



**ZONE 2A ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 21, 2011**

Attendees:

Ted Cabral (TC) – Member	Jason Sweeney (JS) - SSCRC
Ned Orrett (EO) - Member	Randy Raines (RR) - RMC
John Fitzgerald (JF) - Member	Chris Cheek - Public
Teresa Barrett (TB) – Member/City of Petaluma	Susan Kirks - Public
Ray Soper (RS) - Member	Tam Smith - Public
Kent Gylfe (KG) - SCWA	John King - Public
Michael Thompson (MT) – SCWA	Pamela Torliatt – Public
Ann DuBay (AD) - SCWA	Bill Bennett – Public
Pamela Tuft (PT) – City of Petaluma	Betty Dale - Public

NOTE: The next Zone 2A Advisory Committee Meeting will be October 5, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.

1. **Opening/Introductions:** Meeting called to order by chairman (TC) at 2:02 p.m. Attendees were introduced, including the newest committee member Ray Soper.

TC opened with discussion of activities that occurred since committee last met and reported that he had spoken with Supervisor Rabbitt regarding some of the changes that are occurring to the committee with the transition to Supervisor Rabbitt's term in office. TC also expressed, in regards to the April stakeholder meeting for the Upper Petaluma River Flood Control Project Scoping Study, that had he realized the budget provided for the proceedings of that meeting, he would not have recommended the budget.

2. **Public Comment:** A member of the public (Bill Bennett) inquired as to how much of the budget appropriation for the Upper Petaluma River Flood Control Project has been expended and whether a recent meeting between the Water Agency and the City of Petaluma had been held in regard to this project. KG clarified the amount of the current consultant agreement (approximately \$217,000) and verified that the Water Agency and City did recently meet and discussed the potential for mutual support and partnership for the project. It was also noted that an April 28 meeting was held in Petaluma regarding the Scoping Study for the project. There were several comments regarding dissatisfaction with public outreach for the meeting.

The following suggestions were made for future project meetings: Notice meeting in local papers; issue a press release aimed at articles in Argus Courier and The Press Democrat; utilize Water Agency's website, Facebook and Twitter accounts; email notices to April 28 meeting attendees regarding future meetings/activities about the study; mail notice to property owners. One member of the public (Pamela Torliatt) recommended that project stakeholders be made aware of the Zone 2A committee meetings as well.

In addition, one member of the public (John King) stated that while it has been publicly stated that the projects would be voluntary, the documents indicated that eminent domain could be used.

3. **Approval of Minutes:** Committee member John Fitzgerald asked that the minutes of the November 10, 2010 meeting be corrected to reflect that he was not present. It was moved and seconded that corrected minutes be approved. Unanimous.

4. **Upper Petaluma River Flood Control Project:**

Kent Gylfe summarized past activities and gave an update on recent actions regarding the study, as follows:

- In July, 2010, KG circulated a memo to the committee summarizing activities and committee actions related directly or indirectly to the Upper Petaluma River Flood Control Project.
- At the November 2010 committee meeting, the project was on the agenda for discussion.
- Since then, RMC has been studying the watershed, has conducted an issues assessment and developed a Project Objectives Report outlining primary and supporting objectives. These draft documents were the subject of an April 2011 scoping meeting where active stakeholders were invited to provide input on projective objectives and concepts.
- Approximately 35 people attended the April scoping meeting. There were many, diverse, useful comments. Concern was expressed regarding public outreach/noticing, eminent domain and private property rights. Attendees expressed interest in flood control benefits, with groundwater recharge being of lesser importance.
- The consultant has received these comments along with written comments and is incorporating feedback into the next level of the study, which will include screening criteria and draft project concepts.
- KG proposed that the committee host a community meeting in late September to solicit input on the next level of detail.
- TC noted that any meeting needs to have good public outreach.

EO said that the project should push the envelope. He would like to see low impact development considered as a project alternative to see if the LID approach might be successful in reducing flood hazards. He also expressed concern that the "door isn't closed" on ideas and concepts. It was pointed out that the purpose of the meeting, and the next phase of the study are to get input on concepts like LID.

A member of the public (Pamela Torliatt) said that she did not receive notification for the committee meeting today. All people who attended the April 28 meeting should have received notice of today's meeting, since the study was on the agenda. She also commented that some projects have a better cost-benefit analysis than others and that dollars should be focused on maintenance and not watershed projects.

She also stated that the Water Agency should work with the City of Petaluma to ensure that there is no new development upstream of the Corps project and that the Board of Directors should adopt a zero net fill (ZNF) policy in the flood plain that is as stringent as the city policy.

Ms. Torliatt further stated that she submitted comments to RMC but never received acknowledgement. Everyone who submitted comments should be acknowledged and should also receive a copy of the responses to comments.

