



Sustainable Sonoma Council

Meeting Notes

October 14, 2020

Videoconference format

Meeting focus: Review four draft lists of top strategies for Homes report

See end of document for attendees, including new Council members.

In the notes below, the meeting agenda and materials are in regular font. Discussion is in italic.

This is the last time to voice any objections, concerns, resources, or suggestions from your sector regarding the draft top strategies for Homes report. First, review of SuSo's "practical consensus" decision-making rule, though we may or may not take formal votes.

Thumbs up means "I am in agreement with the proposal."

Thumbs sideways means "It is not my first choice, but I can live with it."

Thumbs down means "We need more discussion. I do not agree with the proposal as it stands, and here is why."

If all thumbs are either up or sideways, then the proposal passes.

Time-sensitive windows of opportunity

- Revise the City of Sonoma's development code. Timing: through fall of 2021.
 - There is an ad hoc committee on this, with no requirement for public reporting. Important that this committee's work be transparent.
 - Current language is "squishy", general language is pro affordable housing, but not necessarily in the details. SuSo's desired outcome would be that language would be very specific, to close loopholes that now make it easier to deny or delay affordable housing.
 - Developer sees no obstacles in the code to the Altamira development aside from "the usual NIMBY's"
- Decide the future of Eldridge. Timing: by January 2021. (The three community-proposed concepts we are aware of are [here](#).)
 - Revise to "Help decide the future of Eldridge."
 - Probably will be delay in timing.
 - Sonoma Ecology Center, which hosts SuSo is involved in promoting one of the three known concept proposals for the site: Eldridge Enterprise, which calls for a cluster of post-petroleum innovation employers onsite to enable other desired uses like an affordable array of housing in a complete community.
 - Glen Ellen surrounds Eldridge, so what happens at site will define Glen Ellen (including part south of SDC) and Kenwood. Affordable Housing is part of legislation, so has to happen there. Important to think about AF is part of a bigger picture, understanding what is happening in City of Sonoma and Springs. AF needs to be connected to jobs. Also Eldridge is in WUI.
 - Who actually decides future of Eldridge? Staff not sure. Findings after Council meeting: in early 2021, the consultant team hired by County determines 3 "alternative" land use scenarios to evaluate; ultimately the state decides.

- People who are part of Sonoma Valley Climate Coalition and Sonoma Valley Housing Group are promoting the SDC Campus Project which wants to repurpose existing dorm-style buildings as cohousing.
- What is SuSo's current role? SuSo has not weighed in, but many partner orgs including SEC have.
- The 3 proposals are not necessarily mutually exclusive. SuSo could have a role in finding synergies between them. Bring the authors of 3 proposals together, creating a platform for integration, to earn a place at the table as an organization that is committed to bring forward ideas, civil discourse, more clarity for decision-makers. General agreement about this role.
- **AGENDIZE MORE CONVERSATION ABOUT ELDRIDGE AT NEXT MEETING.** Need to apply SuSo values filter and decide what SuSo will do. Equity, environment, sustainable local economy; transparency. Housing for who? Jobs for who? Who decides? Who participates? Who benefits?
- Help those who are most vulnerable to stay in their homes. Timing: now through the "eviction cliff."
 - Landlord/tenant relationships critical for people to stay in their rentals.
 - City of Sonoma has not yet hired someone for this role.
 - SuSo applying to new Catalyst Fund for funding to convene parties to design ongoing program to do landlord/tenant mediation and prevent evictions and homelessness. Cathy volunteers to serve on this, has experience.
- Influence the fate of two mobile home parks. Timing: unknown.
 - The parks in question are Oaks and Lazzaratto. Both going to change soon.
 - How can we adopt something that we don't know enough about. Seems that it needs to be deprioritized until that is clear.
 - **TO DO: GET MORE INFO - staff, Ann, Cathy**

Need to add Springs Specific Plan, and the federal designation of a portion of the Springs as an Opportunity Zone. These were not included because it wasn't clear there's much that can be influenced or changed. SuSo being engaged could help avoid bad feelings around other initiatives. Not yet approved. **Look into this, find out if there is anything timely to be done.** Cathy will research Springs plan status. May be lawsuit underway.

