

Glen Ellen Forum – Meeting Minutes  
Garden Court Cafe  
February 5, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Michael Furlong at 6:30pm. He reminded attendees that the Forum website is [glenellenca.org](http://glenellenca.org); that they can also receive information on the Forum's [Facebook page](#), and the organization's e-mail address is [forum@glenellen.org](mailto:forum@glenellen.org).

Jim Shere provided an update on the Glen Ellen Historical Society's bi-annual retreat. He announced progress on having the Eldridge Bridge named for Jim Berkland, including drafting a letter to the Sonoma County Supervisors. "The bridge, built in 1931, stands there to this day only because of Jim—who is internationally famous for his work in earthquake prediction, and locally for his devotion to the community," Shere said, adding Berkland "successfully campaigned for its preservation, gathering 1,050 local signatures to save it from imminent replacement by something more generic."

Shere also announced creation of a series of invitational colloquia—or mini-conferences—exploring such topics as the history of Dunbar School (the oldest in California), and Sonoma Developmental Center. The Sonoma County Museum in Santa Rosa has asked the Historical Society to begin planning a major exhibition about SDC next year. "By far the greatest employer in the valley for well over a hundred years, SDC shaped the caring and idiosyncratic character of Glen Ellen in ways yet to be fully understood and appreciated," he said.

Other topics for colloquia include the transformation of Tim Sullivan's blacksmith shop into Marshall's Garage, the evolution of community organization from the Glen Ellen Women's Club to the Glen Ellen Forum, the history of local tourism from hunting and fishing camps to today's spas, and the story of Jack London Village—from Vallejo's sawmill to Metallica's playground.

The Historical Society also plans to launch a new website this spring, "featuring stories about the significant characters that make Glen Ellen what it is today—from General Mariano Vallejo to Gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson, from Mary Ellen Pleasant (the abolitionist who funded John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry) to wealthy socialite and philanthropist "Big Alma" Spreckels (who discovered and made famous a French sculptor by the name of Rodin), and from Jack London to 5-Star General "Hap" Arnold (who learned to fly from the Wright Brothers and went on to invent the United States Air Force)."

Most importantly, Shere said, the Historical Society Board "has begun serious work upon the establishment of an historic district at Eldridge, after SDC has closed, including the creation of a museum and research library, and a memorial park at the cemetery."

Shere closed by mentioning that the Historical Society is "mounting a membership drive to make sure we represent a broad voice from Glen Ellen. Membership information is available by visiting the Historical Society's [web page](#) or [Facebook page](#)."

Shannon Lee provided an update on Dunbar Elementary School. Planning for annual Fifth-Grade Melodrama is underway, and the Sonoma Valley Unified School District has a plan to begin rebuilding the stage, which was destroyed in October's wildfires. The school is planning a community day to construct the stage, mirroring how it was originally built more than 25 years ago. The school's costumes and props were also lost in the firestorms, so the school is looking for community help in replacing those items. Western-style clothing, from boots to bonnets, can be donated by contacting the school; organizers are also looking for seamstresses to help recreate some of the iconic costumes (like the "sign girl" dresses).

Dunbar School is also participating in Read Across America. The reading even culminates on March 5, Dr. Seuss's birthday, with a visit from the Cat in the Hat and readers from the community visiting classes to share their favorite stories with students. All readers, including alumni, are welcome! Contact the school at 935-6070 to make donations, or visit the [Friends of Dunbar/PTO Facebook page](#) to help with either the play or the reading event.

Tracy Salcedo presented a report from the Governance Committee regarding the exploration of forming an Advisory Council, and read a series of questions formulated at a meeting of the Steering Committee, Governance Committee, and a few other interested members. A summary of those questions, as well as a roadmap outlining next steps in exploration of the formation of an advisory council, is posted on the [Governance Committee page](#) at glenellenca.org.

Stacey Vilas reported on behalf of the Traffic and Safety Committee, which has been meeting at 3 p.m. on Wednesdays at the London Lodge Saloon to finalize the concept of Ready Glen Ellen. The program will have "several tiers," including a website with links to other "Ready" towns and checklists to help residents prepare for the next emergency. The program is modeled on "Ready Set Go" programs from Ventura and Marin Counties, as well as on SCOPE and Neighborhood Watch. The idea is that neighbors come together to look out for one another in emergencies, since chances are Glen Ellen will be on its own for two or three weeks in the event of an earthquake or other natural or man-made disaster.

The goals include getting all neighborhoods to organize, training organizers to maximize effectiveness, and making sure all residents know what to do if sirens go off, horns start honking, and whistles start blowing. Trainings for neighborhood organizers will probably be held at the Garden Court Café starting at 6 or 7 p.m., and the Fire Department will be on hand to help. Details of the proposed Glen Ellen Emergency Response Plan are on the [Traffic and Safety Committee page](#) at glenellenca.org.

Vilas also noted that people have begun to speed through town again, and urged locals to be "pilot cars." Jim Shere suggested getting bumper stickers similar to the "slow down" signs already in place around town.

Lisa Hoxie noted that the SDC has two rescue containers, which might be available for use as first aid containers at either end of town, one north and one south.

