



County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department Agricultural Advisory Committee

Natalie Sare, Chair
Peter Marchi, Vice Chair
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou
Crystal Chaix
Daniel Theobald

Eric Hagstrom
James Oku
John Vars
Marilyn Johnson
Ryan Casey

Dr. Igor Lacan
Jess Brown
Koren Widdel

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Redwood City, California 94063
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planning.smcgov.org

MINUTES

Monday, January 12, 2026

IN-PERSON WITH REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Once available, a full recording of this meeting can be accessed on the official government YouTube channel of the County of San Mateo at: <https://www.smcgov.org/planning/event/agricultural-advisory-committee-meeting-january-12-2026>.

1. Call to Order

Chair Natalie Sare called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

2. Member Roll Call

Regular Committee Members Present:

James Oku
Natalie Sare
Peter Marchi
Ryan Casey
Crystal Chaix
Marilyn Johnson

Regular Committee Members Not Present:

John Vars
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou
Daniel Theobald
Erik Hagstrom

Nonvoting Committee Members Present:

Jeremy Wagner,, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner
Jess Brown, San Mateo County Farm Bureau Executive Director

Nonvoting Committee Members Not Present:

Igor Lacan, UC Co-Op Extension Representative

Planning Liaisons Present:

Robby Miller, San Mateo County Planning & Building Department

3. **Oral Communications** to allow the public to address the Committee on any matter **not** on the agenda. If your subject is not on the agenda, the Chair will recognize you at this time.

SPEAKERS

Public Speaker, Ron Sturgeon, upset that staff is telling committee how to operate. Discussed 2004 Resolution purpose, which was handed out to Members. Against time clock for speakers.

Public Speaker, Vince Fontana, against California Fish and Wildlife consideration to list mountain lions as endangered species status because of potential loss of livestock. Asked the committee to help deny this effort.

Public Speaker, Lucy White, against California's Fish and Wildlife approach to protect mountain lion citing inefficient data. Asked the committee to write a statement deny the effort.

Chair, Natalie Sare, clarifies that committee will need to write individual letters on their own account.

Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, asks clarifying question about comment deadline and how to comment.

4. **Committee Member Update(s) and/or Questions** to allow Committee Members to share news and/or concerns for items **not** on the agenda

SPEAKERS

San Mateo County Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, Jeremy Wagner, announced field worker training on March 4 in Pescadero and March 5 in HMB. Pesticide disposal event in Pescadero in mid-spring of 2026. Peninsula fresh event January 26 at Skyline College.

Committee Member, Mike O'Neill, County Office of Education may send someone to the Farm Fresh to possibly get it into schools. Board of Supervisors to address oil drilling off shore letter from Federal Government. Asks Committee to submit public comment against it by January 31.

Chair, Natalie Sare, reads section 4.6 of Bylaws and says the county does not have the authority to override agendized items that is voted on by the AAC. No extraneous noise from the public and members while Chair is trying to get clarification from Planning Liaison.

Committee Member, Jess Brown, asked a question about when to agendize item.

Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, tells the committee that members can bring forward agenda items for the Chair and Planning Liaison to consider and no vote is needed.

5. **Planning and Building Department Report.**

Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, presented the Planning Division's report. Announced the Board and Commission Recognition event on January 26, and said Janaury retreat follow up items will be worked into the upcoming agendas.

SPEAKERS

None

6. Consideration of Meeting Minutes for December 8, 2025.

SPEAKERS

Chair, Natalie Sare, reads parts of section 4.11 of Bylaws and says Action Minutes are not an accurate summary, and Motions to deny the Minutes.

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, asks clarifying question.

Committee Member, Ryan Casey, thinks that Action Minutes are fine because the meetings are recorded, and asked if other committee's use Action Minutes.

Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, responded that he believes so and can follow up with a more accurate number of how many.

Committee Member, Ryan Casey, added that Action Minutes are a more efficient use of staff time.

Chair, Natalie Sare, disagreed and added that the Bylaws should be respected until updated.

Committee Member, James Oku, asks for a sentence, very brief, instead of Action Minutes for help remembering what was spoken about. Would consider approving these Action Minutes with the understanding that future minutes will incorporate his feedback.

Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, agrees with James Oku.

Chair, Natalie Sare, explains a past situation with an application that occurred where Action Minutes were not helpful.