RE Springs Specific Plan timeline (from Scott Orr, Tennis Wick at Permit Sonoma, 10/6/2020):

- Release of draft EIR: December 7, 2020
- First Planning Commission hearing on the Springs Specific Plan and EIR: February 4, 2021
- Second Planning Commission hearing on the Springs Plan and EIR: April 1, 2021
- Board of Supervisors hearing to consider adoption of the Springs Plan and EIR: July 2021

Strategies that Sustainable Sonoma will focus on for the next half year

- Share and promote the recommended strategies in Homes for a Sustainable Sonoma Valley.
- Strengthen public will for housing affordability. (Strategy 1)
- All of the above time-sensitive strategies.

The most important strategies for nonprofits and donors to focus on

- Invest philanthropic and employer dollars in demonstration projects, either directly or by contributing to housing funds and housing land trusts. (Strategy 1B)
- Track real-world housing opportunities and share Sonoma Valley data on a regular basis. 1C
- Establish an enduring capacity to improve housing in Sonoma Valley. 1F
- Increase the capacity of Sonoma Valley to prevent homelessness and displacement, especially during crises, by helping people pay their rent. 2A
- Invest in mobile home parks and their residents. 2D, 3A.

- Support and expand existing programs for home sharing and housing navigators. 2B

There is no identified driver of these strategies. Conversation with Community Foundation Sonoma County and Impact100 are good next steps.

The most important strategies for government to focus on

- Hold the upcoming City and County Housing Element updates to the high standards of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. 1, 3
- Revise the City of Sonoma’s development code.
- Increase the amount of local government funds designated toward Affordable Housing. 1B
- Repair the current inequities between Sonoma Valley’s communities. 1D, 1E
- Build housing on non-traditional types of land. 3A.
 - **Need to reword this strategy.** “Non-traditional” is too vague. Current wording could be interpreted as sprawl, which is not the intent. Means things like rezoning retail areas to allow housing, looking at land owned by schools, churches, etc.
- Reduce regulatory barriers that limit production of infill, affordable, integrated housing. 3C

Revise wording of 4th bullet to be more explicit. Missing is addressing the governance of Sonoma Valley, which is bifurcated between the city/municipality and unincorporated area. Should be explicit, not implicit, do not keep ignoring it. Agreement: it’s an equity issue, and a disconnect. Grateful this was brought up, we wrestled with it a few months ago. Agreed then it might not be at forefront, but is a critical piece that we cannot lose.

There are different views on this issue. We were able to reach consensus around “already urbanized areas,” which is vague on purpose.

The north valley experiences this as well. We have been working hard to be heard. There is a north valley MAC, but its charge does not include any land use issues.

The one City/County effort is the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission. But things don’t change unless you can get the public involved, and they aren’t. Must be a groundswell.

It is not controversial to talk about this issue, have been several attempts in the past, could happen again through the public process.

SuSo can play an important role in learning what public wants, gather interests of people who haven’t been involved, amplify those.

What’s next for Homes report:

- finalize English version of full report
- produce an executive summary focusing on top-strategies lists, webpage, powerpoint
- translate
- promotional materials, to make it easy for SuSo community to include in your own newsletters and social media.
- secure press around report
- Hold launch events with presentations for partners and the public. Does your group/org want a presentation about Homes and the recommendations? Diana-Impact100, Tracy for Glen Ellen Forum, Maureen: SVVGA board, Mark Chamber board and ED roundtable.

Thank you, stay in touch.

Attending:

Welcome new Council members:

- Roger Nelson: MidState Construction. Environment/Economy.
- Richard de Leon: Hanna Institute: Equity.

- Linda Keaton: Sonoma Valley Museum of Art. Economy/Equity
- Tracy Salcedo: Glen Ellen Forum, Sonoma Mountain Preservation, SDC Coalition. Equity/Environment.

Council:

Curran Reichert

Maureen Cottingham

Diana Sanson

Maricarmen Reyes

Sandy Plotter

Lorraine Ashton

Fred Allebach

Teri Shore

Mark Bodenhammer

Ann Colichidas

John Kelly

Cathy Wade Shepherd

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Staff: Kim Jones, Caitlin Cornwall