



Environmental Services Agency Agricultural Advisory Committee

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SAN MATEO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2005 Annual Report and 2006 Annual Workplan

Pursuant to San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 65019, the Agricultural Advisory Committee has prepared an annual report of the Committee's accomplishments in 2005 and developed an annual workplan for 2006.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) is authorized by Section 6362 of the County Zoning Regulations. The purpose of the Committee is to assist in the achievement of the objectives of the Planned Agricultural District Ordinance and the San Mateo County Local Coastal Program. More particularly, the committee is to actively assist in the preservation of agriculture throughout San Mateo County by advice and recommendation to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

2005 Annual Report

In calendar year 2005, the Agricultural Advisory Committee met nine times. The Committee's accomplishments are summarized below.

Project Application Review The Planning Division forwarded eleven projects to the AAC for review of impacts to agricultural operations or resources. The Committee recommended that all eleven project applications be approved by the Planning Commission, in some cases, with specific project conditions to mitigate potential impacts to agriculture. The projects reviewed included the following:

- Eight Coastal Development and Planned Agricultural Development Permits – including five applications for residential developments or additions, and three cellular communication tower installations;
- One application for a Class B Agricultural Preserve (Williamson Act Contract);
- Two General Plan Conformity Determinations for property acquisitions.

Additionally, the AAC provided input on the conditions outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding for the Pigeon Point Light Station trails project. This agreement between the Peninsula Open Space Trust, California Department of Parks and Recreation and the County of San Mateo will facilitate continued operation of agricultural lands on adjacent properties and avoid potential future conflicts between agricultural practices and use of the trail.

County Right-to Farm Ordinance One of the Board of Supervisors recommendations coming out of the 2003 Agricultural Summit was the enactment of a county right-to-farm ordinance. During 2005, the AAC provided comments on draft ordinance language which were forwarded to the Board for consideration.

MROSD Coastside Protection Program In 2005, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) began the implementation of their Coastside Protection Program with three acquisition projects: The Driscoll Ranch, Portola Lookout/Rapley Ranch and Miramontes Ridge. Representatives from MROSD met with the AAC in October to provide background information on the Coastside Protection Program. Working with MROSD and the Planning Division, the AAC developed procedures for streamlining the process for AAC review of property acquisitions for General Plan conformity with agricultural protection policies. Additionally, the Committee provided input to MROSD on potential agricultural impacts and opportunities on several properties that can be carried forward when the District develops specific site management plans.

Presentation on Williamson Act Contracts The AAC invited Adelle Lagormasino from the State Department of Conservation to give a presentation on the California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) at the September meeting. Topics included background on the original 1965 agricultural land conservation legislation, Farmland Security Zone contracts, recent Williamson Act changes, contract cancellations, breach of contract, subdivisions and defined agricultural uses.

New Committee Members The AAC welcomed three new committee members: growers Robert Cevalco and Rex Geitner, and April Vargas, conservationist. Each has added valuable perspectives and insights to discussions and recommendations.

2006 Annual Workplan

In addition to reviewing project applications forwarded by the Planning and Building Division, the Agricultural Advisory Committee identified the following additional goals for the 2006 Annual Workplan.

AAC Member Resource Binder Committee members will work with Planning Division staff to compile a resource binder of relevant background information and reference materials. This resource will provide members with essential documents and guidelines that will support and improve Committee recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The resource binder will include the following:

- AAC authority, purpose and Procedural Rules
- Current AAC Annual Workplan
- Agricultural elements of the County General Plan Policies
- Relevant county zoning regulations (Planned Agricultural District)
- Agricultural elements of Local Coastal Program
- State and local requirements for Williamson Act Contracts
- San Mateo County Trails Plan

Throughout the year, the Committee will allocate a portion of each monthly meeting to review and discussion of various agricultural protection policies and programs, with a focus on County General Plan Policies and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Coastside Protection Program.

Williamson Act Contracts The AAC will provide informational support to the Planning Division as the County reviews current Williamson Act contracts for compliance with recent state legislation. The Committee members' expertise can be utilized to determine if contracts meet the agricultural operation requirements.

San Mateo County Trails Plan The 2001 San Mateo County Trails Plan includes a number of proposed regional trail routes that traverse agricultural lands. The Committee will review the Plan to identify potential areas of conflict with agricultural operations and resources. A proactive assessment and evaluation of possible trail impacts and successful mitigation measures will help streamline the review of future trail projects coming before the AAC.

Agricultural Summit Follow-up Committee members will continue to stay informed on the status of the 2003 Agricultural Summit recommendations that included development of a right-to-farm ordinance, a San Mateo County Grown logo and marketing program plan, and the construction of off-stream farm ponds for increasing water supply. Of particular concern, is the progress on the critical water supply issue.