

DRAFT ALAB MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 2, 2013

Members and Alternates Present: Jean-Pierre Wolff, Lisen Bonnier, Don Warden, Mark Battany, Dan Rodrigues, Claire Wineman, Joy Fitzhugh, Neil Roberts, Mark Pearce, Melanie Blankenship, Bill Struble, Eric Michielssen, Tom Ikeda

Absent Members: David Pruitt, Jerry Diefenderfer, Dick Nock, Chuck Pritchard, Richard Hawley

Guests Present: Patricia Wilmore - Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance (Government Affairs Coordinator)

Staff Present: Marc Lea, Lynda Auchinachie – SLO County Dept. of Agriculture, Terry Wahler, Dana Lilley - Planning Department

1. **Call to Order:** 6:05 pm by Chair, Jean-Pierre Wolff. Quorum present.
2. **Open Comment:** none
3. **Announcements from ALAB Members & County Ag Department Staff Updates:**
 - Lisen Bonnier shared that on December 6 and 7, 2013, the annual Sustainable Agriculture Pest Management Conference will be held at The Veteran's Hall in San Luis Obispo. Continuing Education Units are approved for this conference.
 - Joy Fitzhugh indicated that on December 5, 2013, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board will be meeting to discuss noncompliance with eNOI requirements.
 - Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff announced that the Coastal RCD will be celebrating its 60th anniversary and that RCDs are going strong.
 - Marc Lea provided background information on the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) infestation that was found in the Arbors residential neighborhood less than ¾ of a mile from vineyards in the Edna Valley. Marc indicated that no additional GWSS have been found since pesticide treatments ended in fall 2011 and the Agriculture Department has requested to California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to formally end the quarantine. Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff shared that the treatment program was very successful because there was not push back from the residents because of the outreach by growers, UCCE, and the Agriculture Department.
4. **Previous Minutes: MOTION:** Approve October 7, 2013, minutes: **Motion:** Lisen Bonnier 2nd: Don Warden **Approved: Unanimous**
5. **Meeting locations for 2014; Vice-Chair Recruitment and Updates on BOS district representatives** (Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff and Marc Lea – Ag Dept)

- Marc Lea reported Melanie Blankenship was appointed by Supervisor Mecham and Supervisor Ray indicated that Bill Struble will continue as her ALAB representative.
- Marc Lea informed ALAB members that the UCCE auditorium was not available on the first Monday of the month from January through June 2014. Marc consulted with ALAB members about temporarily changing the meeting date or the meeting location. ALAB members agreed to have Marc work with Eric Michielssen to reserve a room at the Grange Hall on the usual meeting date (first Monday of the month).
- Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff recognized Cindy Steinbeck for her contributions to ALAB and indicated a new Vice-Chair will need to be elected and recommended the formation of the “traditional recruitment committee.” Mark Pearce and Lisen Bonnier volunteered for the recruitment committee. The election will be early 2014.

6. Housing Element Update (Terry Wahler, Dana Lilley – Planning Department)

- Terry Wahler indicated that the Planning Department is in the process of updating the Housing Element. The Housing Element’s goal is to facilitate housing, particularly affordable housing, and is updated every five years to respond to changing conditions and housing laws. Terry shared that the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments has identified 1,398 units as the County’s share of the housing allocation. Terry indicated that there is adequate existing zoning to accommodate this housing allocation and the focus of current effort is on a needs assessment. Terry provided ALAB members with a copy of the 2008 Housing Element needs assessment for farmworkers
- Dana Lilley summarized the input provided by ALAB members for the 2008 Housing Element. Dana requested ALAB input on what changes may be necessary for the current update, preferably by January 2014.
- Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff inquired whether or not the Planning Department consulted with neighboring counties on how the County’s Housing Element compared to Santa Barbara and Monterey counties.
- Dana Lilley informed ALAB members that the content of a Housing Element is heavily prescribed by the State. Dana suggested that farmworker housing is most likely required in all counties.
- Terry Wahler shared his intent to consult with Santa Barbara County planning staff regarding their Housing Element update.
- Lisen Bonnier asked for clarification regarding the existing language that suggests growers would like to see additional amendments to County ordinances, such as amending the 20 acre minimum site area. Lisen was reminded that this was specific to the required acreage standards of the Land Use Ordinance for qualifying for farmworker housing.
- Dana Lilley requested preliminary input from ALAB members during the January meeting. A subcommittee consisting of Richard Quandt, Eric Michielssen, and Neil Roberts agreed to provide feedback during the January meeting.

