



Sustainable Sonoma Council notes March 14, 2019

Attending

Council

Lorraine Ashton
Linda Bruce
Ann Colichidas
Erin Hawkings
Mark O'Brien
Ramie Hencmann
Stephanie Hiller
MariCarmen Reyes

Diana Sanson
Fe Sendaydiego
Judy Scotchmoor
Cathy Wade Shepard
Tim Zahner

Steering Committee

Richard Dale
Cynthia Scarborough

Volunteers

Mike Courville
Ellie Insley
David Morell
Robyn Anderson

Staff

Caitlin Cornwall
Kim Jones

I. CONTEXT

Revisit guiding principles of Sustainable Sonoma. *Today: mission statement.* Re-affirm our shared goal for housing in the context of Sustainable Sonoma's larger mission:

Our mission is to make positive change in Sonoma Valley by aligning the interest groups in the community towards shared goals and measurable targets, and supporting efforts that achieve those goals. This common agenda aligns our activities and accelerates success in achieving a just, thriving, sustainable community.

Reviewed workflow diagram for Sustainable Sonoma (see graphic at bottom of document)

- SuSo Charter is under review by Steering Committee.
- Getting action on issues that affect everyone will usually require using language that isn't necessarily your sector's language.
- We are now doing more in the work groups, and thinking together at the Council meetings.

Timeline on housing (timeframes for regional/county/city housing processes). A better record of this is in production by staff.

- City is doing 3 town halls/workshops on housing, April, May and Jun.
- Springs plan: 28th TBC for public meeting to review the plan
- March 16th Petaluma
- City Council agenda: CASA study session on Monday, March 18th
- Community Foundation Sonoma County is releasing a study/needs assessment this week
- Springs Municipal Advisory Commission first meeting March 26th at Springs Community Hall (housing will probably be a topic)
- Springs: blighted La Salette building is being taken down now
- Splash site (12@Verano) proposed for a housing development, hasn't been permitted and approved.
- County General Plan Update may start soon
- CASA: moving into legislation, need to know more (has the potential to override what we are doing at the city level)
- SDC: a community planning process should start sometime this year
- Temelec: follow up with Cathy
- Census is coming up next year, make sure the count is accurate

Staff updates: Impact proposal. Support work groups, connect to similar initiatives. Feedback poll as one indicator of how engaged Council members are. Poll brought up serious issues we are all wrestling with: how can we proceed productively, given that we have limited knowledge and limited agreement. Want to seek funding for a Sustainable Sonoma Housing Action Plan.

II. WHAT IS OUR LANE?

Reviewed diagram showing relationship between our activities and the results we want. See graphic at bottom of this document.

What excites you about this?

- No one non-profit can do any of this. Sustainable Sonoma gives us the opportunity to address this.
- We have an ability to change perceptions of issues and solutions.
- Potential to create more equity in this community and create a model for other communities.
- We are trying something new because what we are doing isn't working. "Get ahead of the proverbial 8 ball".
- Showing that you can get better results by coming together.
- Creation of awareness/consciousness of the housing problem that doesn't include just higher rents, but also housing conditions. Homeowners being more conscious of their tenants, finding a balance between landlords and tenants, i.e. not raising rent a lot after remodeling.

- The biggest leverage we have is who we are: who's at the table.
- There is an advantage to knowing what we don't know.

What confuses you?

- It feels overwhelming. How do you bring these groups together when we are so divided as a society?

How can we use this to help us move forward together?

- More landlords and NIMBY's needed at the table.
- capacity...?
- We represent different communities within our community, and with this we can address the public perception on housing. Could we create a program of public program that helps people understand that "affordable housing" doesn't mean stereotypes.

What challenges do you perceive we still have?

- many of the people buying and selling houses are not local. Conditions and rent increases are not good. There's a myth that what is driving up the price of real estate is liking open space, etc. but a real barrier is investment capital in real estate.
- What is our role, in relation to all the other housing initiatives? We aren't the leader. That has to be refined and defined.
- Do we know enough about challenges, housing, etc. to take more action than what we are doing now?
- We want to do something, we feel like we want to do something, what knowledge can we gain collectively that we can share that might shift a population awareness. We keep hearing things: people do want rentals, people don't etc.

How can we address those challenges?

- Add *investment capital in real estate* as a barrier to chart, shift activities to address this, note that CASA is likely to enable more of this.

Unpacking "advocacy".

At the end of the last meeting, the idea of our role being "**advocacy**" got a lot of nods. Words matter. This word is a red flag for some audiences. *Definition: "influencing decision makers".*

- With SuSo, we could do a very targeted form of advocacy, which is unique.
- Use the word "advocate", less scary
- Outcome for hospital lot would have been different if there was more public engagement from the beginning.
- What you need is a hard data vision. If we had done research and had examples from other communities that will help create a vision.

