



Sustainable Sonoma Council meeting notes October 18, 2018

Summary of meeting

At their 10/18/2018 meeting, the Sustainable Sonoma Council 1) asked staff for minor changes to the draft summary of its 20 listening sessions, 2) voted to choose “housing affordability” as one of its focus areas to act on together over the next year, 3) asked staff to draft a statement further refining the housing focus, and 4) planned to consider additional focus areas.

Decisions still remaining

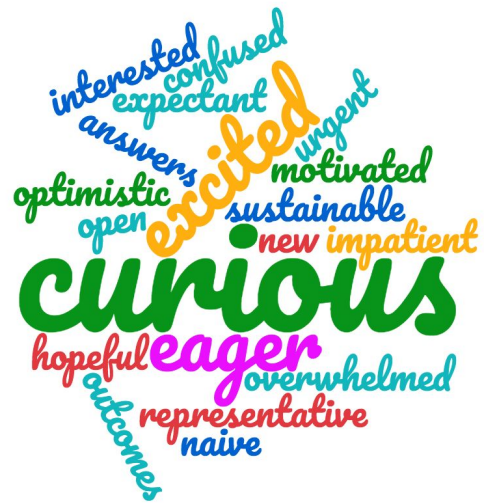
1. Confirmation of the vote to adopt affordable housing as a focus area for Sustainable Sonoma for the next year. Action: If you feel you need to block this vote, please contact staff ASAP. We plan to confirm this vote by Friday.
2. How many compelling issues to address in the next year, and if more than one, which other(s). We’ll take this up at November meeting.
3. Approval of revised summaries of listening session report. Look for email soon on this.
4. Approval or further revision of statement about housing as a focus area. Look for email soon on this.
5. Opportunity for members to comment on Sonoma County’s housing initiatives. See <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Housing/Housing-Initiatives/>. Action: comments due by Oct. 25.

Meeting notes

At the beginning of the meeting, each Council member said one or two words about how they were feeling, going into this meeting. The results are in this word cloud.

I. Timeline Review

Review of where we are in the arc of what Sustainable Sonoma is trying to accomplish. Today’s agenda relates to the highlighted milestones.



- ✓Sonoma Valley challenges that remain unsolved.
- ✓Design Sustainable Sonoma so it can solve those problems.
- ✓Build capacity to have challenging conversations.
- ✓Fully engage the Sonoma Valley community. Listening sessions, presentations.

Sustainable Sonoma Council chooses 2-3 compelling issues for the next year.

Council determines near-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives for each compelling issue.

Create cross-sector Work Groups with leaders. Build Work Group membership.

Work Groups develop and evaluate potential Action Priorities against a set of criteria.

Work Groups pitch proposed Action Priorities to Council.

Council evaluates and chooses 6-8 Action Priorities.

Work Groups implement measurable change in the Action Priorities.

Sustainable Sonoma grows in effectiveness over time.

Sustainable Sonoma reports measurable change to the community.

II. Review results of Listening Sessions

Staff briefly reviewed the draft 1-paragraph summary, the draft 1-page summary, and the report. Council was asked for comments and changes to the summaries, so they can be approved and used publicly.

- Decision: add “from 20 listening sessions from March to October 2018” to paragraph summary.
- Discussion about “rural character”. Staff clarify that it’s often not clear exactly what people meant by a phrase. Some respondents said “unique” character or “historic character.” “Unique” is nice for summary because it means anything the reader wants it to mean, but it was not used much by respondents. Decision: delete “rural character,” just keep “protect open space.
- Discussion about “diversity,” “respect,” “community”, and how people used these.
- Affordable housing - some people phrased it as “rent is too high.” Make sure it doesn’t come across as just needing new affordable housing.

- Staff prefers to avoid phrasing that could suggest we are using the legal meaning of words like “affordable” or “inclusive.” However, these words also have powerful, plain-English meanings. Let’s not edit people’s words too much.

Summary of edits: take out rural character, keep open space, use “mobility” instead of public transportation (to include walking, biking etc.), add something about connection and community. Say “housing that is affordable” instead of affordable housing.

1 page version: Issue with “including middle income.” Prefer “including all income levels.”

III. Council determines 2-3 compelling issues to act on together over the next year

Review of Sustainable Sonoma Council’s decision-making rules: practical consensus, see p. 6 in the SuSo charter. What lies in the center of the room? Bases for decision:

- a. What rose to the top at listening sessions.
- b. Summary of other studies relevant to Sonoma Valley’s current issues.
- c. Knowledge and perspective of Council members, who are all experts in various subjects. Fine line between knowledge and bias.
- d. Values of Sustainable Sonoma: Vision, operating assumptions on pages 1, 2, of Charter.

