County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department

Agricultural Advisory Committee

Natalie Sare, Chair
Peter Marchi, Vice Chair
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou
Crystal Chaix
Daniel Theobald
Ryan Casey
James Oku
John Vars
Marilyn Johnson
Dr. Igor Lacan
Jess Brown
Koren Widdel

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MINUTES

Monday, May 11, 2026

IN-PERSON WITH REMOTE PARTICIPATION

A full recording of this meeting can be accessed on the official government YouTube channel of the County of San Mateo at: Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting - May 11, 2026 | County of San Mateo, CA

Call to Order
Chair Natalie Sare called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Member Roll Call

Regular Committee Members Present:
Natalie Sare
Peter Marchi
Crystal Chaix
Marilyn Johnson
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou (Late)
James Oku
John Vars (Late)
Daniel Theobald

Regular Committee Members Not Present:
Ryan Casey

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:
Igor Lacan, UC Co-Op Extension Representative

Planning Liaisons Present:
Robby Miller, San Mateo County Planning & Building Department

Public Comment 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, Karey Burke, congratulates Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou about his farm.

Action To Set Agenda & To Approve Consent Agenda Items

1. Consideration of the Minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Committee for October 20, 2025 and April 13, 2026.

COMMITTEE ACTION:
Committee Member, James Oku motions to set the agenda and approve the minutes with corrections to April 13, 2026 of member name spelling and corrections to October 20, 2025 to modify member statement. Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson seconds motion. **Motion passed 7-0-0-1. (Mazariegos-Anastassiou not present)**

Regular Agenda

2. AAC Procedural Rules Amendments (75 min) – Discussion, etc.
Presenter: Summer Burlison, San Mateo County Planning & Building Department

SPEAKERS

Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, states wanting to keep Section 5.3
Committee Member, James Oku, states that Section 2.4 was updated
Presenter, Summer Burlison, responds that only Section 2.4 edits have been included in draft and reviews the changes.
Chair, Natalie Sare, announces that Committee accepts Section 2.4 proposed changes and will continue with Section 5.3 review.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, asks if the presentation document has all the changes from last meetings.
Presenter, Summer Burlison, responds that the presentation does not have all the changes incorporated and says that a clean copy will be presented at next meeting.
Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, states that the last sentence of Section 5.3 is not totally the same as the other Section.
Presenter, Summer Burlison, responds that it is discussed in Section 4.5.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, asks why seated was added to Section 4.5.
Presenter, Summer Burlison, responds.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks clarifying question, asks if there are any additional issues with Section 4.5, and moves to Section 5.4.
Presenter, Summer Burlison, explains why Section 5.4 is a redundancy.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, agrees that it can be eliminated.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks if there are any additional issues with Section 5.4, and moves to Section 6.1.
Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, asks what code Government Code Section 81000 is.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that it refers to the Political Reform Act of 1974

and does apply to AAC directly.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks why it was put in the Bylaws.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that at the time of the Bylaws creation, AAC was on County list for bodies that needed to file the Form 700. That error was discovered later on and the body no longer needs to file it because advisory bodies are not subject to the Political Reform Act.
Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, states that the Form 700 was not required at the inception of AAC, but later on.
Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, agrees and added that members dropped out when the Form was required, Ron Stuergeon brought the Political Reform Act to the ACC, and some AAC members complained to the County about why PMAC did not have to file the Form which helped spark the change a few years later.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks why Government Code Section 1090 was added.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that it involves contracts that AAC would enter into.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks if it should be removed based on limited information.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, asks if Williamson Act Contracts apply.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, reads subsection (a) of 1090.
Chair, Natalie Sare, expresses concern how it relates to farmers buying items from other farmers.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, responds that that situation is likely not applicable.
Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, tells a story about a past situation with his business buying some things from another farm business.
Chair, Natalie Sare, states that it should be removed if it does not apply to AAC.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that 1090 does apply to AAC and that the concerns brought up do not conflict with this law because they are personal contracts instead of contracts made by the AAC.
Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, adds that the last phrase of subsection (a) ‘in their official capacity’ alludes that personal contracts are not applicable.
Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, asks if Williamson Act Contracts recommendations apply to this law.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that it does not because the AAC is not entering into the contract.
Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, asks if leasing land from a Williamson Act Contract that was reviewed by AAC would be a conflict of interest.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that it would not because that would not be a contract that AAC entered into and provides an example.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, agrees that 1090 is a good addition, and members should recuse themselves of voting if there is a personal interest whether it is in the Bylaws or not.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks for an example.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, responds with an example.
Chair, Natalie Sare, states that there is some personal relationship matters that create a fine line.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, agrees and adds that the Bylaws should not address every conflict of interest scenario, AAC members should be ethical, and this is in there to cover the County.
Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, adds that Section 6.2 is more relevant to member concerns.