Yes, we want Sustainable Sonoma to be a valued resource, a credible voice, to provide input to (city, county, state, etc.). Yes, we want to ask decision-makers what we can deliver to them, near term and longer term?

III. WORK GROUPS REPORT OUT

What did you do?

ENGAGING:

- Combined with City subcommittee designated to support Sustainable Sonoma: Kimberly Blattner and David Morell.
- Excited to see what will come out of Learning group. Looking at other examples.
- Research on Tiffany Manuel: how the housing message can backfire.
- Working on getting connection to the County, Springs etc.
- City is rolling their meetings out in the next months. Important to frame our meetings as important and different in that we will address unincorporated areas outside of the 2 square miles of the City. Looking at summer, early fall.

LEARNING: Collated information from various processes.

COALITION: Working on a draft of a presentation that can be shared that talks about *The Voices of Sonoma Valley*.

CAPACITY BUILDING:

- Met on 3/13, another meeting scheduled for next month.
- Focus is long term support for Sustainable Sonoma as an entity, not just housing.
- Work Group mission: “Build the capacity of Sustainable Sonoma to deliver its mission”
- We need to raise funds and capitalize on the people who want to help Sustainable Sonoma. Want to hear from other work groups when you have volunteer needs.
- Working with the Philanthropy Strategy group on how to reach high-level donors.

What worked well?

- Use Google alerts to get news items on things you’re interested in. Check out City Lab on social media, and the Congress for New Urbanism
- Using Doodle to schedule meetings, updating notes in real time, using call-in capability.

What learning can you share?

- City Lab article said that people who object to things are people who have the time and inclination to show up and object to things (i.e. NIMBY’s). Doesn’t mean there aren’t also YIMBY’s out there.

What more do you need to move forward?

ENGAGING: Attend Springs Community Alliance meetings, which already has a connection to the County.

LEARNING:

- Time to have meetings, agree for a collaboration space online: google doc
- Think about charge broadly: how others have succeeded or not, learn from them.
- We need a community needs assessment before we decide what we should aim for. We need to create trust with the community via i.e. door to door and ask “what are the kind of housing issues that you are dealing with?” to inform the kind of speakers we bring in. Is this duplicating listening sessions? Can do an assessment using existing data.
- Look to people within groups who already have trust established with communities. i.e. Maricarmen: she needs to stay engaged in conversation with the community to maintain, build trust. Need to go further than through agencies.
- Connect more with Sonoma Housing Group.

COALITION: Slideshow needs to be further fleshed out, include more information about what we are doing here.

What challenges or successes are you having in advancing the mission of Sustainable Sonoma through the activities of your work group?

LEARNING:

- We didn't meet.
- We are a challenging community because we are a city and a community, people have different issues according to where they live, including these differences is going to be part of our work
- Can divide community according to *who needs housing*.
- Would be interesting to identify who is each group -- data. What is our actual housing situation? County report can point us to the data sources.

COALITION:

- Getting better with Powerpoint

Anything to change or add to list of people in your workgroup?

See updated 1-pager covering all work groups.

IV. NEXT STEPS

Given what we just heard, how are we doing on moving across the diagram toward our goals? What are the most effective things to do, to move across? If not us, who? What about in the next 30 days?

- Proceeding with the assumption that we can make progress with the level of consensus we have now.
- If you have any issues or questions about the logic model, say something! It needs to make sense to all of us.
- Community Foundation report: hired a housing expert to identify barriers, constraints, might not have much about Sonoma Valley. SuSo should respond to report when it's released.
- Staff working up proposal to create an expert-informed housing action plan for Sustainable Sonoma
- Revisit scope: Sonoma Valley
- Propose that we measure progress with metric of how many people who work here also live here
- Facilitate a conversation between the "haves" and "have-nots"

V. CLOSING

Next meeting date: April 11th 3-5pm

Please fill out feedback poll!

Closing comments:

- Group calendar so SuSo gets represented at events.
- Group word-smith so people can speak on behalf of the group
- Health Fair is on April 13th at Altamira: SuSo should do a survey there, add ? to scavenger hunt.
- Concerned with underutilized housing stock: 2nd homes
- There is a convening in Chicago on Collective Impact - is anyone interested? If so, we'll get info to you.
- Housing is a social justice issue: people who have resources are able to stop other people from thriving in a community like this. Strategy: how do you empower people who generally don't have power, so that when it comes to voting, advocacy, people who don't have resource who can push back against people who don't want change.
- Our housing statement doesn't sound like it was written by any one interest at the table.

How Sustainable Sonoma makes positive change for the Economy, the Environment, and Everyone in Sonoma Valley



