



HOPLAND

MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Hopland Municipal Advisory Council Minutes

Regular Meeting – Hybrid

December 18, 2024 at 5:30 pm

Hopland Fire Protection District Community Room
21 Feliz Creek Road, Hopland, California

The Hopland Municipal Advisory Council (HMAC) meetings are held in-person and virtually via Zoom Video Communications. Meeting access information is available on the Agenda for this meeting.

Members: Julie Golden, Jane Cupples, Dale Andrew, Vacant, Vacant

Alternate: Bernadette Byrne

Administrative Support: Becky Clark - LACO Associates

1. Call to order & roll call

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm. Julie, Bernadette, and Dale were present. Amy was also present and while her term has expired, she has submitted an application for renewal and is awaiting approval by the Board of Supervisors.

2. Public comment & announcements on non-agenda items

No items for discussion.

3. Consent Calendar

a. Approval of the October 16, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
Bernadette motioned to approve the consent calendar with a second from Amy. All council members present voted in favor.

4. Discussion and possible action on community updates and issues

a. Mendocino County Sheriff's Office: *General updates from Sheriff Kendall*
Construction of the behavioral health unit of the jail is moving forward. The Sheriff's Office recently hired 5 Deputy Sheriffs from other counties and graduated 5 from the police academy. Proposition 36 passed in November and takes effect today (December 18). This will enable the Sheriff's Office to form a Community Outreach and Engagement (CORE) team: a task force with officers and social services staff that will offer support services followed by enforcement if services are refused. Sheriff Kendall is hopeful that this will be a successful strategy.

b. Hopland Fire Protection District: *General updates from Chief Franklin*

On October 27, the Feliz Creek Firewise Council (Feliz Creek, Road 110) hosted a fire preparedness meeting at the Hopland Fire Protection District (HFPD) station that around 30 people attended. Bernadette shared that the Firewise Council hopes to meet in April and October each year. Firewise Councils, and implementation of fire preparedness measures around one's home, may be able to help reduce fire insurance costs by up to 25%. Communities seeking to form their own Firewise Council are recommended to work with Eva King of the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC).

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The HFPD encourages community members with water supplies on their property (ponds, tanks, even pools), to consider offering their supplies to emergency responders. They have signs available for those who are interested. Property owners can get reimbursed for use of their water supply (with water or payment). The HFPD has knox box locks available for property owners from a grant through the MCFSC. They also suggest that all properties have green (with white numbers) signs to make addresses clearly visible to emergency responders.

c. Board of Supervisors: *General updates from Supervisor Glenn McGourty*

Supervisor McGourty shared that this is his last meeting as Supervisor; Madeline Cline will take over as District 1 Supervisor on January 7th. He reflected on his tenure and is happy that a sizable portion of Hopland was moved into District 1 during the recent redistricting efforts.

From the last Board of Supervisors meeting, the biggest discussion item was about how to lower the County's carbon footprint. This included a discussion on the new roof that the Willits library will soon be getting. The roof will include solar and a back-up battery that will cost ~\$300,000. State funding will help pay for part of the project and the County continues to seek additional funding for the project. Additionally, the County will soon have a Strategic Planning meeting to strategize the priority focus for the coming year. Furthermore, he shared that the County will soon be caught up on the fiscal reporting that is required by the State and will be closing the fiscal books for the 2023 to 2024 fiscal year on-time, with a surplus of funds.

Furthermore, Glenn shared updates on the status of the Potter Valley Project. The Eel-Russian Project Authority (ERPA) is currently working on plans for a new structure to pump water to the Russian River watershed following removal of the Cape Horn Dam. ERPA is trying to synchronize its efforts with those of PG&E so that initial work associated with the new pumping structure can be coordinated with the dam removal. The idea for the new structure is that it will pump water 60 feet up to the existing tunnel that directs water to Potter Valley. ERPA currently has grant funding for ~60% of the design. They are currently working with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and BOR will be able to provide funding for the remainder of the project. PG&E's decommissioning proposal is slated to be available for public review in January and Glenn shared that ERPA hopes the new structure will be mentioned in PG&E's proposal. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will have 4 years to make a decision on the proposal, then PG&E will have to take action. PG&E also has plans to remove Scott Dam (Lake Pillsbury) as part of the same overall effort, but they are still studying which one should be removed first.

Julie is concerned that with the removal of the dams, agricultural water users in the Russian River watershed will need off-stream storage to make-up for a reduced water supply. To help reduce this need, Glenn shared that ERPA is also actively engaged with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to do a study related to raising the Coyote Valley Dam (Lake Mendocino). The USACE currently has enough funding for 1 year of the



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study (~\$1 million), but additional funding is needed as the study is projected to cost ~\$3 million. The study overall will be ~\$3 million.

