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# Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee

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## **APPROVED MEETING MINUTES MEETINGS No. 20**

**Wednesday October 13, 2010  
Vista de Las Cruces School Auditorium**

**Meeting No. 20 Called to Order:** By Chair Kimbell at 6:32 p.m.

### **1. Roll Call**

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

**GavPAC Members Absent:** Bowman, Lloyd

#### **County Staff Present:**

David Lackie, Long Range Planning Division Supervising Planner

Brian Tetley, Long Range Planning Division Senior Planner

Stephanie Stark, Agricultural Planner

Katie Haldeman, Long Range Planning Division Assistant Planner

### **2. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda: None**

### **3. Administrative Briefings**

**Staff:** The county conducted one of four public informational sessions to discuss the California Coastal Commission's (CCC) proposed modifications to the county's Land Use and Development Code (LUDC), on Monday, October 11, 2010, at Vista de Las Cruces School. As the modifications are currently proposed, an expansion of use on agricultural land, the definition of which has not been clearly stated, would require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP). This would create an additional permitting process for previously exempt activities. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) will be briefed on the responses and comments received from the informational sessions during their November 9<sup>th</sup> hearing in Santa Maria. This BOS was postponed to include adequate time for staff to review the latest CCC staff report on the proposed modifications. The CCC will consider CCC Staff's revised recommendations during their hearing of November 17-18, 2010 in Santa Monica, at a venue that has yet to be determined.

McKenna relayed the results of a Santa Barbara County community survey entitled "The Central Coast Survey", prepared by the UCSB Social Science Survey Center, and provided a handout summarizing the results as they relate to agriculture and development issues. The telephone study included 804 adult respondents split between North and South County. Results of the survey show that 84 percent support the Williamson Act; 59 percent do not want development on agricultural land; 62 percent favored a new law requiring that new developments outside of the current urban boundaries be subject to voter approval in a countywide election; 68 percent favored agricultural buffers; 14 percent stated that farmers and ranchers do not have a negative impact on their residence; 13 percent felt that farmers and ranchers deplete resources; and 46 percent buy at farmers markets once a week.

Stephanie Stark, Agricultural Planner, announced that the County has a new Agricultural Commissioner, Cathleen Fisher, who worked for Contra Costa County prior to starting at



the county. Ms. Fisher recognizes the importance of land use issues in relation to production agriculture. Amongst other initiatives, Fisher is initiating the publication of a recurring agricultural newsletter for the county.

**Committee:** Feeney remarked that CCC Staff did not respond to the county's invitation to attend the public workshops on the LUDC certification process. McGinnis commented that limited CCC Staff resources and time, given the current State fiscal crisis, might have inhibited staff attendance at workshops. McNabb requested that a copy of the presentation given at the workshops be provided to the Committee. Staff directed McNabb to the county's webpage dedicated to the LUDC certification process.

#### 4. Meeting Minutes from Meeting No. 19 on September 29, 2010

**Deliberations:** Feeney asked for clarification on McNabb's reference to eucalyptus trees in the minutes. No modifications to the minutes were made.

**ACTION:** Baer moved, seconded by McGinnis, and carried by a vote of 8-0, with Kimbell abstaining due to his absence from Meeting 19, to approve the minutes without modifications.

#### 5. Discussion of Existing Agricultural Policy

**Deliberation:** Staff stated that the key thread of County agricultural policy is to enhance the productivity of agricultural lands. Existing County policy on agriculture resides in Land Use Element designations, Agricultural Element policies on compatibility & urban encroachment, LUDC allowed uses, definitions and permitting processes, and the Williamson Act Uniform rules. Staff explained that the State of California, under the auspices of the Department of Conservation (DOC), regulates allowable uses on Williamson Act contracted land, and that the County has minimal influence over DOC policy. Updates to the Uniform Rules would be effective countywide, and therefore would require a BOS amendment. Staff noted that, although important for context, the focus of the GavPAC is on revisions to the Comprehensive General Plan and/or to the LUDC and not revising/updating the Uniform Rules.

Currently, the only allowed uses by right on land zone for agriculture are cultivated agriculture and grazing. Additional processing uses generally require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), which can be prohibitively expensive and time consuming, and brings an agriculturalist's land under greater regulatory scrutiny. In addition, allowing further processing of agricultural products beyond the natural state is considered an industrial process, and therefore not currently allowed on agriculturally zoned land in the county. Processing beyond the natural state includes making items such as jam, salsa, nut oils, etc. Processing on-site is mostly limited to packing, cooling, and basic handling of products for shipment.

The county's Residential Agricultural Unit (RAU) ordinance was not renewed, and therefore it has expired and RAUs are no longer allowed. When active, RAUs were only allowed outside the Coastal Zone on AG-II land. Less than 15 RAUs were permitted under this ordinance. Residential Second Units (RSUs) are not allowed on AG-II zoned land, which prompted the development of the RAU ordinance. The DOC had some concerns about this program's allowance for rental properties and potential incompatibilities with the Williamson Act.

Staff explained that a Residential Second Unit (RSU) has a maximum size of 1,200 square feet and is scaled to lot size and are only allowed on residential land and land zoned up to AG-I-20, while an RAU was specifically applied to AG-II land and units had a maximum size of 3,000 square feet.

**Public Comment:** None



## 6. Consideration of Agricultural Preferences for the Gaviota Coast

**Deliberation:** Emerging key policy concepts and preferences as expressed by the GavPAC are: 1) expanding compatible permitted uses on agricultural land 2) Exploring alternative revenue streams for agriculturalists 3) Providing for additional multi-generational housing opportunities.

Potential agritourism uses for the Gaviota Coast that include: farmstays, tours, on-farm classes, guest ranches, etc.

McKenna said that if the goal of additional housing on agricultural land is to allow alternative income/flexibility, anyone should be able to live in that housing. Staff stated that county ordinance currently only allows for one Single Family Dwelling (SFD) per parcel.

Some principles suggested by the GavPAC, which the Agriculture Subcommittee consider during deliberations, include:

- Explore additional housing options, provided the housing does not otherwise impair existing agricultural operations.
- new policies created as part of this planning process should be consistent in the Coastal Zone and Inland Area
- Availability of water resources and its relation to agricultural potential on the Coast.
- Focus on the usage of an RAU-like ordinance
- Consider agricultural policies in relation to the GavPAC's draft goals and guiding principles
- Create regulations, policies and/or zoning codes that are scalable to a community-scale level

Staff stated that the concept of farmstays never gained much traction during the Santa Ynez Valley Planning processing. McGinnis said farmstays and expansion of permitted uses on agricultural land should be approached cautiously on the Gaviota Coast. Tautrim said that farmstays are different from hotels, and that opening up agricultural land to non-farmers/ranchers does not have to include overnight visits. Van Leer also stated that any sort of rental income on agricultural land would merely be an additional revenue stream, but would not supplant the ranch/farm's primary source of income from agricultural operations. Boise-Cossart stated that future development, similar to existing guest ranch-type operations on the Gaviota Coast, should be discouraged.

Staff referenced the UC Co-operative Extension Small Farms Program webpage on agritourism as a valuable resource for the Agriculture Subcommittee and for further information on expanded uses on agricultural land.

### Public Comment:

**Mike Lunsford:** Historic fears regarding expanding land uses derive from the notion that the scale of operations will get too big and that accessory uses to agriculture will crowd out productive agricultural land.

**Joanne McGarry:** Why are different regulations applied to vineyards and wineries than all other agricultural land? Staff responded that the wine industry was on an upswing in the 1990's and therefore the county's permitting process was revamped as a tiered process to address growth in the wine industry.



**Carl Steinberg:** There should be some means to allow farmers to change operations without additional permitting requirements or regulations.

**Brian Trautwein representing the Environmental Defense Center (EDC):** Supports community-scaled agriculture. Is concerned about allowing additional operations on agricultural land that would digress from productive agricultural operations.

**Linda Till:** Supports scalable regulations. Till also noted that carbon emissions are reduced when processing can be done on-site, thereby avoiding additional transportation of goods for processing prior to arrival at a local market.

**Mike Lunsford:** The Agricultural Clustering Ordinance (ACD) was created to make lots that could be sold while preserving some agricultural land in an easement in perpetuity. Expanded uses or housing opportunities on agricultural land should not encourage the landowner to end Williamson Act contracts.

**Joanne McGarry:** How is the climate action strategy (CAS) fitting into the Gaviota Plan? Chair Kimbell explained that the CAS development is a separate process.

**Chris Shaeffer representing Caltrans:** Is concerned with the nuances of access to additional residential development, particularly if such development would utilize at-grade intersection/crossings.

**Mark Chaconas:** The Committee might want to consider incentives for landowners in the form of mitigation or conservation banks, which could help landowners offset the costs of preserving land.

**Meeting Adjournment – 8:57 p.m.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

*Kim Kimbell*

Date Nov 8, 2010

GavPAC Chair Kimbell