- Chair Jean-Pierre requested feedback regarding a comparison with Santa Barbara and Monterey counties.

7. Evaluation of urgency ordinance covering the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and its effects on local agriculture (Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff)

- Dan Rodrigues indicated that the vested rights meeting in which he represented ALAB went pretty well. Dan observed that a variety of groups were represented and worked together to deliver a workable solution.
- Claire Wineman, also an ALAB representative at the vested rights meeting, shared that there was really great consensus by the stakeholders group but that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) struck down the group's recommended language for determining a vested right. Claire shared her disappointment that the BOS adopted an exemption for sites of less than 20 acres without public comment on the proposal. Claire believed there was a lack of transparency with the final version of vested rights exemptions.
- ALAB members were provided copies of the BOS approved language for the determination of an exemption from Ordinance 3246.
- Lisen Bonnier and Bill Struble questioned the definition of "sites" less than 20 acres. ALAB members discussed the various ways in which this could be interpreted.
- Marc Lea shared his belief that it was for plantings less than 20 acres, however, he would get the official interpretation from the Planning Director.
- Chair Jean-Pierre emphasized the importance of seeking constructive input on such matters from ALAB members.
- Claire Wineman shared her belief that there is increasing pressure to have this apply on a countywide basis.
- Dan Rodrigues suggested that district representatives meet with their BOS to ask them to be more transparent and turn to ALAB members for input.
- ALAB members discussed what impact the lawsuits may have had on the BOS hearing.

8. Discussion and evaluation of countywide water challenges (Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff)

- Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff shared his belief that the County is in a difficult position and it must show some measurable progress addressing the countywide water challenges or likely face increased regulatory pressure from other agencies.
- Dan Rodrigues suggested that housing is one of the biggest problems because so much has been approved throughout the county in agricultural areas creating competition for groundwater resources.
- Eric Michielssen indicated there needs to be a unified look at all uses and a comprehensive plan developed to manage water resources. There needs to be municipal cooperation.
- Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff provided ALAB members with an overview of the potential uses for recycled water including irrigation of agricultural crops.

- Melanie Blankenship inquired about what science was behind the draw on the basin. ALAB members shared information about various studies and indicated a modeling effort is currently underway. It was noted that it appeared the modeling effort may be delayed by the recent lawsuits that were filed against the county.
- Neil Roberts and Dan Rodrigues discussed that vineyards use about .5 to 1.5 acre feet of water per year. They both noted that vineyard water use per acre has declined substantially over the past ten to twenty years. Neil referenced the work Mark Battany is undertaking regarding frost protection.
- Mark Battany indicated that there is a need to extract maximum possible benefit from our water resources. Mark shared that there is a shift away from using water for frost protection.
- Melanie Blankenship shared that she was born and raised in this area and that houses have often been developed in areas where there isn't adequate water.
- Chair Jean-Pierre Wolff asked Mark Pearce how the urgency ordinance was influencing agricultural financing. Mark shared that banks attempt to structure deals that control the downside risk and properties that don't qualify for vested rights could lose substantial value. Mark indicated a property worth \$12,000 an acre could drop to \$1,000 an acre. It appears that both banks and appraisers are requiring demonstration of water resources.

9. Future Agenda Items: Next meeting: January 6, 2014

- Courtney Howard discussing countywide water challenges; feedback from Housing Element subcommittee; RESP with James Caruso

Meeting Adjourned: 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lynda Auchinachie, County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures