

SOMIS MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (MAC) MINUTES
of Meeting Wednesday, January 8, 2020
The Somis MAC held an official meeting Wednesday, January 8, 2020, 6:30 PM
Somis School Cafetorium, 5268 North Street, Somis, California

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Pat Richards** at 6:30 pm. MAC members **Bob Fulkerson, John W. (Jack) Foss, Tyler Cobb** and **Patricia Martinez** were present.

2. Flag Salute

Tyler Cobb led the flag salute.

3. Swearing-in of MAC Member Patricia Martinez

Supervisor Parks swore in newly appointed member **Patricia Martinez** and welcomed her to the MAC.

4. Election of MAC Chair and Vice Chair

Jack Foss made a motion to nominate **Pat Richards** as 2020 MAC Chair, and **Tyler Cobb** seconded the motion. It passed 5/0. **Bob Fulkerson** made a motion to nominate **Jack Foss** as 2020 Vice Chair. **Jack Foss** made a motion to nominate **Bob Fulkerson** as 2020 MAC Vice Chair, and **Tyler Cobb** seconded the motion. It passed 5/0.

5. Approval of the Minutes from the meeting on November 13, 2019

Jack Foss made a motion to approve the minutes with the following amendments: (1) Correct Tibbetts to Tibbitts on page 2, (2) Add to Mr. Tibbitts' Public Comments: "Mr. Tibbitts stated they believe the County had not justified a 9% water rate increase and that a group of about 25 Somis residents were running a Proposition 218 campaign to get the community to send in written objections to overturn the proposed rate increase under California law." **Bob Fulkerson** seconded the motion, and it passed 5/0.

6. Agenda Review

No changes were made to the agenda.

7. Public Safety Reports

California Highway Patrol Lieutenant Michael Logie from the Moorpark CHP office reported that the Somis area has been quiet throughout the holidays and had fewer collisions in the fourth quarter than the previous three quarters. A resident asked about the safety issues at a turn on SR 118 into a driveway for hoop houses before Somis Road and west of Bradley Road. He responded that there have not been many crashes in that area, but drivers should use extra caution in agricultural areas. **Pat Richards** asked how the new signal at SR 118 and Balcom Canyon has been affecting traffic. **Lieutenant Logie** said the signal is slowing traffic, which allows for better merging onto the 118 Highway, and that the warning lights approaching the signal are a good notice to drivers.

8. Comments of Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks

Supervisor Linda Parks reported that the County's draft General Plan Update EIR document will be released soon, and that the application for the farmworker housing project is not yet complete but Planning staff will provide information to MAC when it is deemed complete. She congratulated Dr. Colleen Robertson, Superintendent of Somis School, for her appointment to the Ventura County Library Foundation Board of Directors. **Supervisor Parks** reported that the Prop 218 campaign to reject the proposed water rate increase in Somis was successful. She discussed recent items at the Board of Supervisors, including the Board's direction to the Resource Management Agency to amend building codes to have higher standards in high fire severity zones, a ban on flavored vaping products in the unincorporated county to decrease use among youth. She said the Board of Supervisors will hold a special off-site meeting in Thousand Oaks on January 21st at 6:00 pm that will have several important items on the agenda, including status reports from all District 2 MACs, the Woolsey Fire after-action report, recommendations from the Mental Health and Safety Task Force after the Borderline tragedy, and a report on the feasibility of Ventura County libraries to loan portable power stations for the medical needs population during public safety power shutoffs.

9. Council Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no Council comments.

10. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no public comments.

11. Advisory Items

a. MAC Recommendation, CalTrans Study of SR Permanent Damage Restoration Project

The MAC reviewed documents provided by Caltrans regarding a proposed damage restoration project and wildlife passage improvement locations on SR 118 from post mile 11.97 to post mile 13.28, and the La Cumbre, Long Canyon, Wailing Siren, and Mejico Creek culverts. The work eastbound includes constructing a soldier pile wall, installing concrete barriers, and paving dirt shoulders to channel water away from slopes. The work westbound includes rock slope protection along the existing drainage channel and upgrading the metal beam guardrail. The MAC asked for an extension of the comment period and to receive more information on the scope of the project, including the following questions: (1) Will runoff be recharged? (2) Will the culverts be replaced? (3) Will Caltrans trench across the roadway? (4) Will the guardrails be kept? (5) How will Caltrans handle traffic during construction? Will it affect peak hour traffic, or happen late in the evening? (6) Will the project include widening shoulders, additional pavement (if so, how much?), and gaining rights-of way along the 118?

b. MAC Recommendation, Ventura County Proposed Urgency Ordinance on Hemp Farming

Ed Williams, Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner, discussed State laws regarding hemp farming, restrictions other California counties have implemented regarding hemp farming, and the proposed urgency ordinance that will go to the Board of Supervisors on January 14, 2020. He said the Board directed the Agricultural Commission to restrict flowering hemp production within a half mile of sensitive areas, including residences, schools, and parks. Mr. Williams said only the female plants produce the odious smelling oil when flowering, and it takes about 4 months to produce from seed to harvest. The Board also directed staff to look at restricting planting and harvesting windows. The urgency ordinance would only limit outdoor hemp planting. Greenhouses would be exempt as long as there are odor mitigating measures in place approved by the Agricultural Commissioner. He said open hoop houses will not be allowed to grow hemp in the buffer area and greenhouses must be enclosed. He also said the Agricultural Commission has met with the Sheriff's Ag Crimes Task Force and Special Crimes. When asked how the Agricultural Commission will enforce restrictions, Mr. Williams said he has eight field inspectors, two supervisors, and one deputy to work on hemp farming issues. **Drew Tillman**, a resident of the Groves area, said he lives next to a greenhouse that is growing hemp and he is opposed to the greenhouse exemption. He said the smell is still a factor and there are already issues with light pollution from the greenhouses. Mr. Williams said the Board will consider light pollution as part of the permanent ordinance. **Hillary Ling** also expressed opposition to hemp grown in greenhouses in the Somis Groves area. Additional concerns from Somis residents include adequate measures for mitigating odor in greenhouses, proper enforcement for violators, crime spreading to communities neighboring hemp farms, hemp farms affecting property values. **Tyler Cobb** commented that the Right to Farm Act protects this crop. Mr. Williams said Prop 64 declared hemp an agriculture crop, and that the Agricultural Commission will look into certification from the California Crop Improvement Association, and to certify low odor varieties of hemp. **Jack Foss** made a motion for the MAC to recommend that the Board of Supervisors support the adoption of the interim urgency ordinance to prohibit the outdoor planting of hemp in the unincorporated area of Ventura County within a half mile from existing communities and sensitive receptors. Their recommendation also includes consideration of the following issues:

1. Include inspection and mitigation measures for greenhouses in the half mile buffer zone to ensure effective odor control;
2. Apply restrictions to reduce light pollution from greenhouses;
3. Implement measures to penalize hemp growers who violate hemp regulations;
4. Require effective signage identifying hemp farms;
5. Implement incentives and measures that encourage growers to plant low-odor producing hemp varieties.

The motion was seconded by **Pat Richards**. It passed 4/0, with 1 abstention by **Tyler Cobb**.

c. MAC Update to the Board of Supervisors on January 21, 2020

The MAC discussed recent accomplishments and activities in Somis to report to the Board of Supervisors at the special off-site meeting in Thousand Oaks on January 21, 2020. It was decided that MAC Chair Pat Richards would give the report to the Board.

12. Future Agenda Items

- a. Farmworker housing project
- b. CalTrans restoration project on SR 118
- c. County's Hemp Ordinance

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm to Wednesday, March 11, 2020.