
Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES MEETING No. 29

***Wednesday March 9, 2011
Vista de Las Cruces School Auditorium***

Meeting No. 29 Called to Order: By Chair Kimbell at 6:30 p.m.

1. Roll Call

GavPAC Members Present: Baer, Boise-Cossart, Bowman, Feeney, Kimbell, Lloyd, McGinnis (arrived after roll at 6:43 p.m.), McKenna, McNabb, Tautrim, Van Leer

GavPAC Members Absent: None

County Staff Present:

David Lackie, Long Range Planning Division Supervising Planner

Brian A. Tetley, Long Range Planning Division Senior Planner

Allen Bell, Development Review Division Senior Planner

Katie Haldeman, Long Range Planning Division Associate Planner

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

3. Administrative Briefings

Deliberations: Staff has no administrative briefings.

4. Meeting Minutes from February 23, 2011

Deliberations: The minutes were amended to correct a few typographical errors.

Public Comment: None

ACTION: Tautrim moved, seconded by Bowman and carried by a vote of 9-0, with McNabb abstaining, (McGinnis was not present at the time the minutes were approved) to approve the minutes with modifications.

5-7. Transportation, Energy, and Infrastructure Deliberations

Deliberations:

Official Scenic Highway Designation.

The Committee inquired about any additional visual resource protection and design review scrutiny (i.e., for bridges) that an Official Scenic Highway Designation might provide to the planning area. Tautrim inquired as to how the Official Designation would impact landowners along Highway 101. Lloyd stated that additional scrutiny is given to projects within 600 feet of the officially designated scenic Highway 154. Lloyd stated that additional scrutiny of projects might deter Caltrans from conducting projects in the planning area due to additional restrictions or costs that might be incurred.

Some Committee members are concerned about deciding on a recommendation with regards to the Official Scenic Highway Designation, without knowing the implications of that Designation. McKenna, Chair of the Visual Resources Subcommittee, stated that the Subcommittee will further deliberate on this issue.



Staff reminded the GavPAC that the Scenic Highway Designation process could proceed independently of the Gaviota Coast Planning process or it could be included as an action item in the Plan.

General Policy Language.

ACTION: Feeney moved, seconded by Lloyd, and carried by a vote of 11-0, to direct Staff to develop general policy language for:

1. Restoration of coastal lagoons
2. Restoration of fish passage
3. Removal of barriers to fish passage on County roads
4. Improvement of coastal access, with a focus on access through public land
5. Management of invasive species

In addition, the GavPAC directs Staff to use economic and environmental considerations to develop a prioritized list of specific areas (watersheds, lagoons, etc) and specific invasive species (*Arundo donax*, etc) for which to apply the above policy language. The GavPAC recognizes that this policy direction will also serve as guidance for the proposed Interagency Review Council for the Gaviota Coast.

ACTION: Baer moved, seconded by Van Leer, and carried by a vote of 11-0, to amend the previous Motion to include development of general policy language to support removal of barriers to fish passage on County roads.

Public Comment:

Chris Shaeffer representing Caltrans: An Official Scenic Highway Designation would provide enhanced visual resources protection and require a higher level of aesthetics review by Caltrans, but the extent of review and what the final product would be is not clear. Caltrans' would policies in a Gaviota Coast Plan, as part of its policy consistency analysis, therefore the Plan creates a pathway for additional visual resource protection.

Stressed the importance of developing a Gaviota Coast Interagency Review Council, similar to the Council operating in Big Sur, and of working with the 3rd District Supervisor to support and champion the Council as well as require Caltrans' participation in the Council.

Consider guiding public access to the coastline to existing above-grade Highway crossings.

Infrastructure & Fire Protection.

McNabb says most roads in the Refugio Canyon area do not meet current Fire Department Development Standards. Response times to fire emergencies in the Refugio area are slow in part because there is no longer a U.S. Forest Service fire station in the Refugio area. McNabb stated that 12 landowners on Refugio Rd. have recently had their fire insurance revoked for certain structures. A lack of fire insurance prevents a property owner obtaining a mortgage.

The County is currently paying to support Station No. 18 (at Mariposa Reina exit in Gaviota). Chair Kimbell stated that the population density in the planning area is too low to support another fire station. Lloyd relayed that a new fire station will be constructed near the new Highway overpass near Winchester Canyon in Goleta. He doubts development impact fees for fire protection would be sufficient to support additional fire



services in the planning area. The Committee wants to hear from the Fire Department on the issue of fire protection in the planning area.

Feeny explained that insurance company mandates can drive fire protection requirements (brush clearing, etc.), not necessarily the fire department. In addition, defensible space requirements can vary at the federal, state, and local levels.

Staff stated that the soon to be released Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Mission Canyon Community Plan has addressed issues of fire protection and vegetation management.

ACTION: Boise-Cossart moved, seconded by McNabb, and carried by a vote of 11-0, to give the following policy direction to Staff:

1. Encourage the County to keep Fire Station No. 18 active and viable to serve visitors, tourists and residents on the Gaviota Coast.

ACTION: McKenna moved, seconded by McGinnis, and carried by a vote of 11-0, to give the following policy direction to Staff:

1. Investigate the feasibility of developing rural volunteer fire brigade(s), and if possible, to assist or support their development.

8. Presentation by Mr. Leonadi Ward, Visual Resources

Mr. Ward has been the Chair of the Hollister Ranch (HR) Design Committee for the past four years. The Committee has worked to update the HR Design Guidelines. General design guideline principles include 1) blending development with the landscape while accounting for seasonal color variations 2) dark colors 3) low building heights 4) and weighing the importance of color and materials over building size. The Design Guidelines do not have a building size limit, in part because the HR Design Committee did not want to create a situation where applicants would build up to that size limit. The overarching goal is to not have development break-up the landscape, and design is addressed using a hierarchy which includes, in order of descending importance: siting, color, design, size, and materials.

There is recognition that HR is a working agricultural landscape, thereby allowing for agricultural support equipment and structures.

Deliberations: The GavPAC inquired about protection of private views on HR. Mr. Ward responded that all views, excluding views from the passenger rail line, are private views, therefore the Design Committee works to protect neighbors' views and views to the ocean.

9. Visual Resources Subcommittee Summary Report.

McKenna, Chair of the Visual Resources Subcommittee presented a summary of the Subcommittee's progress and asked for the GavPAC's input regarding the general direction the draft policies are taking. Lloyd commented that the policy language presented in this summary report needs to be further refined by the Subcommittee and Staff. Lloyd is concerned about including the word "eliminate" within policy language regarding visual resources impacts, but he does support policies and planning tools which seek to harmonize development with the landscape.

The Subcommittee is still deliberating on the general conditions for the proposed Critical Viewshed Corridor Overlay.

Deliberations: The issue of "home size" was discussed, Baer asked for data to support claims that there is a trend of large home development on the Gaviota Coast. Feeny suggested using a definition of rural character to help determine appropriate home sizes.



Public Comment:

Mark Chaconas: many of the issues being discussed in the Visual Resources Subcommittee meetings should be addressed by the Agriculture Subcommittee as well.

Leonadi Ward: the definition of rural character could applied to design review to help determine home size limitations.

Les Freeman: It is difficult to describe the character of the Gaviota Coast because there are many different types of buildings and development. Are visual impacts only considered significant when seen from a public viewing place with the unaided eye? Or with amplification (i.e. binoculars)?

10. Discussion of Long-Term Meeting Schedule

Staff asked the Committee to submit comments on the draft visual resources policies so that those comments can be incorporated into future policy discussion.

Ed Yates, County Counsel, will attend the next GavPAC meeting to answer questions on conflict of interest.

Public Comment: None

Meeting Adjournment – 9:28 p.m.

