



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

County Office Building
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, California 94063
650/363-1825
planning.smcgov.org

DRAFT ACTION MINUTES

Monday, March 10, 2025

IN-PERSON WITH REMOTE PARTICIPATION

A full recording of this meeting can be accessed at:

<https://www.smcgov.org/planning/event/agricultural-advisory-committee-meeting-march-10-2025>

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order

Chair Natalie Sare called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Member Roll Call

Regular Committee Members Present:

James Oku
Natalie Sare
Peter Marchi
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou
Crystal Chaix
Daniel Theobald

Regular Committee Members Not Present:

John Vars
Ryan Casey

Nonvoting Committee Members Present:

Koren Widdel
Jess Brown

Nonvoting Committee Members Not Present:

Jim Howard
Igor Lacan

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

San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, Koren Widdel, announced Supervisor Mueller has a proclamation for National Agriculture Day, March 19, 2025; last week her department mailed and emailed webinar information, 100 invitations, regarding Rights and Responsibilities for Immigration issues.

Supervisor Aide, Mike O'Neill, announced Supervisor Mueller is interviewing next Friday for vacant AAC positions.

Chair Natalie Sare inquired if there are any bird flu updates.

5. **Planning and Building Department Director's Report.** (*Planning Liaison*)
The next meeting is April 14, 2025, which is also the special workshop meeting.

NO SPEAKERS

6. **Presentation** (continuation from February 10, 2025 meeting) to collect comments on the proposed language changes to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Basic Policy; Presenter: Susanna Chan, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen).

SPEAKERS

Midpen Assistant General Manager, Susanna Chan, noted that there is public engagement taking place throughout the coast, in addition to gathering AAC comments; Midpen will be meeting with the City of Half Moon Bay, Peninsula Municipal Advisory Council, and other groups. The documents will be brought to the Midpen Board in the summer of 2025.

AAC Vice Chair, Peter Marchi, commented that when there is a tenant currently leasing Midpen property for agricultural use, and then it will be up for review in a few years, this can discourage tenants who have been farming for a long time, as that tenant has put a large investment into the land. Ranchers, so long as they are following rules, should have first opportunity to continue farming.

Midpen Assistant General Manager, Brian Malone, responded that the lease term has increased to a 15-year term, to increments of 5 years/5 years/5 years, for a combined 15-year term. The Midpen Board has made leases competitive to give opportunities to people who did not previously have opportunities. Midpen staff will take AAC comments back to their Board.

Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, commented that hopefully consideration can be given to the rancher already on site relative to leases, and that the overall timing is less important. The revisions are well thought out in terms of preserving agriculture.

Committee Member, Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou, commented if the tenant is operating under 5 yrs, this isn't a long time for a farm business. If the focus is on short-term lease - conservation goals are difficult with a 5-year lease. Making sure that the land is being managed in a way that accomplishes conservation goals is more difficult with short-term leases. How does Midpen determine which farmland is available for conservation grazing versus which is available for vegetable production, what criteria are used to make the determination?

Public Speaker, Kerry Burke, commented regarding item F, inquired "who determines if the land is viable for agriculture?", is there a better definition?

Committee Chair, Natalie Sare, commented she would like to hear back regarding the definition of "viable agricultural land", this should be discussed with AAC. She would like the AAC Committee to advise Midpen on "what is viable". She invited Midpen to the April workshop.

County Attorney's Office, Brian Pettit, commented that the document will get adopted by Board.

7. Discussion items:

All Committee Members – Propose holding AAC monthly meetings, approximately April, May, and June 2025, to invite different categories of farmers to AAC meetings to collect ideas on how to preserve agriculture on the coastside.

SPEAKERS

Committee Chair, Natalie Sare, announced Crystal will take notes on easel pad. Comments and ideas will be noted first; discussion will be at a future date. Crystal, Daniel, Koren, Cole, James and Mike will help with set up.

Chair, Natalie Sare, will ask the attendees their understanding of the existing regulations and options to modify and/or improve the regulations. Committee Member, Crystal Chaix, has volunteered to collect attendees' names and farm information. Committee Member, Daniel Theobald, volunteered to notify Puente of the workshop. Mike O'Neill will be the official timekeeper. Planning staff will bring a projector. Koren Widdel will take notes on laptop.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Agricultural Advisory Committee