- d. Hopland Public Utility District: *General updates*
No updates
- e. Hopland Cemetery District: *General updates*
The only update from the community is that on Sunday, wreaths were hung on veterans' graves as part of the annual Wreaths Across America event.
- f. Shanél Valley Academy: *General updates from Amy Frost*
Amy shared that the Shanél Valley Academy (SVA) recently received a scam call from what appeared to be a legitimate utility phone number. The caller demanded payment over the phone with threats of power shutoff. She warned the community to stay vigilant. She also shared that a few of the buildings at the school (including the library) have leaking roofs. The SVA needs to raise approximately \$100,000 for a new roof. Additionally, the SVA 4-H club is up-and-running with more than 30 kids participating. Everyone under the age of 18 can participate.
- g. Hopland Research and Extension Center: *General updates from Hannah Bird*
Supervisor McGourty shared that the Hopland Research and Extension Center has a job posted for a new Superintendent (to run the day-to-day operations). He shared that it is for a full time job with great benefits.
- h. Hopland Farmers Market: *General update*
A member of the public shared that the Hopland Farmers Market is prepared to run every weekend next year. The day and time has not yet been decided, but it will generally run from late morning to early afternoon.

5. Discussion and possible action on Establishing a School Zone

Supervisor-elect Madeline shared that she and Supervisor McGourty worked with the Director of the Mendocino County Department of Transportation, and he agreed to install the requested school zone signs. Four (4) signs will soon be installed (by the end of the year) at the locations they used to be, according to historic street-view photos that Amy was able to find.

6. Discussion and possible action on Fire Preparedness Community Meeting

See discussion under the Hopland Fire Protection District update item.

7. Discussion and possible action on Downtown Hopland Pedestrian Lighting

See discussion under the Caltrans Hopland Highway 101 ADA Project item.

8. Discussion and possible action on Caltrans Hopland Highway 101 ADA Project

Three (3) Caltrans staff (Cecil Dyer – Transportation Engineer; Shakiba Shenyani – Transportation Engineer; and Jen Buck – Project Manager) were virtually in attendance to discuss the current

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status of the Caltrans Hopland Highway 101 ADA Project (Project) and the proposed improvements. Cecil shared the current plans that include improvements from Mountain House Road to just past Country Porch Antiques. In response to a question from the HMAC, Shakiba (Caltrans) clarified that nearly all sidewalks will be replaced within the Project limits, with bulb-outs at intersections. The only portion of the sidewalk that will be left as-is, is the portion outside the Thatcher Hotel that was recently improved.

In June 2024, Caltrans hosted a public meeting to share the plans. At that meeting, Caltrans shared that because of conflicts with Hopland Public Utility District (HPUD) infrastructure that would be too costly for the HPUD to relocate, the Project was scaled back to remove improvements that require excavation/trenching. According to Jen (Caltrans), the Project is the same as it was in June; however, Julie and Amy expressed concern that changes to the project were made (including the removal of safety and street lighting improvements) without notification to the community. According to Amy, the perception from the community following the June meeting was that both ADA and safety improvements would be included and that drainage improvements were the primary aspect removed from the project due to the HPUD utility line conflict. The improvements removed included electrical upgrades, which, according to Julie, would have included a flashing light crossing at Center Street. She asked why Caltrans is unable to utilize the existing electrical service that feeds the existing street lights. Cecil (Caltrans) clarified that this would require trenching that would conflict with the existing HPUD utility lines that cannot be relocated due to cost. Additionally, Julie shared that she was told solar lights are not currently part of the Project due to the cost.

Upon quick glance at the plans shared by Cecil (Caltrans) in the meeting, HMAC members and the HFPD expressed concern that the center divider proposed on Mountain House Road may present a conflict for HFPD apparatuses and large tankers traveling to winery facilities.

The budget for the Project is extremely tight; in an August hearing, Caltrans asked the California Transportation Commission for an additional \$1.2 million to cover rising costs. Julie shared that she spoke at this hearing. Due to Project costs, Jen (Caltrans) shared that Caltrans is now approaching improvements in Hopland in 2 separate projects: the Project, consisting of ADA improvements planned for construction in Spring 2026; and a subsequent project that will ideally address everything removed from the Project, including improvements that would require trenching. This later project will be dependent on the relocation of HPUD utilities. Julie asked if the entire project could be consolidated once again and pushed out for a couple of additional years. She is concerned that the 2nd project will not happen if the projects are kept separate.

Due to uncertainties with the details of the proposed improvements, the HMAC requested that Caltrans attend the January 15, 2025 HMAC meeting to present the current Project plans and share additional details.

9. Discussion and possible action on Hopland Rest Stop Project and GRTA Master Plan
No update/discussion

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10. Discussion and possible action on Hopland Community Plan

No update/discussion

11. Council Members' and staff reports regarding assigned tasks, committee meetings, and other items of general interest

a. HMAC Vacancies

The HMAC will soon have 3 vacancies, as Bernadette's term expires January 1st, and she has chosen not to renew. Amy has submitted her application for reappointment and is awaiting approval by the Board of Supervisors.

b. Other

HMAC Referrals: Julie was recently sent a notification from the County about a rezone project out Feliz Creek Road. The project proposes to rezone the land from Rangeland (RL) to Agricultural (AG). The County sent the information packet to the HMAC to inform them of the project.

12. Discussion on agenda items for January 15, 2025 HMAC meeting

For the January meeting, the HMAC decided to ask Caltrans to attend and present current project plans. For the February meeting, the HMAC will invite Shawn White City of Ukiah Director of Water Resources and Phil Williams special water counsel for the City of Ukiah to talk about the status of the water district consolidation efforts and the Ukiah Valley Water Authority.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18pm.