
Goleta Valley Planning Advisory Committee

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

May 5, 2009 at 6:00PM

Santa Barbara County Planning Commission Hearing Room

Meeting Called to Order: By Chair Valerie Olson at 6:05PM

1. Roll Call

GVPAC Members Present: Elliott, Ezal, Freeman, Mineau, Olson, True

GVPAC Members Absent: Adams

County Staff Present:

Derek Johnson, Deputy Director, Office of Long Range Planning

David Lackie, Supervising Planner, Office of Long Range Planning

Erika Leachman, Planner, Office of Long Range Planning

Stephanie Stark, Agricultural Planner, Planning and Development

2. Public Comment:

Shelly Cobb discussed noticing interested parties of GVPAC meeting to encourage participation in local issues such as support for local farmers, the community's carrying capacity for population, water, and traffic. Ms. Cobb identified the Modoc/Hollister area to the Hwy 154/State Street area as problematic for traffic and expressed concern about redevelopment of a hotel at the Hwy 154/State Street intersection.

Ann Crosby discussed the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan as a plan that did not change the unincorporated Santa Ynez Valley and a good model for Goleta Valley. Ms. Crosby described the role of the PAC members as representatives of the community as a whole; in particular, Ms. Crosby questioned whether the neighborhood wants changes to the Turnpike Shopping Center or other areas using tools like form-based code and suggested consideration of downzoning to increase minimum parcels size to reduce impacts from residential development.

Wendy Kaysing (c/o Estelle Foster) submitted letter to GVPAC and staff regarding water issues including supply, demand, and quality.

Patti Close discussed emergency preparedness as an issue to address as a coordinated effort with the Office of Emergency Services (OES), particularly with regard to traffic on the highway in a major emergency or evacuation. Ms. Close also discussed the GVC's approach to higher density developments to cluster development on half of property to preserve open space and pocket parks and to avoid developments that do not consider neighborhood



compatibility and increased congestion. Ms. Close expressed interest in not rezoning land in the Eastern Goleta Valley because demand for housing in California has diminished due to recession.

Estelle Foster expressed concern about adequacy of noticing for GVPAC meetings and suggested the County notify every resident in South Coast of meetings to draw input on issues of pollution, traffic, density, and quality of life.

Mary Whalen expressed concern about adequacy of noticing for GVPAC meetings in newspapers, events calendars, Channel 20 Government TV, and emails. Ms. Whalen also expressed interest in public comment through the staff presentation and GVPAC discussion at intervals instead of waiting until the end of the presentation.

3. Minutes of April 22, 2009 GVPAC Meeting:

Amendments: Typo changed "dueling" to "potential" solutions for Goleta Beach Sand Stabilization.

ACTION: Ezal moved, seconded by True, and carried by a vote of 6-0 to approve the April 22nd, 2009 GVPAC Meeting Minutes, as amended.

Yea: Elliott, Ezal, Freeman, Mineau, Olson, True

Nay: None

Absent: Adams

4. Tentative Long Term Scheduling

Goleta Valley Community Workshop:

The GVPAC reviewed and discussed the draft layout of the topical tables for the July 11, 2009 public workshop. The GVPAC recommended the table topics be revised to align with the topical chapters of the GVC 20/20 Comprehensive Vision for the Eastern Goleta Valley. The GVPAC will receive information packets for the workshop on the June 2, 2009 GVPAC Meeting.

Public Comment:

Ann Crosby suggested that the workshop provide opportunities to receive input on a variety of topics, including:

Emergencies and public services designed to function well in different types of emergencies;

Watersheds and Water Quality/Supply designed to handle drought conditions and energy shortages;

Parks to include community gardens and policies for food security;

Agricultural land use to address food security, energy, and food prices;

Traffic with regard to congestion impacts, air quality, and noise.



Goleta Valley Community Survey:

The GVPAC discussed outreach to community organizations to encourage participation in the survey and the workshop and offered to help post notices, talk to neighbors and organizations, distribute flyers, etc. to help advertise the workshop and survey.

Public Comment

Patti Close suggested that the survey be printed in the newspaper so people could cut it out and mail to the County.

5. Presentation:

Presentation covered agricultural land use in the Goleta Valley under the County Comprehensive Plan, including existing rural and urban agriculture in the Eastern Goleta Valley. Staff displayed a series of maps and data tables, focusing primarily on the urban agricultural nodes of the Goleta Valley to describe the existing character, function, and form of the agricultural operations. Staff also presented a series of planning tools and approaches as available options for the Goleta Community Plan update., including:

- agricultural protection programs
- agricultural planned development,
- transfer of development rights,
- urban agriculture overlay or zoning provisions,
- encouraging agricultural preserve contracts under Williamson Act,
- purchase of development rights or open space easements, and
- land trusts.