Committee Member, James Oku, agrees.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that he is OK to remove the Government Code Section 1090 language since the law applies regardless of whether it is in the Bylaws.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks to go to Section 6.2 to see if that helps clarify Section 6.1.
Presenter, Summer Burlison, reads Section 6.2 and states this is more applicable to member concerns.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks that sometimes we are asked to recuse and other time to disclose it, would that be handled under this Section.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that the Political Reform Act is relevant to AAC because it provides a framework of impropriety, such as an applicant is a source of income, has provided a gift, real property is in the vicinity, or investment in a business.
Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, reiterates the past situation where he bought some stuff from another farmer and subsequently voted on a project concerning this farmer after disclosing it, and did so at the advice of his attorney because the purchase was a low amount.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that the Political Reform Act is confusing and if members should reach out to him if they think they might have a conflict of interest. Adds that $500 is a threshold for purchases and gift in the previous 12 months and real property investment of $2000.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks if he can share that information.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, responds that the information is under the Political Reform Act.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, requests to add the information on conflict of interest dollar values to Section 6.1 and remove the specific law references.
Chair, Natalie Sare, agrees.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, expresses concern about adding numbers since they change over time, explains how members should bring up conflict of interest in meetings, and states these matters are very nuanced.
Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, voices concern about the $500 threshold.
Chair, Natalie Sare, responds that if he discloses it to the group, it is OK.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, requests to replace Section 6.1 phrase ‘including those concerning incompatibility of offices, Government Code Section 1090, and common law bias’ with Daniel’s explanation.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, responds that he does not think it is necessary to add his explanation.
Chair, Natalie Sare, disagrees and states that Crystal’s strikethrough of Section 6.1 be done and asks if members want to add Daniel’s explanation to Section 6.2.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, states Section 6.2 is OK as is, but if want to modify it suggests adding ‘For example, if somebody believes they may have a conflict of interest, they should disclose it to the committee and recuse themselves if necessary’ to the end of Section 6.2.
Chair, Natalie Sare, asks Summer if that statement is OK.
Presenter, Summer Burlison, asks County Counsel for comment.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, states that he would need to review it and is concerned with changing anything that was put out by the County Standing Rules, but thinks it could be OK.
Chair, Natalie Sare, announces that the Committee wants that included in Section 6.2 and moves onto Rule 7B – Annual Work Plan.
Chair, Natalie Sare, announces that the Committee agrees to the changes for Rule 7B – Annual Work Plan and moves onto Rule 8B – Oath of Office.
Chair, Natalie Sare, announces that the Committee agrees to the changes for Rule 8B –

Oath of Office and moves onto Rule 9B – Amendments of Procedural Rules.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, asks if 'Procedural' should be changed to 'Bylaws'.
Presenter, Summer Burlison, responds that although the Committee refers to this document as Bylaws, but is officially referred to as Procedural Rules throughout the document. Asks for County Counsel input on changing that.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, states that it can be modified if wanted and just wants consistency throughout.
Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, asks if a resolution is needed to approve the changes.
Presenter, Summer Burlison, responds in the affirmative and says that is what will be voted on at next meeting.
County Counsel, Brian Pettit, states that the resolution was removed for the other sections but was kept in this section to keep amending the rules a formal process.
Chair, Natalie Sare, announces that the Committee agrees to the changes for Rule 9B, and asks for Brian to provide a summary or source link to any rule or regulation mentioned to the Planning Liaison.
Chair, Natalie Sare, opens public comment. No speakers.