TC noted that maintenance projects that have been brought to the committee have been funded. He said he would like Petaluma to adopt a complete ZNF policy before asking ranchers to adopt ZNF. JF explained the City's ZNF policy and why the city cannot implement ZNF in the downtown areas.

Ms. Torliatt clarified that she meant that the committee should request a report of the overall funding plan for the stream maintenance program (SMP). She clarified statements regarding ZNF noting that landowners in the unincorporated areas can be adversely affected when upstream landowners build in flood plains. She reiterated that it was more effective for money to be spent on maintenance rather than a \$1.3 million study. KG clarified that the contract for the study is \$217,000, not \$1.3 million.

JF noted that there has been less opportunity for maintenance projects because of environmental issues. Committee member Soper pointed out that there are plenty of potential maintenance projects in places like Lichau Creek but that California Department of Fish & Game will not allow people to clear brush. JS responded that SSRCD has been funded by Water Agency to do hydrology study of Lichau Creek to develop the best approach to sediment and other problems. The RCD welcomes comments and interaction with landowners on this issue. A discussion ensued regarding the problems in Lichau Creek.

A member of the public (Susan Kirks) noted that in regard to the Watershed Study that open space should be removed as a supporting objective. She said that the Water Agency should step carefully regarding this issues, particularly with the current lawsuit regarding mitigation on open space conservation easements. She recommended that the component "restore degraded open space lands" should be removed from Draft Supporting Objectives.

TB noted that outreach is critical for the upcoming meeting to be a success.

5. **Public-Private Partnerships:**

TB reported that committee always needs more money to complete its desired projects. She pointed out that other entities leverage limited funds by soliciting private partners and grant funds. She proposed that the committee explore taking the same approach.

A discussion ensued regarding possibilities for private funding. It was proposed that the Deer Creek developer could fund some projects as part of flooding mitigation. (It was pointed out that there must be a nexus between impacts from development and funded projects.)

TB said that Cal Trans 101 widening will have storm drain issues and that they are discussing offsite storm drain mitigation.

KG will talk to John Maitland at SCTA about required mitigation for 101 widening.

TB noted that if mitigation requires detention ponds, they should be built in Petaluma.

A member of the public (Susan Kirks) stated that in her breakout group at the April watershed meeting, people believed that City of Petaluma development should require flood control, groundwater recharge and other benefits. Deer Creek is a good example of a development that should provide these benefits.

Mike Thompson, Water Agency, clarified a few discussion points:

- The Water Agency has taken advantage of grants, including partnering with the North Bay Conservation Corps for maintenance in Petaluma. He also noted that in 2009, through a partnership with County Human Services Department, the Agency hired (for no cost) two

adult stream maintenance crews. Finally, beginning in the summer of 2009, the Agency has utilized hundreds of young people to do stream maintenance through the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps.

- The Water Agency spends flood zones funds first on maintenance, and then the remainder of the money can be spent on other flood zone projects. In the last several years, the costs of maintenance have gone down while productivity has increased by both efficiencies in how the work is done and through the use of youth and conservation crews.
- The cost and hassle of permitting for stream work led the Agency to develop a stream maintenance program (SMP) that is permitted for several years of work.

A member of the public (Bill Bennett) questioned why major rural creeks were not included in SMP. MT explained that multi-year permits were only available for constructed streams and that most rural creeks are natural. It is been tough to get multi-year permits for natural creeks, but the success of the SMP provides a model that can hopefully be applied to rural areas.

Discussion ensued about rural creeks and environmental permitting.

A member of the public (Pamela Torliatt) suggested that the committee agendize an overview of the SMP and the agency's maintenance schedule. KG acknowledged the wisdom of this approach and pointed out that Keenan Foster provided an extensive overview of the SMP last year and that maintenance updates were a regular part of the agenda.

A discussion ensued about committee meeting frequency, with longtime committee member Fitzgerald reporting that the committee had met quarterly years ago. KG noted that other flood zone committees currently meet once annually to review proposed Capital Improvement Program budgets and to make budget recommendations. TC will discuss committee meeting frequency with KG and report back at next meeting.

6. Project Status Updates:

PT provided the following updates:

- City received an \$850,000 River Parkways (Prop 84) grant to work on the flood terrace and river enhancements project, with kiosk. Next phase will be a trail (if receive additional grant funds).
- FEMA map update is in progress and following federal schedule. Preliminary mapping has found a 13 percent increase in storm patterns in upper reaches of Lichau and Adobe Creeks. The western subwatersheds have similar changes. As soon as FEMA approves maps, the City will share with its council and with the public.
- The seven previously recommended Zone 2A projects for the City were on hold while PT was temporary public works director. Now that she has returned to special projects, the projects will get back on track.
- Other projects that City is working on include improvements to a channel parallel to 101 and grant funding for a project on North McDowell. Ongoing partnerships with the Water Agency and RCD are being pursued.

