



County of Yolo

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TO: Commissioner Richard Reed, Chair
and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: David Morrison, Assistant Director
Planning and Public Works Department

DATE: April 14, 2011

SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Committee Operations

Recommended Action

1. Appoint an Ad Hoc Subcommittee for Citizens Advisory Committees to develop options that allow for effective community input with reduced Division resources.
2. Direct staff to convene a Citizens Advisory Committee summit to consider the options developed by the subcommittee.

Background

At their meeting of December 18, 2008, the Planning Commission approved a letter to be sent to the Board of Supervisors, requesting the establishment of a subcommittee to address the lack of standard written procedures that govern the eight General Plan Citizens Advisory Committees in the county. The letter was delivered and included as "Correspondence" at the Board of Supervisors' meeting of January 13, 2009. At that meeting, Chair Mike McGowan requested that the item be considered at a future meeting until after he had an opportunity to discuss the matter with the Planning Commission Chair.

On March 10, 2009, the Board of Supervisors approved the creation of the Ad Hoc Planning Commission subcommittee and directed staff to report back in six months. On October 13, 2009, staff presented the subcommittee's recommendations. The proposed Bylaws included several changes to improve the functioning and quality of decision making of the Citizens Advisory Committees. They provided guidance and orientation materials to assist newly appointed committee members in carrying out their duties. The Bylaws also created a consistent set of procedures for the various committees, ensuring a more streamlined and predictable process for both applicants and decision makers. A new Code of Ethics was established, to reduce the potential for conflicts of interest to affect local recommendations. Finally, the new Bylaws provided for longer two-year terms for committee members, to allow the development of more experienced participants, and greater continuity.

On March 15, 2011, the Board of Supervisors took the following actions:

- Created a new South Davis Citizens Advisory Committee to serve the unincorporated area within District 4, generally located south of Interstate 80. This includes the communities of Royal Oaks Mobile Home Park, Willowbank, and El Macero (**see attached map**).
- Adjusted the comment area for the Clarksburg Citizens Advisory Committee to the west, to include the easternmost portion of the lower Yolo Bypass.
- Modified No. 14 of the General Plan Citizens Advisory Committee Bylaws to no longer require Department staff to attend all regular meetings. Instead, staff shall only attend those meetings where a recommendation on an application and/or ordinance is considered, as determined by the Planning Director. In addition, made revisions to allow future changes to be made to the Bylaws without requirement of an ordinance.
- Directed the Planning Commission to work with Department staff and the advisory committees to evaluate how meetings can be made more efficient. Options may include, but are not limited to: committee consolidation; joint public hearings; limited numbers of meetings; and other strategies.

The SDCAC provides an advisory body for an area of the County that was not previously served. However, it should be noted that several areas of the unincorporated area do not currently have advisory committee representation. These include the areas around the Cities of Winters and Woodland, Monument Hills, and Elkhorn. As a part of its charge, the Ad Hoc Subcommittee could consider options to extend representation to these underserved areas.

The creation of the SDCAC makes a total of nine advisory committees (Capay Valley, Clarksburg, Dunnigan, Esparto, Knights Landing, Madison, South Davis, West Plainfield, and Yolo-Zamora). Three of the nine have been created in the past four years. During this same time, the Development Services Division has reduced staffing from 21 to 9. The change in the Bylaws was made to help provide additional staffing capacity to serve the newly created SDCAC.

The nine advisory committees are in addition to two additional land use advisory committees that are not currently supported by Development Services Division staff: the Cache Creek Technical Advisory Committee, and the Aviation Advisory Committee, both of which are supported by staff from the County Administrator's Office.

Analysis

As budget deliberations continue in the coming months, existing staff capacities may be further reduced. Further review of how advisory committees are organized may provide additional efficiencies that will allow for effective community input with reduced Division resources. Neighboring jurisdictions provide a range of alternative approaches. For example, Colusa, Napa, and Sutter Counties do not use community advisory committees. Solano County only has one group: the Green Valley Citizens Advisory Committee. Sacramento County on the other hand has 16 Community Advisory Councils, organized by Supervisorial District, that cover the entire county.

As an initial starting point for discussion, options may include, but are not limited to, the following suggestions:

- Combine existing advisory committees;
- Hold regular joint meetings between committees;
- Create an agricultural advisory committee to consider applications located outside of established towns and cities;
- Rely on cities to provide recommendations for projects within their planning areas; and
- Create committees based on supervisorial districts.

ADOPTED COMMENT AREA MAP FOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEES

