



## 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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### DRAFT ACTION MINUTES

**Monday, May 12, 2025**

A full recording of this meeting can be accessed on the official government YouTube channel of the County of San Mateo at:

<https://youtu.be/P9XgcMxGuRM>

#### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Natalie Sare called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

#### **2. Member Roll Call**

##### Regular Committee Members Present:

James Oku  
Natalie Sare  
John Vars  
Peter Marchi  
Ryan Casey  
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou  
Crystal Chaix  
Marilyn Johnson  
Erik Hagstrom

##### Regular Committee Members Not Present:

Daniel Theobald

##### Nonvoting Committee Members Present:

Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner  
Jess Brown, San Mateo County Farm Bureau Executive Director

##### Nonvoting Committee Members Not Present:

Jim Howard, Natural Resource Conservation Staff  
Igor Lacan, UC Co-Op Extension Representative

Planning Liaison Present:

Olivia Boo, Planning Staff Liaison

Robby Miller, Planning Staff Liaison

3. **Oral Communications** to allow the public to address the Committee on any matter not on the agenda.

**SPEAKERS:**

Public Speaker, Kerry Burke, is looking forward to hearing feedback regarding the April 2025 special workshop. Speaker Burke asked if the Exhibit E list can be returned when the agenda has fewer items. On Wednesday night, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District will be holding a Board meeting in Half Moon Bay to discuss recent water issues at Johnston Ranch and a water acquisition in La Honda - the agenda is on the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's website.

Supervisor Aide, Mike O'Neill, informed that there may be comments regarding the Request for Proposal process for leasing the Midpeninsula Open Space District space. This item is likely not on Midpeninsula's agenda but the public may comment during Oral Communications. The Board of Supervisors passed the Farm Labor Housing loan program (Department of Housing) on their May 6 agenda, Option A has been approved.

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 Agricultural Commissioner, Koren Widdel, announced the Farm Working Housing Loan Program, Option A, by the Department of Housing passed. It is not forgivable compare to the past programs. The Ag Department had the As Fresh as it Gets peninsula showcase last Monday. The Ag Department is looking for informal Requests for Proposal for pest control for the noxious weed management program.

Supervisor Aide, Mike O'Neill, Phase 1 of the Housing Loan Program covers the first 12 months of the program. The maximum loan amount is \$100,000. If funds are still available, Phase 2 would cover a maximum loan amount of \$200,000. O'Neill will invite Department of Housing staff to speak to the AAC.

Committee Chair, Natalie Sare, asked when the Markegard and Terra Gardens projects will return to the AAC. Regarding the Farm Labor Housing Loan Program, has the income percentage lowered. Chair Sare suggested inviting the Department of Housing to share an overview of the new Loan Program and to add the Farm Labor Housing program on the June Agenda.

Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, stated the Department of Housing staff may not need to come to an AAC meeting, since the information will be available when the document is published.

Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, announced the 34<sup>th</sup> annual Burt Silva Golf Event will be on June 11, 2025.

Committee Member, John Vars, announced there is a Farm Worker Commission meeting on May 14 from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at the Half Moon Bay Library.

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, introduced herself as new public seat AAC member. Regarding the Farm Labor Housing Loan Program, it would be helpful to have the Department of Housing staff come to an AAC meeting to hear Committee suggestions.

Committee Member, Erik Hagstrom, introduced himself as a new public seat AAC member.

5. **Planning and Building Department Director's Report.** *(Planning Liaison)*  
The next meeting is June 9, 2025.

**SPEAKERS:**  
None.

6. **Consideration of Meeting Minutes** for the April 14, 2025 AAC meeting.

**SPEAKERS:**  
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, motioned to approve the minutes with one revision, to correct the adjourned time to 6:59 p.m.  
Motion passed, 7-0.  
Two abstained

7. **Discussion** of the results from the April 14, 2025 Workshop.

**SPEAKERS:**  
Committee Chair, Natalie Sare, reported back on comments and suggestions received at the workshop. There is desire to share the results with Supervisor Ray Mueller by an informal meeting. Committee Member Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou is discussing with groups his farm works with regarding internships. Suggestion to invite the Future Farmers of America (FFA) to attend an AAC meeting to foster the relationship with the AAC Committee. The subcommittee will present focus points to the AAC Committee.

Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, proposed an outline format of workshop summary, and requested to agendize it for next meeting.

Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, supported the AAC Committee invite FFA students to AAC to share with the students what the Committee does. There is a school board meeting this week, FFA and ag need agriculture support due to some school classes potentially being cut related to FFA.

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, raised that high school seniors do senior exit projects. Proposes an AAC Member can go to the high school and do a presentation to the students, before inviting the students to an AAC meeting.

Committee Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, proposed to also invite leaders of FFA and 4H to visit AAC meeting, to ask FFA and 4H how the AAC Committee can support FFA and 4H. There is concern of FFA program getting cut from freshman class. Proposed the option for the workshop summary to agendize for June and continue to July, as needed.

Committee Member, Jess Brown, the high school is cutting agriculture classes, the cuts may impact the FFA classes being offered. Asked if the subcommittee will be returning with workshop summary recommendations.

Committee Member, James Oku, changes to FFA may result in impacts to continuation of classes if there are low sign-ups for freshman classes. For workshop summary, he's interested in starting with the 24 workshop points, then to allow for edits.

Public Speaker, Bridget Jett, reported incoming freshman class will be significantly affected and students will be behind in FFA program. It's important to speak on this item at the school board meeting.

San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, Koren Widdel, asked if the workshop summary notes can be shared with the Committee members.

Supervisor Aide, Mike O'Neill, explained the subcommittee has to be less headcount than a majority of the AAC, the limit is 4 members. If a majority then public notice is required. The subcommittee can prepare a draft workshop report for the AAC, the draft will be published on the County website for review and comment by the Committee Members and members of public.

Committee Member, John Vars, offered that due to the maximum subcommittee headcount (4 members), he can withdraw from workshop subcommittee and hear the workshop summary along with the broader AAC.

Committee Member, Ryan Casey, asked if there is a need to divide the workshop summary results to be discussed across more than one meeting in order to have some discussion in June with the option to continue the item to a future meeting.

Committee Member, Cole Mazariego-Anastassiou, motioned to agendize the Workshop to June 2026 and to discuss public comments and create a draft letter to submit to Supervisor Mueller and Steve Monowitz, Director of Planning and Building. Motion seconded by Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson. Motion passed 9-0.

8. **Adjournment**. Chair Natalie Sare adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.



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