

State of California, County of Siskiyou

Board of Supervisors Minutes, August 29, 2023

The Honorable Board of Supervisors of Siskiyou County, California, met in special session this 29th day of August 2023; there being present Supervisors Brandon Criss, Michael N. Kobseff, Nancy Ogren and Ed Valenzuela, County Administrator Angela Davis, County Counsel Natalie E. Reed and County Clerk and ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Laura Bynum by Deputy County Clerk Wendy Winningham. Supervisor Ray Haupt was absent.

The Board met in joint session with the Siskiyou County Planning Commission.

Present for the Planning Commission were Commissioners Jeff Fowle, Dusty Veale, Blair Hart, Tony Melo and Danielle Linder (Chair).

The meeting was called to order by Chairs Valenzuela and Lindler. Supervisor Criss led in the salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Presentations from the Public

County Counsel Natalie E. Reed provided a brief overview of the public comment guidelines associated with special meetings, advising that the comments are to pertain to the items on the special meeting agenda only.

Yreka resident Steve Radford appeared before the Board, sharing concerns regarding the lack of young families and members of the public attending and participating in Board meetings. Mr. Radford suggested that the Board meet in the evening on occasion to give them opportunity to attend. Mr. Radford additionally shared concerns regarding the negative impacts associated with local wildfires and smoke due to the lack of forest management.

Scott Valley resident Richard Marshall appeared before the Board, sharing concerns regarding the consultant chosen to assist the County in developing the General Plan and the perceived lack of public notice of the joint meeting between the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission.

Scott Valley resident Michael Stapleton appeared before the Board, speaking in support of efforts being made to preserve the Scott Valley Area Plan (SVAP) in the General Plan update process and for codification of the SVAP into County Code.

Montague resident Debbie Bacigalupi appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the consultant chosen to assist the County in developing the General Plan, including their possible ties to the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI).

Supervisor Kobseff commented regarding the need for the public to be involved in the planning process, advising that there would be no adoption of a plan or other action taken at this meeting.

General Plan Update Workshop - This item is aimed to facilitate a workshop between the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission in regards to the General Plan Update. Mintier Harnish will provide a status update, present specific information, and solicit direction and feedback from the Board and Commission. Presentation and discussion only.

Deputy Director of Planning Hailey Lang appeared before the Board and provided a brief overview request, advising that consultants Mintier Harnish were present to facilitate the presentation and discussion.

In response to Supervisors Valenzuela and Kobseff and Commissioner Fowle, Ms. Lang provided an overview of the anticipated process for Community Development and other County staff to develop the Safety Element of the General Plan rather than utilize the services of a consultant. In addition, Ms. Lang advised that an updated General Plan would streamline various Planning, Building and permitting processes as well as open up various grant opportunities.

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General Plan Update Workshop – (continued)

Mintier Harnish Principal/Owner Jim Harnish appeared before the Board providing a brief overview of Mintier Harnish, which works mainly in Northern California. Mr. Harnish introduced Project Manager Brent Gibbons and Assistant Project Manager Ryan Lester who would provide a powerpoint presentation as the initial first step in developing/updating the County's General Plan. Mr. Harnish additionally introduced Aileen Mahoney with Rincon, a partner on the environmental side of the General Plan update process. Mr. Harnish advised that Mintier Harnish does not have a Memorandum of Understanding or contract with ICLEI and that only cities and counties are Mintier Harnish's clients.

In response to Supervisor Kobseff, Mr. Harnish summarized the update process, including the anticipated communication process between Mintier Harnish and County staff.

Mr. Gibbons appeared before the Board, presenting a powerpoint detailing the General Plan that is required by State law for every California jurisdiction, an overview of the General Plan characteristics and how it affects zoning, subdivision maps and building permits in the County and is consistent with and between the various Plan Elements. Mr. Gibbons summarized the required Plan Elements (i.e. Land Use, Housing, Safety, etc.) and advised that new State requirements would impact the General Plan update process.

Continuing the powerpoint, Mr. Gibbons provided an overview of the update focus, including updating the Land Use, Noise and Open Space/Conservation Elements, developing a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, prepare an implementable Plan, update the County's Zoning Code and prioritize health communities. Mr. Gibbons additionally summarized the seven phases of the project's timeline, with Plan adoption anticipated for late in 2025.