A member of the public noted that people need more education about projects like this and others.

RS said he would like additional education on groundwater.

Discussion ensued about possibility for educational workshops/field trips. RCD and members of the public would like to be involved.

JS provided update on SSRCD activities. (Refer to attached progress report for primary discussion points).

JS was asked about work on rural creeks and discussion ensued regarding permitting issues on natural creeks. The SSRCD would like committee input on pursuing a multi-year permits. The costs and time involved for permitting for one year of work is becoming prohibitive and is not effective from a maintenance viewpoint. RCD staff will be proposing this approach with their board.

JS further reported that the RCD is conducting a large bank stabilization project in upper watershed (San Antonio Creek) and that it has been awarded a watershed coordinator grant for Sonoma Creek and Petaluma River from Department of Conservation.

7. Reports/Comments:

JF asked that watershed maps be provided to all committee members and a large map be brought to meetings.

EO volunteered to develop a lesson plan for committee.

RS offered the committee the use of the Penngrove Community Hall for meetings/educational events.

8. Next meeting:

KG reminded members that the meeting following the special September meeting will be the annual budget meeting. If committee members have projects that they would like to have considered for the recommended budget, they should submit them.

TC suggested that the section of the Petaluma River between the Rainseville Bridge and Petaluma Blvd be cleaned out. It is full of sediment.

The budget meeting date was discussed, with November 3rd raised as a possibility.

In addition to the budget, KG will try to schedule an update from PRMD on the Muelrath Wetlands Mitigation and the county ZNF policy.

A member of the public suggested that staff provide an update on the berm and fill project at the auction yard.

The next committee meeting will be October 5, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at the Penngrove Community Hall.

Petaluma River Zone 2A Channel Maintenance Projects
Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District
Progress Report – July 2011

TO: Kent Gylfe, SCWA and Zone 2A Advisory Committee Members
FROM: Jason Sweeney, Watershed Coordinator, SSCRCD
DATE: July 21, 2011

Work completed on the following projects – November 11, 2010 through July 20, 2011

RCD staff continues to work closely with SCWA and City of Petaluma staff to collaborate and build-in efficiencies in completing work. The cooperation and partnerships have been significant in achieving mutual project goals and meeting the needs of the community.

Adobe Creek – Restoration Planting Maintenance Update

“Sartori Reach” – In late spring, RCD staff removed brush from around the restoration plantings and flagged trees ahead of the City’s fire abatement mowing. Staff coordinated with the City contractor ahead of that work. Late rains have allowed RCD staff to hold off on the summer watering schedule. Staff is watching the site and planning additional summer maintenance (watering, weed and blackberry removal) while conserving funds for the removal of weed mats and mulching of plantings this fall before the project closes in December.

Total Contract: **\$335,500.00**
Balance Remaining: **\$7,553.12** (as of June 30, 2011)

Lynch Creek – Restoration Planting Maintenance Update

RCD continues the successful partnership with the City Department of Water Resources on weed and irrigation maintenance at the site. This partnership has benefitted the maintenance and monitoring needs on both the Zone 2A Channel Maintenance project as well as the City-led community floodplain clearing and revegetation effort, with collaboration between RCD Fisheries Biologist Michael Bowers, the Department of Water Resources, and the Dept. of Parks and Rec. Staff is planning additional summer maintenance (weed and blackberry removal) while conserving funds for wrapping up the Zone 2A project this fall before the project closes in December.

Total Contract: **\$395,000.00**
Balance Remaining: **\$8,765.46** (as of June 30, 2011)

Fall Trash Clean-up

RCD staff assisted with some aspects of planning and staffing the annual spring clean-up event, held on May 7th 2011. RCD staffed a table at the event, providing a demonstration of the watershed model to discuss flood and watershed management issues and recruiting volunteers for the planned Fall Cleanup event, which will be held on Saturday September 17, 2011. In addition to the main cleanup event planned, RCD staff will be offering support and materials to those interested in organizing their neighbors and friends for smaller neighborhood cleanups planned around the Sept. 17th event.

RCD is also working with a group consisting of Committee On The Shelterless staff, the Petaluma Police Department, the City Department of Water Resources, the Friends of the Petaluma River, and other interested stakeholders to continue to develop a program to curtail and clean up trash that is generated by homeless campers.

Total Contract: **\$28,000.00**
Balance Remaining: **\$10,092.68** (as of June 30, 2011)