GVPAC considered the challenges of urban agriculture in the Goleta Valley, such as land costs, employee availability, cost and availability of local housing, and limited local farm services. GVPAC considered what land use planning can do to encourage agricultural operations, including the provision of incentives for farmers to retain the operations, land trusts or conservation easements, farm employee housing opportunities, and flexibility in permitting structures, greenhouses, and uses that keep the operation viable and highly productive.

The GVPAC discussed the viability of agricultural lands in determining which agricultural properties are a priority to the community and the property owners in both the urban and rural areas. The GVPAC also discussed the potential to preserve agricultural operations, open space, and visual resources through zoning for planned development, urban agricultural overlays, development standards, and conversion to public amenities, such as parks or open space.

The GVPAC and members of the community exchanged ideas and experiences with regard to local agriculture operations and asked questions of each other in an casual discussion.



Public Comment:

Jack Ruskey, a farmer from Zone 1 of the Goleta Valley Planning Area, expressed interest in leaving the 1993 policies for agriculture unchanged to preserve agricultural land use designation, create fire break between urban uses and rural foothills, and preserve agricultural character that people like. Mr. Ruskey discussed high land prices as a result of such character and quality of life and that agricultural land values should not be determined based on what the land could be used for under a different land use designation like residential or commercial.

Anne Crosby characterized staff as planners, not farmers, who abstracted agricultural issues in the Goleta Valley and urged the GVPAC to consider viability of agriculture from farmers' perspective, in light of water availability, and in the interest of food security, in addition to the technical land use planning perspective.

Patti Close suggested the GVPAC terminate the policies from the Goleta Community Plan to provide affordable housing to all Goleta residents. Ms. Close discussed the definitions of rural, urban and suburban areas and urged the GVPAC to protect suburbia in the Eastern Goleta Valley with tract houses instead of multi-story developments. Ms. Close also expressed interest in preserving agricultural lands in the interest of food security when transport is unable to ship food to local grocery stores, and subsidizing farmers similar to how cities subsidize affordable housing developments.

Suzanne Elledge, from Suzanne Elledge Planning Services representing Ron Caird, asked that the GVPAC consider rezoning 2 small areas of the Caird property in the S. Patterson Agricultural Area to new land use designations, specifically 3.5 acres to professional/institutional (PI) and 5 acres to Residential (7-R-1). This request was made to balance agricultural interests with economic interests of property owners, preserve open land and agricultural operations, and alleviate cost pressures due to water, labor, and services in the urban area.

Bert Bertrando described the Goleta Water District's implementation of a conservation easement on their property near Hope Ranch and suggested conservation easements as a possible tool to preserve open space and agriculture in the Goleta Community Plan. Mr. Bertrando also noted the price for water in the Goleta Valley urban areas where it is metered is much higher than the price for water in Santa Maria or other areas where wells are used.

John Givens, representing John Givens Farms, described difficulties in farming in the Eastern Goleta Valley and urban areas in general due to lack of available land, labor supply and cost, lack of infrastructure and services for farm equipment, lack of local demand for crops (20%



of crops sold at local farmers markets, 80% sold across country), and lack of incentive to buy and farm land.

Ron Caird, representing the Caird properties, described the ease of farming in other areas of the County, like Santa Maria, over the Eastern Goleta Valley, including availability of labor, affordable housing, lighter regulations, a supportive agricultural community, and large areas of viable agricultural land instead of pockets. Mr. Caird explained that high intensity agriculture is valuable, but costly (his land use permit to construct greenhouses in the Patterson Agricultural Area cost \$1.5 million, will cost \$35/sq ft to build, and will not provide a return on the investment for 35 years). Mr. Caird explained that rezoning a portion of his agricultural land would help sustain his other agricultural operations, which are primarily cut flowers and not food crops.

Stan Giorgi, representing the Giorgi Family farms, explained that his farms primarily produce lemons in large quantities beyond the demand locally which requires their sale nationally. Mr. Giorgi expressed concern over high land costs which prevent new farming operations or sale of farms to other farmers due to little return on investment in the business.

Mary Whalen discussed a past proposal to develop San Marcos Growers property with 1200 units as inflating the value of the land under a presumed rezone to allow the development.

6. Adjournment

Next GVPAC Meeting (#15) will be held on Wednesday, May 20th, 2009 at 6:00 in the Planning Commission Hearing Room

ACTION: Ezal moved, seconded by Elliott, and carried by a vote of 6-0 to adjourn until GVPAC Meeting #15.

Yea: Elliott, Ezal, Freeman, Mineau, Olson, True

Nay: None

Absent: Adams

Meeting Adjourned at 9:15PM

Signed Valerie F. Olson Date 2 June 2009
GVPAC Chair Olson