Continuing the powerpoint, Mr. Lester provided an overview of the outreach efforts being planned, including creation of a website for public engagement, branding/updating of the General Plan logo, anticipated social media, email blasts and newsletters sent out to the community and community workshops in several locations throughout the County.

Lengthy discussion followed between members of the Planning Commission and Mr. Gibbons regarding potential exposure to litigation should a jurisdiction not follow its General Plan, the issues (water use, marijuana, public engagement and the SVAP) discussed at a recent 'kick off' meeting between Mintier Harnish, County staff members, a member, each, from the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, the importance of communication between the consultant, County, Commission and Board, the need to avoid a 'one size fits all' Plan, the need to consider the over 60% of County land owned by the State and/or Federal government in this process, the need for a process to hold State/Feds accountable in the updated Plan and the anticipated review process with regard to public engagement.

In response to Commissioner Lindler, County Counsel Natalie E. Reed advised that community workshops between Community Development, Mintier Harnish and the public would not be considered a Brown Act event.

Further discussion followed regarding the potential impacts associated with new State regulations, a 5-year review that will be built into the update Plan, one County option, taking public input into account, for the updated Plan to have little or no growth (i.e. population, development), the need to consider properties within Williamson Act contracts in Plan development, the need to develop a Plan to protect agricultural lands and associated lifestyle and the need to develop objective General Plan policies.

Supervisor Ogren advised of the need for public engagement in the Plan development process due to the various issues the County will face in the Plan update process, including housing (for homeless, low income, affordable), infrastructure needs and impacts associated with forest and ag lands.

Discussion followed between members of the Board, Mr. Gibbons and Ms. Lang regarding anticipated plans to coordinate the General Plan development with the various cities and special districts within the County, the anticipated processes related to AB 52 (tribal) consultations, including the Shasta and Modoc tribes as stakeholders and the Safety Element update process.

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General Plan Update Workshop – (continued)

Further discussion followed regarding the anticipated public/community workshop process, the anticipated process to update the Zoning Code, newsletters for public outreach, the anticipated process to meet the minimum requirements for the various legislation and support for streamlining various County processes and processes to engage with the public and receive comments/input.

Commissioner Fowle advised of the need to consider/address the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and Safe Harbor Agreements (associated with agricultural lands and listed/endangered species) during the General Plan update development process.

Discussion followed, including Ms. Mahoney with Rincon regarding Federal environmental justice legislation, the Healthy Communities Act (associated with air quality), potential impacts associated with climate change adaptation, concerns regarding impacts from legislation related to vehicle miles travelled, concerns regarding the current state of housing in the County, the need to address wildfire and flooding issues (vegetation management) and greenhouse gas emissions from wildfires within the Safety Element update process and possible options/alternatives for performing emissions analysis during the Plan update.

Supervisor Criss suggested outreach to various partners/stakeholders in the Plan development process, including Siskiyou County Cattlemen’s Association, Siskiyou County Farm Bureau and Siskiyou Economic Development Council.

Commissioner Fowle advised of the need to consider various non-paved roads within the County that have been decommissioned by the Forest Service,

Commissioner Hart reiterated the need to consider SGMA (groundwater) rules/regulations/plans during analysis of zoning districts during Plan development.

Commissioner Melo shared concerns regarding the need to address water and enforcement of the Plan during development.

Commissioner Lindler advised of the need to consider internet connections within the County during the Plan update process.

Supervisor Ogren advised of the need to consider/evaluate the County’s airports and address inability to obtain or lack of fire insurance for certain County residents during the Plan update process.

Supervisor Kobseff advised of the need to address industrial development within the Plan update.

Commissioner Fowle requested that Community Development/Planning staff place an item on upcoming Planning Commission agendas to discuss and receive updates on development of existing conditions and background report (Phase 2 of the project timeline).

Adjournment - There being no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, the meeting was adjourned.

Attest:
Laura Bynum, County Clerk

Ed Valenzuela, Chair

By: _____
Deputy