Alice Horowitz provided an update from the SDC/Eldridge Committee. She noted the committee is currently in a holding pattern waiting on the site assessment report from WRT, the firm hired by the State of California to begin the redevelopment process. [Since the forum meeting, WRT has contacted stakeholders and released drafts of the Assessment Report, as well as slated a second Stakeholder Meeting for March 22. Two representatives from the Forum's SDC/Eldridge Committee have been invited to attend.] The committee will meet on Feb. 21 at 6 p.m. at the London Lodge Saloon to discuss next steps. A recap of latest committee activities is on the [SDC/Eldridge Committee page](http://glenellenca.org/SDC/Eldridge-Committee-page) at [glenellenca.org](http://glenellenca.org).

Lisa Hoxie noted that SDC employees have heard that folks from WRT had to come back out and resurvey following the wildfires, which accounts for the delay.

BJ Blanchard reported on behalf of the Community Projects Committee, noting progress had been made on upgrades to local bus stops. She noted that Sonoma County Transit has agreed to purchase benches and install them, but won't install shelters. She presented several sketches of options being considered, noting the committee was looking for something with a rural feel that was also durable. She asked community members at the meeting to leave their comments on the sketches on the board presented at the meeting.

Leslie Vaughn reported from the Community Engagement Committee, which is looking to continue bringing the community together through free meals. The meals might not be quite quarterly, she noted. The committee is also looking at organizing social events for fundraising, in March or April; perhaps a spaghetti feed. The committee is also pursuing the purchase of a large tent for community events. Valley of the Moon Winery wants to help with the purchase; and other businesses could assist as well, with advertising offered on the tent as a possibility. Interested individuals or businesses can contact Leslie at [forum@glenellen.org](mailto:forum@glenellen.org) or by visiting the [Community Engagement page](http://glenellenca.org/Community-Engagement-page) at [glenellenca.org](http://glenellenca.org).

Leslie also noted that there are still a couple of Weber kettles and turkeys available for people in the community who have lost their homes.

Michael Furlong stated there are now 700 e-mails on the forum mailing list. He encouraged attendees to join the Forum's working committees, or to restart the Community Garden Committee and the Commerce and Tourism Committee. He also brought attention to the [business directory](http://glenellenca.org/business-directory) on the [glenellenca.org](http://glenellenca.org) site, and encouraged locals to add their businesses there, big or small, even the self-employed. Add your business by emailing [forum@glenellen.org](mailto:forum@glenellen.org).

Michael noted that the Forum is in the final stages of securing its nonprofit 501(c)3 status and is looking for folks to join both the Steering Committee and the Board of Directors, and would like to have formal elections. Those interested can contact the Forum at [forum@glenellen.org](mailto:forum@glenellen.org).

Michael also gave a brief update on the Forum's financial status, noting that the organization has about \$3,500 in the bank, and that the GoFundMe campaign is still open. Money has thus far

paid for legal fees associated with securing nonprofit status. Community meals have covered themselves. He appealed for ideas for as to how to spend additional dollars.

There was discussion about providing video coverage for folks unable to attend forum meetings. Leslie noted KSVY is interested in helping. Candice Ludlow is also interested in working on video outreach. In terms of other ways to reach more of the community, a new kiosk in the center of town could provide information to community members and visitors. While there is a design, no one has yet stepped forward to build a new one. Talk turned to sprucing up the existing kiosk at the post office, with new paint, a map on one side, and perhaps flyers on the other.

Stacey Vilas appealed for help creating a color-coded evacuation map that could be used for tourists and residents. Arthur Dawson volunteered to help.

In terms of special meetings or presentations, it was noted that Cal Fire has offered to give the community a presentation on creating defensible space, and Brett Sackett, Chief of the Sonoma Police Department, is also interested in giving a presentation. More information on locations and dates will be forthcoming.

There was a question about whether a special thank-you event for first responders had been initiated. Michael noted there was nothing concrete yet, but that the community engagement committee would pursue.

Michael also noted that increased ICE activity in Northern California is expected in March. He wasn't sure what it would entail, but knows it will occur.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. The next meeting is Monday, March 5, at 6:30 p.m. at the Garden Court Cafe.

### Attendees

Leslie Vaughn  
Michael Furlong  
Jim Shere  
Dolores Meyer  
Melissa Dowling  
Lisa Hoxie  
Bev Rodondi  
Dave Rodondi  
Mary Guerrazzi  
Michael McClure  
Janie Soto  
Meri Mace

Katherine Hargitt  
Geoffrey Herrick  
BJ Blanchard  
Deb Pool  
Helyna Derickson  
Stacey Vilas  
Nick Brown  
Shannon Lee  
Leslie Hoche  
Steven Hightower  
Marta Rich  
Marge Everidge

Wendy Lindstrom  
Ellen McKnight  
Dayna Wiebalk  
Bill Wiebalk  
Arthur Dawson  
Alice Horowitz  
Rob Barnum  
David Walker  
Brook Tarrant  
Margie Foster  
Lori Rukes  
Jody Ketcham