

Glen Ellen Forum – Meeting Minutes
Garden Court Cafe
May 7, 2018

Michael Furlong called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Vicki Hill provided an update on Groundwater Sustainability Act.

- By a State law passed in 2014, communities are required to create protection plans for at-risk groundwater basins like the one in the Sonoma Valley, which includes much of Glen Ellen.
- In Sonoma, a new Groundwater Sustainability Agency, with 12 Board of Directors, composed of Sonoma County Water Agency, Valley of the Moon Water District, North Bay Water District, and others, has been formed, along with an Administrator, and an Advisory Committee of 12 individuals representing community stakeholders. The agency and advisory council are charged with developing a plan to determine how much groundwater is currently in the basin, how much is available, and how to maintain groundwater quality and quantity for the next 50 years.
- The agency received upfront funding in the form of a grant but must be self-sustaining starting in 2019. To meet that mandate, the agency is exploring funding options. Rates and fees would pay for research for the next several years. Fees could be based on parcels, acreages, extraction base (type of use) or a combination.
- Robust public engagement process is required. The public is invited to comment on proposals. Workshops will be scheduled to gather input.
- There is a provision for exemptions for small residential wells based on metering, but these wells are not exempt from fees.

For more information, check out the link on the GEF website or [County GSA site](#). All meetings are public.

Norm Clover from Whisper Creek Developers/Grizzly Log Homes is rebuilding his parents' home, which was destroyed by fire in October, and discussed options available through his company for folks looking to rebuild their own lost homes:

- The homes are log, but other materials are also used, so they don't have to look like log homes. There are several different models, from large homes to small cabins. The potential exists to redesign so that the log homes look like original homes. Foundations can be slab or perimeter.
- The homes offer a way to get through the framing/building process quicker. Certifications are done before homes are shipped. Homes are put together in Montana and then shipped to the building sites, but building costs are still competitive.
- Visit the website at grizzlylogbuilders.com for more information (the link is also on the glenellenca.org homepage).

Caitlin Cornwall of the Sonoma Ecology Center (SEC) made a presentation about a new initiative called Sustainable Sonoma:

- Sustainable Sonoma grew out of the SEC, which is 25 years old and was looking at its mandate for next 25 years. In doing so, the organization came to realization that fundamental problems presently hinder creation of an ecologically sustainable Sonoma Valley, among them the lack of affordable housing and the struggle to balance tourism with quality of life for local residents. The Sustainable Sonoma initiative brings all

stakeholders together around a single table, including business, the environment, social justice, health, tourism and others, to address the issues.

- The first step is to hear from the community. From that input, Sustainable Sonoma hopes to get a mandate. Listening sessions, including some with small groups (health workers, chamber of commerce and tourism), as well as four larger public listening sessions, have been held or are planned for different parts of the valley.
- Sustainable Sonoma would like to do a listening session in the north valley, hosted with the Glen Ellen Forum, possibly in June.
- Format: Nine big questions are posted on the walls of the venue asking what people would like to see in a variety of areas such as kids, jobs, the environment etc. The answers would be posted on the walls. Community members would then be asked to take a look at those answers and vote with dots on what's most important to them.
- The Forum and Sustainable Sonoma agreed to "go forth" and work on logistics for a listening session.

If you have thoughts on the concept, you can visit [Sustainable Sonoma.net](http://SustainableSonoma.net). You can also answer the big questions online at the site.

Michael noted that the Forum hopes to add an Environmental Committee to the Forum's committee roster, as well as a Tourism & Commerce Committee, and a Garden Committee. He invited those interested to contact the Forum.

Mariah Dunning spoke on behalf of neighbors from Rancho Madrone, the neighborhood on the south side of Madrone Road, regarding the proposed marijuana dispensary at old firehouse at the corner of Madrone and Arnold Drive:

- According to Dunning, if permitted, the dispensary would provide medicinal marijuana now, but would be permitted to sell recreational pot as well.
- The neighborhood believes this is the wrong location for a dispensary. There are 200 children in the neighborhood, and a middle school bus stop is near the location.
- There's not a lot of parking available, so customers would be parking and walking on neighborhood streets.
- Petitions were presented and attendees invited to sign.
- The area is unincorporated, so the county will approve the multimillion-dollar operation.
- When asked what would be an appropriate location, various proposals came up: Eighth Street East, the old sheriff's substation on Highway 12, and Jack London Village. Just not in a "neighborhood".
- A notice of the proposal went out to neighbors, but some neighbors did not receive it.
- A meeting on the proposal is planned for May 23 in downtown Sonoma, in the community room next to Sonoma Police Station on First Street West. The meeting begins at 6:30.
- Michael has approached the proponents to speak to Forum members, but they haven't replied to date. If they respond, the Forum will host.

