the term 'subordinate' has not been defined or quantified in County policy or code. McNabb asked whether there is a document explaining the Central Board of Architectural Review (CBAR) review process and what issues the CBAR has run into when interpreting County policy in the Gaviota area. Bethany Clough, CBAR Chair, explained that the County's skyline intrusion policy is clear and straightforward to implement. The most difficult challenge for the CBAR is to balance a minimization of grading while maintaining subordination to natural landforms, particularly with the rangeland nature of the Gaviota Coast. For example, large berms may hide new development, but the increase in grading associated with berming runs counter to County policy. In some cases, sensitive landscape screening is difficult, as the existing landscape has few trees, and the addition of trees adds to a development's overall mass. Allen Bell stated that not all projects in the planning area trigger CBAR review. The proposed development must require a discretionary permit or subject to the Ridgeline and Hillside ordinance (have 16 feet of elevation loss within 100 feet of a building's footprint).

Chair Kimbell requested that Staff prepare a summary of the County's rural area policy approach and the CBAR's methodology for project review. Allen Bell explained that only a small percentage of residential development projects undergo a pre-application process, or the less detailed Planner Consultation process, likely due to the upfront costs associated with such processes. Clough also stated that the Fire Department development standards frequently drive design, which can be a difficult obstacle for the CBAR. Staff explained that the View Corridor Overlay was adopted as part of the County's Local Coastal Plan, and therefore a landowner cannot opt into, or out of the Overlay. Clough stated that house size can affect the ability of a project to reach subordination with the natural environment, as it can be harder to blend a larger home into the surrounding environment. In addition, limitations on house size in relation to the parcel size, such as floor area ratio (FAR) used in urban areas, are not applicable to rural areas with larger parcels.

Lloyd stated that preserving the rural character of the Gaviota Coast is a fundamental principle of this planning process.

Public Comment:

Bill Giorgi: Received confirmation that the policies which the Committee has been discussing are County-wide policies. He stated that siting a house on a ridgeline is advantageous for monitoring agricultural operations on a property.

Les Freeman: Applying County road standards to private development would lessen visual impacts from private roads.

Mike Lunsford: Stated the definition of the word "rural" from the dictionary and emphasized that the Gaviota Coast Conservancy wants to protect the Gaviota Coast from sprawl.

Bill Giorgi: The definition of "rural" should also include the culture and history associated with agricultural structures.

Mike Lunsford: There are no County policies that seek to achieve invisibility of new development in rural areas.



Bob Carr, Landscape Designer, representing Caltrans: Highway 154 and Highway 1 from Highway 101 to Lompoc, are the only two Officially Designated scenic highways in the County. San Luis Obispo County most recently received an Official Designation for a scenic highway.

Mr. Carr described the process to become a scenic highway as follows: 1) Meet with Caltrans staff, 2) Complete an application, which includes visual impact assessment modeling, and 3) Create a Corridor Protection Plan which discusses land use, grading, advertising, design review, and utilities.

The County would be the primary applicant for an Official Designation, but time and resources of community groups can also be used for the application process. Benefits of the Official Designation include an additional layer of government protection for the scenic corridor, a potential incremental increase in tourism, and a potential for State and Federal grants. In addition, Caltrans can use the Corridor Protection Plan as a guide when conducting landscaping.

Bill Giorgi: Stated concerns about increasing tourism and traffic on the Gaviota Coast.

6. Consideration of Visual Resources Priorities for the Gaviota Coast

The GavPAC spent some time working through expressions of the rural character of the Gaviota Coast, which resulted in the following list:

1. Functional agricultural structures
2. Open landscape
3. Agricultural structures as guidelines for development
4. Architectural design compliments traditional agricultural and rural structures
5. Agricultural operations (i.e., ranching, orchards)
6. Pastoral landscape in a natural setting
7. Avocado trees
8. Cultivation of sustainable crops and orchards
9. A mosaic of natural landscapes and agriculture
10. Uniqueness of the Gaviota landscape
11. Adobe structures
12. Single story structures
13. Rugged and inaccessible
14. Practical , pragmatic development
15. Simple, natural and functional
16. Ocean viewshed
17. Mosaic of landscapes
18. Fencing
19. Sparsely populated, low density population/residences
20. Night sky

Meeting Adjournment – 9:08 p.m.



Meeting No. 18 Called to Order: By Chair Kimbell at 6:31 p.m.

