
Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES, MEETING #6

Wednesday February 10, 2010
Vista de Las Cruces School Auditorium

Meeting Called to Order: By Chair Kim Kimbell at 6:35 p.m.

1. Roll Call

GavPAC Members Present: Boise-Cossart, Bowman, Feeney, Kimbell, Lloyd, McGinnis, McKenna (arrived late and did not vote on minutes), McNabb, Tautrim, Van Leer

GavPAC Members Absent: Baer

County Staff Present:

Vicki Parker, Office of Long Range Planning Deputy Director

David Lackie, Office of Long Range Planning Supervising Planner

Katie London, Office of Long Range Planning Assistant Planner

2. Public Comment:

Suzanne Perkins: Supports having interim design guidelines throughout the Gaviota Coast, addressing house sizes, white fences, etc. while the Gaviota Plan is being developed. Chair Kimbell asked if that can be done, Staff responded that it was something the Board of Supervisors can consider and staff will provide additional information at the March 3rd GavPAC meeting. McNabb: stated that interim guidelines could hurt someone currently in the development process.

Bill Giorgi: Wants more time for other speakers, including those representing the oil & gas industries, to provide input to the GavPAC.

3. Meeting Minutes from January 6, 2010

Public Comment: None

Deliberation: None

ACTION: Acceptance as presented. Bowman moved, seconded by Van Leer, and carried by a vote of 10-0 to approve. (McKenna arrived after the vote)

4. Agricultural Panel

Panel consists of: Leslie (Les) Freeman, Eric Hvolboll, Andy Mills, Guner Tautrim, Paul Van Leer

Discussion: Panel Questions.

1. Describe the location and nature of the agricultural operation(s) that you represent.

Freeman: Cattle ranching in Refugio Canyon (Freeman Ranch)

Hvolboll: Farming and Ranching (La Paloma Ranch)

Mills: California Rangeland Trust, Hollister Ranch

Tautrim: Cattle ranching (Orella Ranch)

Van Leer: Orchards (Las Varas Ranch)



2. Discuss any existing or anticipated threats to the ongoing agricultural operation(s) that you represent.

Freeman: Concerned about State Park expansion (Refugio) and difficulty of passing ranches/farms onto one's children. State Parks generate more trash, illegal camping, traffic (foot and vehicle). Lack of affordable worker housing and family housing (both on and off-site).

Hvolboll: Most concerns are not locally influenced (i.e. estate tax) and it's hard to control them locally. Supports a safe harbor for native/threatened species.

Mills: Loss of Williamson Act land, particularly w/loss of subventions. Approximately 80-85% of people selling their farms or ranches have no other options to generate capital. Cost of permitting improvements and other agricultural permits are threats.

Tautrim: Land succession, inheritance taxes and low profitability of agriculture influence the feasibility of keeping small family farms operating from generation to generation. Too often landowners get penalized for voluntarily creating habitat for native grasses, etc. Supports "safe harbor-like" concepts and that provide landowners incentives for creating/protecting resource habitat. Addressed the issue of building large residential homes ("McMansions"). "It's the How, not the How Many that we should focus on."

Van Leer: Foreign (mainly Mexican) imports, fuels costs, pest invasion, labor and insurance, and wastewater discharge influence the fluctuating costs of running an agricultural operation. Lack of housing is a major barrier to keeping agriculture on the land. Also, labor contractors are expensive, difficult to find workers.

3. Stewardship of the land and resources has been identified as an important guiding principle embodied in the history of the Gaviota Coast; recognizing the contributions of past and current stewards, and a renewed commitment to future land stewardship.

a. From an agricultural perspective, what does "stewardship" mean to you?

Van Leer: Think and plan for the future, not focusing on short-term gains. Land owners need "tools" to assist with estate/agricultural planning if the County is committed to keeping agriculture long-term. Rule and regulations cost money to comply with. Need policies, rules, regulations that benefit agriculture or estate planning.

Tautrim: Honoring the water, carbon, cycle. Having your operations leave the land better than before. Incentivize at the County level, good stewards of the land.

Freeman & Hvolboll: Agrees w/ Van Leer and Tautrim. Agriculture needs to be profitable enough to reinvest in the land and there needs to be an openness to learning new things.

Freeman: Rotational grazing; however, additional fencing is costly.

Hvolboll: La Paloma Ranch developed a Management Plan based on available resources and constraints. No overgrazing. Monitor/report on groundwater supply, knowledge of how water can be "farmed" and recharged. Stopping or discontinuing grazing abruptly can have negative affects on vegetation mix and visual context.

Mills: Careful management of land so it takes care of you

McGinnis: Asked for specific examples of good stewardship.

Boise-Cossart: Spoke of examples of organic farming at her property.

Feeney: Mentioned funds available from state agencies for stewardship projects. Gave example of the Refugio Canyon Arrundo eradication project benefits to creek habitat and adjacent agricultural land.



Public Comment (Bill Giorgi): Don't put water for cattle in riparian areas (to preserve these areas), need to have incentive programs and should be further investigated.

Lloyd: What is missing that keeps cattle grazing away?

Tautrim: No market for grass-fed cattle, when competing against cattle/beef as a commodity.

Freeman: USDA is a stumbling block to getting beef to the consumer market.

McKenna: Would a cooperative be helpful?

Freeman: Many varieties of cattle, don't always taste the same, depending on grazing location, cattle type, etc. More difficult to get beef to market than crops (i.e. avocados, citrus, etc)

b. Identify common interests and how can these interests be reflected in meaningful policies and tools in-line with landowner activities and economic interests.

Kimbell: Do we have the ability to craft policies to help support beef/cattle cooperatives?

Mills: Residential uses may not be bad, as they could help offset land costs and support ag

Tautrim: Resurgence of smaller scale, diverse farms, which are economically safer. Current global economy assumes transport of goods around the world. Agriculture needs flexibility to respond to changing markets, costs of energy and non-renewable resources (e.g. phosphate).

Freeman: When you are a producer you are at the mercy of the "middle-man". Potential new tool: Transfer of Development Credits (TDC)/TDR Gaviota specific linked to providing a portion of Capital for agricultural operations.

Public Comment (Suzanne Perkins): Supportive of Clustering, not putting a house on every ridge with a conservation easement. **(Bill Giorgi):** Exempt bona fide farmers/ranchers from impact fees. Have different coastal zone policies for farmers/ranchers **(Mike Lunsford):** Create a district for managing a TDR bank, grant fund allocation.

Van Leer: Keep families together by allowing estate planning; allowing additional uses

4. Agriculture is an important component of the Santa Barbara County economy. Discuss how rising land values, agricultural market fluctuations, estate planning, and other factors present financial challenges to maintaining the vitality of agriculture and the working rural landscape on the Gaviota Coast.

a. Discuss the importance of the Williamson Act.

Feeney: Distributed an updated information sheet (revised in 2006) on conservation easements.

McNabb: Inquired about the County tax on conservation easements and Williamson Act contracted land (under State Law, conservation easements are entitled to the same reduced assessment as Williamson Act contracts).

Mills: Land values cannot support agricultural operations, need to look at how residential use could support agriculture

Tautrim: Williamson Act reduces property tax assessments based on 'development potential' given up, but this does not take into account all the resources on the property. Most ranches/parcels are only allowed one residential unit, and that development potential has



already been used. No value is given to 'scenic value' or land/ecosystem preservation, in tax assessment.

5. What issues will the Gaviota Coast Plan need to address and resolve?

a. Provide a top three "wish list" for changes, additions, or new land use policy tools that would benefit agriculture on the Gaviota Coast.

Van Leer: Agricultural permit streamlining. Allow residential second units on Ag-II-100 or larger parcels. New housing tools to keep family members on the farm. Allow other income producing opportunities that don't interfere with agriculture.

Tautrim: Supports development of regenerative stewardship tools/processes. Agricultural streamlining, providing safe harbor-like incentives for protecting habitat succession for taxing. Value of conservation easements be valued on more than just development potential (i.e. visual resources, biological resources, etc)

Freeman: Housing for families, 1 rental house = the profits from 60 cattle, having coastal zone consistent with inland zone, flexibility in siting employee housing.

Hvolboll: Increase the size of the AAC from 5 to 7 and require 1 to be a farmer and 1 a rancher. Increased County support of conservation easements and TDR's

Mills: Policy to support conservation easements as a tool to decrease development rights; additional family housing (RAU, density bonus, etc), TDC or TDR

b. What approach do you believe will be most successful in developing various planning tools and policies?

5. Long Term GavPAC Meeting Schedule

Continued to next meeting, email poll sent to GavPAC for proposed workshop dates. Staff informed the GavPAC that the vantour will be postponed until after the rainy season (likely sometime in May).

Meeting Adjournment – 9:10 p.m. Kimbell moved to adjourn meeting, Lloyd seconded. Vote of 11-0 to approve.

Signed Charles D. Kimbell Date 2/25/10
GavPAC Chair Kimbell