Discussion:

- How do we decide, when we don’t know how hard it will be to work on some of these issues? Within each big issue, there is low hanging fruit and things we can successfully do. We aren’t there yet, but will get to stage where we use criteria to select short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes.
- Difficult for new attendees to know exactly what SuSo is up to, and how to represent their org, interest, and/or self. Council members’ organizations need to know that their representatives are speaking/voting for the organization.
- Compelling issues brainstorm: living wage, health care for all, supporting youth, affordable rental housing--less commuting, tourism, SDC (could encompass all areas).

Straw vote: Should Affordable Housing--specific definition to be refined later--be one of, or the only, compelling issues for this coming year? Thumbs up from all except for three sideways thumbs.

Are there ways to talk about affordable housing that would most engage your interest group? Is there a take on the housing issue that brings the most stakeholders in?

- Adequate supply of appropriate housing

- All levels. Opportunities for shelter for all.
- Housing for people who work here
- Tourism is a huge topic that touches many issues. Interesting it wasn't talked about more in the listening sessions.
- Housing with related amenities (parks, infrastructure, transit/trails)
- Infill, in already-developed areas
- Future of SDC. But: SDC didn't rise to the top in listening sessions
- We are all saying in different ways housing--say "inclusive". Staff shies away from words that have legal meanings. Council likes "inclusive" and "affordable". Some people liked "integrated" to ensure that housing is not segregated by race, age, income, etc.
- Environmental community generally would not support housing built in open space.
- Avoid a NIMBY situation.

Re-vote: "Should housing affordability be one of or the issue that Sustainable Sonoma focuses on over the next year?" Thumbs up except 3 thumbs sideways.

Discussion about how many compelling issues to take on this year.

Many on Council assumed that what the listening sessions "say" should be the mandate of Sustainable Sonoma. The 5 issues lifted up in the listening session summary are top of mind for the group. Council could break into groups and craft each of the 5 topics. 1. State the issue in an inclusive way 2. Lay out proposed steps that could be taken 3. Lay out the scope of impact 4. How do you measure? We should go through this step in order to make a more informed decision. Each of the 5 groups is responsible for coming back and presenting a deeper dive analysis to the big group.

Vote: roughly speaking, how many topic areas do you think Sustainable Sonoma should formally tackle in the next year? Did not get a count, ranged from 1 to 5, most were 2 or 3. Did not decide, will take up again.

Just "housing" isn't been specific enough to give thumbs up. We don't have enough housing AND we have segregated housing, and this shows up in our schools. If housing isn't integrated, doesn't create an integrated community (mixed income, race, age, etc.), it will only exacerbate issues we have in our schools. Some of it is exacerbated by the power structure: Sonoma is an incorporated city, the rest of the valley isn't. How to we bring equity, inclusivity, fair, diverse into this process? Is it how we measure success?

Members want affordable, inclusive, diverse, integrated housing. "Housing for all" doesn't encompass the change we are advocating for. Staff will craft a statement and feed it back to the Council.

Wording submitted after the meeting: ... how to deliver and preserve housing that is affordable, decent, safe, and accessible to everyone in our community, while learning to understand and transcend the systemic forces that have kept us from achieving this to date.

Wording submitted after the meeting: “A continuing major issue in Sonoma Valley is housing for a culturally, economically, and age and ability diverse population that focuses on affordability for both renters and those who wish to own, and takes into account land restrictions and respects the value of a healthy environment.”

County of Sonoma is taken comments until October 25 on proposed housing initiatives, highly relevant to Sustainable Sonoma. See this [video](#) of Jane Riley of Permit Sonoma presenting to Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission about the housing initiatives.

More information at Permit Sonoma website [here](#).

IV. Closing

Next meeting: November 28th 3-5pm, location TBA

No December meeting.

Please mark your calendar! Starting January 10, meetings will be monthly on the 2nd Thursday, 3-5pm.

V. Attendees

Timing of attendance is noted only to track who participated in which votes or discussions.

<u>Council members and alternates</u>	Priscilla Essert	Rebecca Hermosillo - left 4:39, didn't vote on how many topics
Tim Zahner	Diana Sanson	Jacquelyn Torres, arrived late
Cynthia Scarborough	Lorraine Ashton left 4:46, not part of wordsmithing	Peg Van Camp, arrived late
Ellen Conlan	Jacey Pickens-Jones	Socorro Shiels, arrived late
Bert Whitaker - left 4:20	Tom Conlon	Sandy Piotter
1st vote only	Celia Kruse De La Rosa	<u>Advisors and staff</u>
Richard Dale	Judy Scotchmoor left 4:46	Mike Courville - left 4:30
Mark Bodenhammer - left 4:16, 1st vote only	not part of wordsmithing	Katherine Fulton
Cathy Wade Shepard	John McCaull	David Bolling
Gary Saperstein	Maricarmen Reyes	Ellie Insley
Omar Paz	Stephanie Hiller, arrived late	Kim Jones
Orlando Rodriguez left 4:21, 1st vote only	Jennifer Gray Thompson - left before 4:00 no vote	Beth Dadko
Arthur Grandy		Caitlin Cornwall