



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, July 14, 2025**

**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-july-14-2025>

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Natalie Sare called the meeting to order at 6:00 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  
Daniel Theobald  
Marilyn Johnson

Regular Committee Members Not Present:

Erik Hagstrom

Nonvoting Committee Members Present:

Koren Widdel

Nonvoting Committee Members Not Present:

Igor Lacan  
Jess Brown

Planning Liaison:  
Olivia Boo, Planning Liaison

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

**No Speakers**

4. **Consideration of Meeting Minutes** for the April 14, 2025 and June 9, 2025 AAC meetings.

**SPEAKERS**

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, inquired as to why responses to minutes are not included.

Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, motioned to accept the April 14, 2025 minutes. Committee Member, Ryan Casey, seconded the motion.

**Motion passed 8-0.**

Committee Member, Daniel Theobald motioned to accept the June 9, 2025, minutes. Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, seconded the motion.

**Motion passed 7-0.**

1 abstained - Committee Member, James Oku

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

**SPEAKERS**

Committee Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, commented **that** when he asked to get his labor camp connected, he was told that connection is only available for the township. The selection to allow private connections is very restrictive. Marchi asked if LAFCO can attend a future AAC meeting to answer questions.

Public Speaker, Kerry Burke, commented that there was a lot of effort to approve CSA 11 for the fire station and the high school; it involved an amendment to the Local Coastal Program to allow the water connection to the rural area which is not normal. The allowance was due to the fire station and the high school qualifying as institutions.

Committee Chair, Natalie Sare, commented that many Planning Department projects have come to AAC and approved by the Planning Department without returning the Committee for further input. Sare would also like to invite LAFCO staff to speak to the Committee.

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, asked Committee Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, if others wish to also have public connection from CSA-11 and if there are other farmers that can benefit.

**Commented [SB1]:** Not sure what you are meaning here. Is it that projects are skipping AAC?

**Commented [OB2R1]:** Does my revision make sense?

San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, Koren Widdel, announced that the United States Representative Sam Licardo's office is having a meeting on August 14, 2025 at 1:15 p.m., at Supervisor Mueller's coastside office. The meeting is for Representative Licardo's staff to hear about local agriculture concerns.

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Supervisor Aide, Mike O'Neill, announced the August 14 meeting will be held at 270 Capistrano Rd., Supervisor Mueller's Office.

Committee Chair, Natalie Sare, asked when the Terra Gardens and Markegard Planning projects will return to AAC. The AAC workshop subcommittee tentatively plans to present a summary at the August meeting.

Planning Liaison, Olivia Boo, announced the Markegard project return timeline is unknown at this time, and Terra Gardens is tentatively expected to return in August 2025.

6. **Planning and Building Department Director's Report.** (*Planning Liaison*)  
The next meeting is August 11, 2025.

**No SPEAKERS**

7. **Presentation** on Farm Labor Housing Loan Program. Presenters: Karen Coppock and Alejandro Segura, San Mateo County Department of Housing.

**SPEAKERS**

Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, asked if the loan is a forgivable loan; whether the loan to upgrade units has to meet current code compliance versus the code in effect at the time of construction; who the Department of Housing is reaching out to; and for the family units, what if the proposed unit is for 10 laborers.

**Commented [SB3]:** Not sure this makes sense - whether the loan meets code compliance...for what?

**Commented [SB4]:** Should this be "out"

Chair, Natalie Sare, asked which code are units required to meet; in the taskforce report, is payment retroactive if compliance is done in 90 days; does this program pay retroactively. Sare noted that it's imperative this program should have been brought to AAC during the research process. Sare asked for clarification that if you have four adults in the same house, unrelated to each other, do they need to meet the criteria for a four-person income in one unit.

Karen Coppock, Housing Development Supervisor, responded that the units should meet current code; many of the changes to the program were made by the Board of Supervisors; the loan cannot be prepaid; if you are a family, you are considered one household and all the income totals are for one family. If four unrelated adults, occupy a unit, each individual is considered a separate household. The loan amount of \$100,000 is per property. The purpose is to bring the housing up to code.

Public Member, Kerry Burke, asked whether the program covers what the owner hasn't been able to comply with on their own; whether these owners get priority; and if the owner is required to submit documentation each year.

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Committee Member, John Vars, commented that he didn't see improvements to the program in the current farm labor housing program. Additionally, if an owner is trying to build for the test of time, owners will be discouraged from proposing something nicer. He appreciates the proactive sharing of the information. Vars asked that for the owners included in the survey, have the units been installed?

Supervisor Aide, Mike O'Neill, asked if the AMI is revised annually and if the loan number is also revised.

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Committee Member, James Oku, asked if he takes a loan and has 10 units and he uses the loan for 1 unit, will all units be affected by the maximum caps.

Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, asked that with old units some bunk houses need renovation so would \$100,000 still be the maximum. In the previous version of the loan program, there were complicated tax provisions. For deductions for the new loan, Mazariegos-Anastassiou asked how the numbers break down.

Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, commented that \$100,000 is not enough benefit to encourage application if there are too many legalization issues to be fixed. Thus, owners may not take advantage, and then the opportunity will be lost.

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San Mateo County Building Official, Christopher Raglan, responded that building inspectors would inspect for life and safety, and that then the loans would apply to that.

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, asked if the money is only to be used towards repair/remodel of existing units.

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8. **Overview of the Amendments to the Minimum Wage Ordinance** - effective July 10, 2025. Presenters: Shane Ross and Shireen Malekafzali (San Mateo County Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement).

**SPEAKERS**

Chair, Natalie Sare, asked if California law supersedes San Mateo County or is it the federal law that supersedes San Mateo County.

Committee Member, James Oku, asked what are some of the civil issues rather than criminal issues because he would assume most of that stuff would have been criminal, wage theft.

Public Member, Kerry Burke, asked if the presentation and slide deck indicate that there are services for the six cities but not the unincorporated area, and whether services also apply to the San Mateo County area.

Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, commented a lot of times what is seen is programs like this have all the best intentions of helping out people who need it and genuinely if somebody is being taken advantage of. Even when trying to do something

good to protect people, oftentimes it ends up harming those very people because it is made impossible for farmers to employ them and give them a wage at all.

Supervisor Aide, Mike O'Neill, asked whether the chart handout stating 25 employees refers to head count or full-time equivalent employees.

Committee Member, John Vars, commented that he appreciates this proactive sharing of information with the community and getting all this information out. As he started his business he didn't know all of the rules and it wasn't necessarily easy to access that information and he thinks that efforts like this are really important to make sure everybody understands what their responsibilities are.

9. **Update on Request to Return to In-Person Only AAC Meetings** - County update on the request by AAC to return to in-person only meetings and stop the current hybrid meeting format. Olivia Boo, Planning Liaison.

Planning Liaison, Olivia Boo, reported that Planning and Building Department management confirmed the AAC Committee will not return to 100% in-person meetings, and instead will continue as hybrid meetings. For violation projects, Planning staff recommends that the owner/applicant attend the AAC meeting in-person.

**SPEAKERS**

Committee Chair, Natalie Sare, proposed to continue this item to the August meeting due to time constraints.

10. **Adjournment.**

Chair Natalie Sare adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