1. Roll Call

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

GavPAC Members Absent: McGinnis

County Staff Present:

David Lackie, Long Range Planning Division Supervising Planner

Brian Tetley, Long Range Planning Division Senior Planner

Allen Bell, Development Review Division Senior Planner

Katie London, Long Range Planning Division Assistant Planner

Guest Speaker(s):Puck Erikson, CBAR Member

2. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda:

Mike Lunsford: Commented on the low public attendance at this meeting and requested the GavPAC consider conducting some meetings in Goleta as well as Gaviota.

3. Administrative Briefings

Staff: The County will hold a public workshop to discuss the California Coastal Commission's (CCC) proposed modifications to the LUDC on Monday, October 11th at 6:30 p.m. at the Vista de Las Cruces School Auditorium. The County has invited CCC staff to attend the workshop, but CCC staff has yet to respond to that request. A total of four public workshops will be held on this matter in the following locations: Carpinteria, Montecito, Goleta, and Gaviota. Staff will provide the GavPAC with meeting time and location details once that information becomes available.

Committee members Baer, Bowman, Feeney, and McKenna may attend the workshop in Gaviota to convey the GavPAC's sentiments on the proposed modifications to the LUDC. Staff reminded the Committee that Brown Act Rules are still in effect during the public workshop.

Staff gave clarification regarding the noticing of two meetings (GavPAC Meetings 17 & 18) with a joint agenda.

Committee: A conservation and restoration seminar will be held at UC Santa Barbara on September 27th and it would be helpful if a member of the GavPAC could attend. Chair Kimbell will forward the details of that meeting to Staff who will then forward onto the Committee. Lloyd stated that the GavPAC Goals and Guiding Principles developed at the previous meetings should be clearly labeled as Draft Goals and Guiding Principles. This information should be updated on the County's website and on the inserts given to the GavPAC at this meeting.

MOTION: All information to be considered at GavPAC meetings shall only either be included in the packet mailing for that meeting or presented at the meeting.

ACTION: Lloyd moved, seconded by Van Leer, and carried by a vote of 10-0.

4. & 5. Addressed at Meeting 17

6. Consideration of Visual Resources Priorities for the Gaviota Coast

The list of expressions of the rural character of the Gaviota Coast was modified resulting in the following revised list:



1. Functional agricultural structures
2. Open non-fragmented landscape
3. No intrusive lighting
4. Architectural design compliments existing agricultural, rural, and natural setting
5. Landscape complimentary with surrounding natural environment
6. Less visibility of structures
7. Visible impact subservient to the natural environment
8. Siting structures to protect the viewshed
9. Protect ocean viewshed
10. Low density on a plan-wide basis
11. Protection of the Night Sky

A Subcommittee on Visual Resources will use this list of items a two draft rural character vision statements to further refine what is meant by rural character on the Gaviota Coast.

Deliberation: Staff listed the County's three key visual resource policies for rural areas that form a hierarchical approach to project review. Staff also explained the phases of CBAR design review. CBAR first reviews project siting and its fit with the surrounding environment. Grading, architecture and landscaping are secondary issues discussed after site selection. Size, bulk and scale are reviewed by the CBAR during the site selection process. If an applicant wants to build a large structure, from a design standpoint, it is more difficult to create a design for a large structure that is generally compatible with regional or neighborhood character. CBAR design review can occur before permits are pulled or applied for, to get early feedback on site potential. The GavPAC can tier off the County's hierarchical approach to develop additional policies that would be more expressive of the design outcomes desired for the Gaviota Coast.

Visual resources principles also discussed include:

1. Development which is visible from public areas should be especially carefully sited and designed to be subordinate to its setting.
2. The design of development should fit the site.
3. Limiting visibility of development takes precedence over minimization of grading volume.
4. Some grading may be necessary to reduce visibility.
5. It is preferable to fit buildings into the setting without significant grading.
6. Grading to create a flat pad on slopes is discouraged.
7. Respect for the existing landform.
8. Artificial berms are discouraged.



Public Comment:

Mike Lunsford: Baseline rural character should include biodiversity and recreational assets as well as the other unique resources of the coast. Chair Kimbell responded that these components of the Gaviota Coast will be addressed when the GavPAC deliberates on other resource areas.

Mark Chaconas: When will staff provide a memo on the “unwritten rules” of project review, as discussed during the previous meeting? Staff stated that there really are no “unwritten rules”, but rather working practices of design professionals used to interpret County policy. The transmittal memo sent to the GavPAC prior to this meeting explained the existing three key policies for visual resources in rural areas and discussed how planners apply those policies to project review.

Mike Lunsford: Projects that are blatantly inconsistent with County policy should not be eligible for CBAR for review. Applicants should comply with the three key policies in the project application.

Meeting Adjournment – 9:27 p.m.

Signed _____ Date _____

GAVPAC Chair Kimbell

