



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Board of Supervisors: Administration
(831) 454-2200

Subject: Biennial Report of the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission

Meeting Date: February 23, 2021

Recommended Action(s):

- 1) Accept and file the report prepared by the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission highlighting their activities during calendar years 2019 and 2020; and
- 2) Direct the chair to thank the members of the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission for their work on behalf of County government.

Executive Summary

Accept and file the report prepared by the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission highlighting their activities during calendar years 2019 and 2020.

Background

The purpose of this report is to highlight the activities, accomplishments, and future goals of the board during calendar years 2019 and 2020.

Submitted by:

Bruce McPherson, Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attachments:

Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission 2019-2020 Biennial Report

APPOINTED
2/23/2021
EXHIBIT 3 A



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123
KATHLEEN MOLLOY, PLANNING DIRECTOR

AGRICULTURAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION 2020 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2020

1. Role of Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission (APAC)

The role of APAC is to advise and assist the Board of Supervisors by providing information on the County's agricultural industry, to evaluate matters referred to APAC by the Board, and to review, in cooperation with the Planning Department, proposed development projects having the potential to affect agricultural lands as designated on the County's Agricultural Resources Map, including agricultural buffer reductions, land divisions, and agricultural policy matters.

2. Meeting Dates, Time, and Location

APAC is scheduled to meet on the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at the Agricultural Extension Auditorium at 1432 Freedom Boulevard in Watsonville. As per direction by the Board of Supervisor's, meetings shall be limited to no more than six per year. During 2020, remote meetings were established to allow the APAC, staff, and the public to attend public meetings via telephone.

3. Commission Structure

The Commission is composed of five voting members who are residents of the County and are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Bruce Dau was re-elected Chairperson and Ken Kimes was re-elected Vice-Chairperson. The current voting members are as follows:

Bruce Dau, Chairperson (5th District)
Ken Kimes, Vice Chairperson (2nd District)
Sam Harnshaw (1st District)
Ellen Rinde (3rd District)
Mike Manfre (4th District)

There are also three liaison members, who have no votes:

Juan Hidalgo, Agricultural Commissioner
David Sanford, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner
Mark Bolda, County Agricultural Extension Director

4. Commission Staff

The Agriculture Commission Staff includes the current Agricultural Commissioner, Juan Hidalgo, who was appointed in 2015 and Deputy Agricultural Commissioner David Sanford. David provides staff support to APAC by recording and transcribing meeting minutes, as well as assisting the Agricultural

Commissioner with other responsibilities of the Agricultural Commissioner's Office related to the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission. In addition, the Agricultural Extension Director, Mark Bolda, has a seat on the Commission and he and his staff provide input regarding agricultural matters and more often provide recommendations to Planning Department staff and the public regarding selection of agricultural buffer plant species.

The Agriculture Commission has remained consistent with no changes to the Commission members during 2019 and 20. Sheila McDaniel continues as the current Planning Department Staff, providing support to APAC by scheduling meetings, creating agendas, preparing for meetings, processing applications, preparing staff reports, providing Planning Department staff support at APAC meetings, presenting appeals of APAC decisions to the Board of Supervisors, and providing policy input to the Planning Department sustainability section as well as representing the Planning Department regarding agricultural policy outreach efforts and public assistance.

5. Attendance

See attached rosters (Attachment 1) for 2019 and 2020 Commissioners attendance. Three meetings were held in 2019 and one meeting was held in 2020. All Commissioners regularly attended meetings for both years without absences, including the Agricultural Commissioners officers.

6. Annual Goals and Accomplishments

APAC commissioners are updated on current planning and agricultural issues by County Planning Department staff and by the Agricultural Commissioner's office. The Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission provides the knowledge and expertise necessary to support the protection of Commercial Agriculture (CA) zoned land as required by the County General Plan. The objectives of the Commission vary depending upon what is directed to their attention by these offices and by the Board of Supervisors.

In 2019, three meetings were held. In 2020, one meeting was held.

For 2019 and 2020, most of the APAC duties continue to involve review of agricultural buffer setback reduction applications associated with residential development applications within proximity to agricultural resource lands that were submitted to the Planning Department.

However, in 2019, the APAC also considered amendments to Santa Cruz County General Plan/Local Coastal Program and County Code ("Workforce Housing Policy Amendments") related to agricultural employee housing and provided recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. These regulations have since been adopted by the Board of Supervisors and have simplified the process and standards for agricultural employee housing. This appears to be resulting in significantly more public inquiries for development of projects due to the transparency of the agricultural regulations and has resulted in one application for consideration to recognize existing housing. We look forward to significantly more public interest in and development of agricultural employee housing in coming years.

There are also several agricultural amendments in the Sustainability Update considered by the APAC in 2017 that are still in process. These amendments are intended to address more current agricultural practices and uses and to allow for the consideration of associated agricultural uses to occur on Commercial Agricultural (CA) and Agricultural (A) zoned land to support a successful, long-term, agricultural industry in the County. These regulations include consideration of an updated use chart addressing modern farming practices and needs such as marketing activities (agri-tourism and education), modern farming operations requiring associated industrial equipment and storage buildings on-site for the harvesting, refrigeration, packing, storage, and transportation of produce or related

commodities, as well as updated fencing provisions addressing the security needs of farmers while also ensuring the aesthetics of agricultural operations.

Currently, the Planning Department consultant is preparing the draft environmental impact report. The amendments are expected to be released along with the draft environmental impact report by the Fall of 2021 and adoption in mid-2022.

Regarding cannabis cultivation, since review and adoption of the cannabis regulations in 2018, the Development Review staff have reviewed cannabis applications these past two years, with most applications located within the Commercial Agricultural zoned land.

In 2020 the CLO updated the cannabis regulations to streamline the application review process by establishing outdoor cannabis cultivation and indoor cultivation within existing structures as a principal permitted use within Commercial Agricultural (CA) zoned land without the requirement for a use approval. This regulatory update has resulted in direction of most cannabis cultivation applications directly to the CLO for licensing, which exception of cannabis setback reduction applications and/or construction of new buildings for cannabis storage and processing or new buildings in disturbed portions of the agricultural site. In addition, the regulations were also updated to allow distribution within existing structures as a ministerial action and manufacturing within existing buildings as an administrative approval, which supports continued and improved occupancy of agricultural buildings and does not result in a loss of additional agricultural land.

Thus far, this code update appears to be achieving the objective to provide protection of our limited agricultural lands throughout Santa Cruz County, while also supporting conversion of underutilized structures throughout CA lands and allowing a more simplified regulatory transition for cannabis cultivation.

7. Future Goals

In 2019 and 2020, APAC will focus on meeting the following goals:

- Discuss, stay informed, and offer support to County decision-makers regarding agricultural policy decisions, including on-going County efforts to update the agricultural ordinance, as well as continued implementation of the cannabis cultivation ordinance, as directed the Board of Supervisors.
- Discuss and stay informed on pertinent current issues affecting agriculture in Santa Cruz County including general pest conditions, the status of the Williamson Act, the status of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency on agriculture as applicable, issues associated with the drought, and economic impacts on local farmers.
- Continue to meet the goals of the County General Plan regarding the preservation of commercial agricultural land.
- Provide efficient service to applicants by ensuring Commissioner attendance at scheduled meetings to meet quorum requirements.
- Utilize all available technology, as necessary to achieve consistency with County of Santa Cruz and Board of Supervisor direction regarding remote public meetings during COVID-19 and beyond.
- When unable to meet quorum for a regularly scheduled meeting, special meetings will be provided as necessary to ensure that permits are processed in a timely manner.

8. **Recommendations**

Staff recommends that your Board accept this report on behalf of the Agricultural Policy Advisory Commission.

Attachments

1. **Commissioners Attendance/Meeting Schedule**
2. **Projects Reviewed by APAC in 2019 and 2020**

AGRICULTURAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

ATTENDANCE ROSTER 2019

MEMBERS	1st District Sara Namukasa	2nd District Ken Kibwa	3rd District Helen Rukia	4th District Miles Munda	5th District Bruce Dan Chekwa
JANUARY 17	P	P	P	P	P
FEBRUARY 21	NO MEETING - No Items				
MARCH 21	NO MEETING - No Items				
APRIL 18	NO MEETING - No Items				
MAY 16	NO MEETING - No Items				
JUNE 20	NO MEETING - No Items				
JULY 18	NO MEETING - No Items				
AUGUST 15	P	P	P	P	P
SEPTEMBER 19	NO MEETING - No Items				
OCTOBER 17	NO MEETING - No Items				
NOVEMBER 21	P	P	P	P	P
DECEMBER 19	NO MEETING - No Items				

P - Present
E - Excused Absent
A - Unexcused Absent

ATTACHMENT 1

AGRICULTURAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

ATTENDANCE ROSTER 2020

MEMBERS	1 st District Sam Eassey	2 nd District Ken Kline	3 rd District Ellen Kinde	4 th District Mike Minto	5 th District Ernest Dug Chairman
JANUARY 16	NO MEETING - No Items				
FEBRUARY 20	NO MEETING - No Items				
MARCH 19	NO MEETING - No Items				
APRIL 16	NO MEETING - No Items				
MAY 21	P	P	P	P	P
JUNE 18	NO MEETING - No Items				
JULY 16	NO MEETING - No Items				
AUGUST 20	NO MEETING - No Items				
SEPTEMBER 17	NO MEETING - No Items				
OCTOBER 15	NO MEETING - No Items				
NOVEMBER 19	NO MEETING - No Items				
DECEMBER 17	NO MEETING - No Items				

P - Present
 E - Excused Absent
 A - Unexcused Absent

AGRICULTURAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

Applications Reviewed and Acted on by APAC in 2019 and 2020

For all proposals other than additions to existing residential construction and the placement of agricultural caretakers' mobile homes on agricultural parcels which are administrative applications and do not require APAC review and approval.

2019

January 2019 Agenda

APPLICATION 191325

630 Seaview Terrace

APN: 046-261-27

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal to demolish an existing single-family dwelling and to construct a single-family dwelling with a detached garage within 200 feet of Type 3 agriculture resource land. Requires an Agricultural Buffer Determination to reduce the 200-foot setback to a minimum of 101 feet to APN 046-072-20, 139 feet to APN 046-261-23, 160 feet to APN 046-261-21 (149'8" to property line), 25 feet to APN 046-261-25, and 47 feet to APN 046-081-24.

LOCATION: Property located on the west end of an unnamed right-of-way, approximately 600 feet northwest of Seaview Terrace. Seaview Terrace is located approximately 1300 feet southwest of the intersection of Crest Drive, which is located approximately 850 feet southwest of San Andreas Road.

PROJECT PLANNER: Sheila McDaniel, 454-2255; sheila.mcdaniel@santacruzcounty.us

ACTION: Approve staff recommendations

August 2019 Agenda

Public hearing to consider amendments to Santa Cruz County General Plan/Local Coastal Program and County Code ("Workforce Housing Policy Amendments") related to agricultural employee housing and provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors

Meeting Material: Available for review on the Santa Cruz County Planning Department website at: <http://www.sccplanning.com/PlanningHome/ZoningDevelopment/AgendaHearings/AgriculturalPolicyAdvisoryCommission.aspx>

LOCATION: County-wide

PROJECT PLANNER: Suzanne Ise, Principal Planner, (831) 454-5166;

suzanne.ise@santacruzcounty.us

ACTION: Approve staff recommendations

November 2019 Agenda

APPLICATION 191183

1071 Larson Road, Aptos 95003

APN: 105-041-02

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal to demolish an existing single-family dwelling and detached garage, construct a 1,280 square foot single-family dwelling within approximately 41'5" of Type 2B agricultural resource land, and construct a replacement garage within approximately 154' of the agricultural resource land. Requires an Agricultural Buffer Reduction Determination to reduce the required 200-foot setback.

LOCATION: Property located on the west side of Larson Road (1071 Larson Road), approximately one-mile northwest of the intersection with Trust Gulch Road, within the Aptos Hills Planning Area.

PROJECT PLANNER: Jerry Busch, 454-3234; Jerry.Busch@santacruzcounty.us

ACTION: Approve staff recommendation with revisions to conditions of approval

APPLICATION 191141

151 Silliman Road, Watsonville 95073

APN: 110-141-11

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal to expand an existing agriculture research facility to include removal of seven existing greenhouses and two laboratory buildings and construction of the following: an approximately 20,000 square foot one-story research laboratory; an approximately 4,500 square foot research laboratory; and an approximately 12,000 square foot greenhouse. Project includes 3,500 cubic yards of grading, construction of 102 additional parking spaces, accessibility improvements, and installation of a comprehensive landscape plan. Requires an amendment to Master Plan Application 07-0267 and an Agricultural Buffer Setback Reduction to decrease the minimum required 200 foot buffer to eight feet from APN 110-141-13, containing existing Commercial Agricultural uses to the north, and 10 feet from APN 110-141-12 to the west.

LOCATION: Property located on the north side of Silliman Road, (151 Silliman Road), about 300 yards east from Highway 129 in Watsonville.

PROJECT PLANNER: Nathan MacBeth, 454-3118; nathan.macbeth@santacruzcounty.us

ACTION: Approve staff recommendations

2020

May 2020 Agenda

APPLICATION 191193

No Situs

APN: 050-401-04

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal to construct a single-family dwelling and accessory dwelling unit and to reduce the required 200-foot agricultural buffer setback to 102 feet to the northwest (Type 2D agricultural resource) and 184 feet to the southwest (Type 1A agricultural resource). Requires an Agricultural Buffer Determination.

LOCATION: Property located on the north east side of Amesti Road, approximately 960 feet southeast of Rianda Road (adjacent to 454 Amesti Road).

PROJECT PLANNER: Randall Adams, 454-3218; randall.adams@santacruzcounty.us

ACTION: Approve staff recommendations

APPLICATION 201031

No Signs

APN: 051-351-10

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposal to construct a single-family dwelling and recognize construction of an accessory dwelling unit and to reduce the required the required 200-foot agricultural buffer setback to approximately 85 feet from APN 051-351-09 to the north (Type AG-1A agricultural resources). Requires an Agricultural Buffer Determination.

LOCATION: Property located approximately 715 feet east of Cassady Road (adjacent to 1290 Cassady Road).

PROJECT PLANNER: Randall Adams, 454-3218; randall.adams@santacruzcounty.us

ACTION: Approve staff recommendations

ATTACHMENT 2