3. <u>Planning Liaison Report – Presenter: Planning Liaison, Robby Miller</u>

SPEAKERS:
Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, asks why a pond liner was used for one of the CDx listed in April Attachment A.
Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, responds for her to email him and he will look into it.
Committee Member, James Oku, reminds members that farmers can apply for the public member position.
Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, asks if farmers outside the county can apply for the public member position.
Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, responds to send him an email to confirm that is not allowed.

<u>4. AAC Meeting Location – Presenter: Planning Liaison, Robby Miller</u>

SPEAKERS:
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, states concern with time restraint on Library and motions to have the meetings at Supervisor Ray Mueller's office.
Chair, Natalie Sare, seconds motion.
San Mateo County Farm Bureau Executive Director, Jess Brown, asks if unlimited time is OK for County Staff.
Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, responds in the affirmative.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, states the hard stop time is preferred because of young kids at home.
San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, Koren Widdel, asks if Mueller's office has equipment.
Supervisor Mueller's Aide, Mike O'Neill, replies that they do not have a TV monitor but have a projection screen.
Assistant Director of Planning and Building, Sophie Mintier, states that Mueller's office is a viable location and was previously past over because some members had issue with travel time. She added that the main concern is having reliable internet.

Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, states that he is concerned about the additional travel time and will vote against Mueller's office if the start time will not change by at least 15 minutes.
Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, states that AAC used to meet at 7 pm starting in the springtime.
Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, suggests 6:30 or 6:15 pm start time.
Committee Member, James Oku, suggests meeting at the library for a few more months and asks if the insurance is an issue.
Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, responds that the insurance is different for each place and is waiting for more information.
San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, Koren Widdel, asks where the meetings were held when it started later.
Committee Member, Marilyn Johnson, responds that it was held at the Farm Bureau office and Old Train Depot.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, states that she is also concerned with the travel time but the unlimited time is more important and it checks all the other boxes for a location.
Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, asks if the office is leased by Ray Mueller or the County.
Supervisor Mueller's Aide, Mike O'Neill, responds that it is leased by the County.
Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, states that the meetings used to alternate between Half Moon Bay and Pescadero, and occasionally San Gregorio. Adds that one location was decided to ease the burden on County Staff.
Committee Member, James Oku, suggests an alternative motion to stay at the library until research can be completed on the viability of Mueller's office.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, responds that at the location was proposed as a viable option already at the January AAC retreat. Suggests holding two meetings there as a trial for the Planning Liaison to see how easy it is for setup.
Chair, Natalie Sare, states that the unlimited time will allow the Committee to due their due diligence.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, motions to hold AAC meetings at Supervisor Ray Mueller's office for the next two meeting for a trial run. Chair, Natalie Sare, seconds motion. **Motion passes, 5-3-0-0** (Vars, Theobald, Marchi).

Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, motions to have an amendment to change the start time from 6 pm to 6:15 pm. **Amendment passes, 6-2-0-0** (Vars, Marchi).

5. Workplan - Presenters: Debbie Schecter, Sophie Mintier, and Planning Liaison, Robby Miller

SPEAKERS:
Committee Member, James Oku, states concern about not being involved with Williamson Act Contracts
Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, responds that there has not been a audit for several years and there have not been any recent contracts for the AAC to review.

Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, asks how often Williamson contracts get audited
Planning Liaison, Robby Miller, responds that he is not sure.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, asks if AAC helps with the audit.
Planning & Building Assistant Director, Sophie Mintier, responds that the goal is for AAC to be involved in the audit and says that this could be a Workplan item.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPDATES & QUESTIONS

SPEAKERS:
Committee Member, James Oku, asks about a status on the agritourism guidelines.
Planning & Building Assistant Director, Sophie Mintier, responds that the guidelines were never finalized and if they want to add to the Workplan for implementation or input to revision of the guidelines.
Chair, Natalie Sare, thanks Supervisor Ray Mueller for correcting another Supervisor regarding the hard work AAC does.
Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, asks for golfers or sponsors for the Farm Bureau golf event.

7. ADJOURNMENT Chair, Natalie Sare, adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.