



County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department Agricultural Advisory Committee

Natalie Sare, Chair
John Vars, Vice Chair
Daniel Theobald
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou

Crystal Chaix
James Oku
Jess Brown
Jim Howard

Dr. Igor Lacan
Koren Widdel
Peter Marchi
Ryan Casey

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DRAFT ACTION MINUTES

Monday, February 10, 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/wpxLdc8lvR4>.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

Chair Natalie Sare called the meeting to order at 6:01 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

Regular Committee Members Absent:

None

Nonvoting Committee Members Present

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

Nonvoting Committee Members Absent:

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

Planning Liaison Present:

Olivia Boo, Planning Staff Liaison

Moment of silence for Bob Marsh, former committee member.

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

SPEAKERS

Public Speaker, Kerry Burke, announced that Farm Day is March 28, 2025 and tickets can be purchased through the Chamber of Commerce and the Farm Bureau.

4. **Committee Nomination** for AAC Secretary.

SPEAKERS

None.

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

Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, announced that Wednesday, June 11, 2025 is the Burt Silva golf tournament. Interested parties can go Eventbrite and find the information or contact Crystal Chaix for more information.

Committee Member, James Oku, announced his land was inspected for his tenants regarding non-payment of wages and possibly people living in greenhouses. The police thought there were 200 people employed, when in reality there are 10 people employed. The Department of Cannabis was present and involved and found no violations.

Committee Member, John Vars, announced Wednesday evening that there is a special meeting of the Farm Worker Advisory Commission at the Half Moon Bay Library. The Commission would like to gather suggestions from farm workers on what would be helpful. There is no set agenda; it is an open forum to suggest how to navigate the healthcare system, how to prepare for ice raids. The meeting is on February 12, 2025, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, Koren Widdel, announced a save the date for Wednesday, May 14 and Thursday, May 15 for the California Ag Tourism Summit, sponsored by the USDA in San Diego.

6. **Planning and Building Department Director's Report.** (*Planning Liaison*)
The next meeting is March 10, 2025.

SPEAKERS

None.

7. **Discussion items:**

- a. **AAC Ag Workshop** - All Committee Members – Propose holding AAC monthly meetings, possibly starting in May 2025, to invite different categories of farmers to

AAC meetings to collect ideas regarding steps and paths for the County to help preserve farming on the San Mateo County coast:

Chair, Natalie Sare, announced that this meeting may be in May. The Ted Adcock, Grand Oak room, can hold 150 seats and possibly be set up classroom style. April is a better month; it would work better for farmers. Koren offered to pay for postage, the goal is to mail the flyer in the first week of March.

Committee Member, Ryan Casey, shared concern with a large headcount meeting, as it could result in disaster, whereas a smaller group may have a clear focus and communication, and be more productive.

Committee Member, James Oku, commented that the workshop could go overtime and asked if the meeting could start earlier.

Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, commented that the big collective meeting would push off regular AAC items.

Public Speaker, Eliza Milio, offered that if there's complications reserving the Ted Adcock, the Resource Conservation District (RCD) has a room available.

- b. Pescadero Fire Station Pipeline - Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, suggested the Committee draft a letter for this topic, addressed to the County. This is regarding farmers interested in having access to connect CSA-11 project. The intent is to invite Planning staff involved with the new fire station project to attend an AAC meeting, so that farmers can be part of the discussion to provide input to the County.

Public Speaker, Dante Silvestri, commented that CSA-11 is a limited aquifer, there is a new well, and no one is permitted to connect. It only benefits the fire station and the school.

Committee Member, Ryan Casey, commented that the CSA-11 topic has been discussed in the past.

8. Presentation on proposed language changes to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Basic Policy; Presenter: Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen).

SPEAKERS

Public Speaker, Kerry Burke, commented that people are supportive of being allowed to have additional agricultural uses and buildings allowed on PAD land, such as agricultural storage buildings and additional uses.

Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, asked for a map of the areas under Midpen that are used for agriculture or planned to be used for agriculture and to show the difference of what is used for grazing and for row crops.

Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, asked regarding the tenant policy, if a current farmer's lease goes up for bid, and the farmer is a good tenant, why does the land need to go up for bid?

Committee Member, John Vars, asked whether Midpen is looking for specific feedback on the green text?

Midpen staff will return to the March 10, 2026 AAC meeting for further discussion.

San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, Koren Widdel, shared H5N1 was found at a property in the City of San Mateo. This was confirmed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), all the chickens died, and the property is under 120 day quarantine. The health department monitored humans for exposure. A stray cat picked up H5N1 and passed. So far, no other incidents have been found.

9. Adjournment

Chair Natalie Sare adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Agricultural Advisory Committee

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