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, agrees with a brief summary.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

Vice Chair, Peter Marchi seconds Motion to deny meeting minutes. Motion passed 4-2.

Regular Agenda

7. Continuation - Farm Labor Housing Loan Program. Presenters: Alejandro Segura (San Mateo County Department of Housing).

SPEAKERS

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, asks how does the Department ensure farm laborers are occupying the units.

Presenter, Alejandro Segura, responds that any change of ownership requires notification to the Department.

Committee Member, James Oku, thanked for incorporating feedback, including increased amounts and more flexible loan terms.

Chair, Natalie Sare, reiterated James remarks and asks what are applicants seeking by applying for these type of loans compared to conventional loans.

Presenter, Alejandro Segura, responds that the loans incentivize affordable rents and address issues on properties. Added that he would provide a report to Mike O'Neill on how the program is going in the next few months.

Committee Member, James Oku, asks if applicants are related to the Farm Labor Task Force actions.

Presenter, Alejandro Segura, responds that 90 percent were related to the Task Force

8. **Continuation – Summary of AAC's April 2025 Special Workshop.** Presenters: AAC Chair, Natalie Sare, and Workshop Subcommittee.

SPEAKERS

Committee Member, James Oku, asks what items were previously voted on

Chair, Natalie Sare, responds that most were voted on, but some were skipped.

Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, says that Midpen and POST should be invited separately. Wants to provide feedback to Midpen about their tenant policy that is removing good tenants.

Committee Member, James Oku, recalls that we voted on all of the items.

Chair, Natalie Sare, responds that we reviewed all items but only voted on ones that were County specific.

Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, says the Committee voted on Items C, F, & M.

Chair, Natalie Sare, says there was a similar Item to K that involved Midpen was voted down.

Committee Member, James Oku, said item was not posted to the website and should be since it was a voting item.

Chair, Natalie Sare, agreed and added that the Workshop slides were not in the Full Packet either.

Committee Member, Jess Brown, suggests prioritizing bottom two Item K bullet points for a productive meeting.

Committee Member, Ryan Casey, agrees not to include the first bullet point and suggests making sure we have not already had conversations with Midpen in the past about this, and not lump the two organizations together out of respect.

Committee Member, James Oku, recalls Midpen coming to Committee recently and having a long conversation about proposed changes, but did not come back with update on actual changes made.

Committee Member, Mike O'Neill, stated that Midpen and POST are different organizations and POST, a nonprofit organization, has no legal obligation to come.

Chair, Natalie Sare, Motion to table this to next meeting.

Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, stated that the Committee went through all the slides and reviewed, discussed and voted on item A, C, F, L, M, and O, but not K. Out of the 6 items that were votes on, 3 Items were approved.

Public Speaker, Ron Sturgeon, stated the item needs to be posted 72 hours in advance so should not be voted on.

Public Speaker, Vince Fontana, states that Midpen and POST are land grabbing by buying up the land and relinquishing the water rights. The County is involved. Midpen is controlling Fish & Game, and are destroying agriculture in the County.

Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, reminds Committee of Motion on the table.

Chair, Natalie Sare, reiterated that vote cannot happen.

Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, asks about whether previous presentation on Item could be grounds for a vote.

Chair, Natalie Sare, retracts Motion to make sure not in violation of Brown Act.

9. Adjournment. Chair Natalie Sare adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

ROLL SHEET – January 12, 2026

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	
Voting Members													
James Oku Farmer	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Natalie Sare Farmer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
John Vars Farmer	X		X	X		X		X		X	X		
Peter Marchi Farmer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ryan Casey Farmer	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cole Mazariegos- Anastassiou Farmer	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Crystal Chaix Farmer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Daniel Theobald Ag Business	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X		
Erik Hagstrom Public Member				X	X			X					
Marilyn Johnson Public Member				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
**Vacant Conservationist													
**Vacant - Natural Resource Conservation													
San Mateo Co. Agricultural Commissioner: Koren Widdel	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Farm Bureau Exec. Director: Jess Brown	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	
UC Co-Op Extension Rep.: Dr. Igor Lacan			X		X								
Staff Liaison													
San Mateo Co. Planning Liaison: Robby Miller	X	X	X	X	X	X	X^	X		X	X	X	

X: Present Blank Space: Absent or Excused Grey Color: No Meeting *Special Meeting
 **Position Vacant ^Alternate