Michael provided updates on the following:

- The Glen Ellen Forum's nonprofit status is complete.
- Website: A new calendar page for events is up. There will be a bilingual option shortly; he is working with La Luz on that. A business/Chamber of Commerce page for local area businesses is also live. The e-mail app now features instant sign-up and unsubscribe.

- The next Free Community Meal will be at the La Luz Bilingual Center (17560 Greger Street, Sonoma). They have an industrial kitchen on site. The meal would be rice, beans, tacos, and salad, with wine, beer, and non-alcoholic drinks. There was mention of the possibility of a donation of a margarita bar, according to Leslie Vaughn.

On the issue of Emergency Preparedness, two events are planned for the weekend of May 17:

- Home and Ranch Preparedness Summit in Santa Rosa; RanchReadinessDay.com
- Sonoma Valley Emergency Preparedness Fair; <http://svchc.org/>

Stacey Vilas provided an update from the Traffic and Safety Committee:

- After being passed by another motorist, who sped across the double-yellow line on winding London Ranch Road to get around her, Stacey found herself stopped behind the miscreant in the line waiting to get into Jack London State Park. She approached the driver, who apologized and explained she was trying to stay with her friend. Stacey, a former police officer, “would have liked to have given her a ticket.” This provided the perfect segue for the unveiling of new “Love our Town Slow Down” signs. The committee is accepting \$10 donations; any leftover funds after costs are covered will go to the Ready Glen Ellen effort.
- The Ready Glen Ellen website is up and the emergency plan is posted there at readyglenellen.com.
- The committee has 800 CAL FIRE booklets available for local residents. The booklets describe steps homeowners can take to ensure their homes are as well prepared for wildfire as possible.
- In response to a request from the local fire department to make sure residential street signs can be seen from a distance, reflective signs are available from Parsons Lumber & Hardware (17800 Sonoma Highway, Boyes Hot Springs). They are \$15 each, and Parsons will make them.
- Stacey will be traveling in the upcoming months; Nick Brown and Bill Olson will be heading up the Traffic and Safety Committee in her absence.
- Stacey reminded those present to keep working on neighborhood emergency preparedness by getting together with neighbors, getting a phone tree in place, and having a leader. SCOPE Sonoma County has materials and a checklist.

Leslie Vaughn provided an update from the Community Engagement Committee:

- The group is hard at work on the La Luz Community Free Meal (see above).
- The group also hopes to put together “a fancy do,” perhaps a Christmas event, at Doug Wilson’s house next to the market. The venue opens up to nonprofits for fundraising.
- Two people have expressed interested in securing a marquee/tent for use at Forum events at the Garden Court and other locations. The marquee could also be used by other nonprofits.
- As attendees squinted in the setting sun, the idea of securing shades for the Garden Court windows was floated.

BJ Blanchard provided an update from the Projects Committee:

- Two projects have been completed, including the “successful town clean-up drive” that removed 300 pounds of rubbish from Glen Ellen. In addition, bus stop upgrades of teak benches have been installed. If they are not vandalized over the next four months, more will be installed in town.

- The Committee hopes to host a creek cleanup day in September. To prepare, the Committee is soliciting information about access etc. Contact BJ if you can help.

Alice Horowitz provided an update from the SDC/Eldridge Transition Committee:

- She noted that the April 16 workshop hosted by the Forum, Glen Ellen Historical Society, Sonoma Land Trust, and Sonoma Ecology Center had an “impressive” turnout. Feedback from the 20 breakout sessions has been synthesized: It is available on the SDC/Eldridge page on the Forum website. The synthesis has also been sent out to county government, as well as state assembly representatives, state government officials, and other interested parties.
- The biggest takeaways included keeping the “open space open” and ensuring that there is local representation should a trust be formed to oversee governance on the property.
- SDC/Eldridge Committee members would be present and speak as the County Board of Supervisors consider a consent agenda item to provide funding to pay for staff to participate in planning for the SDC transition, including drafting/review of proposed trust legislation. The agenda item outlines 14 county interests that align with goals and input from the Glen Ellen workshop.
- A Town Hall meeting on the SDC/Eldridge transition planned for May 10 was discussed. The impression was that the meeting would focus on closure of State hospital, but that there would also be discussion of disposition of the property.

Shannon Lee provided an update from the Advisory Council Exploration (ACE) Committee

- She explained the name change; this was formerly the Organization and Governance Committee established when the Forum began in 2016.
- Under its new name, the Committee has had two meetings, at which they reviewed the Advisory Council process and developed a mission statement, which is on the Committee Page on the Forum website.
- In terms of a timeline, the Committee is looking at making a decision on whether an Advisory Council should be formed by the end of calendar year.
- The Committee has been in touch with existing Councils and groups considering the same structure, as well as exploring the laws surrounding advisory committees, drafting bylaws, looking at boundaries (zip code/school district), and exploring the idea that Glen Ellen might be best served by a North Valley Municipal Advisory Council formed in conjunction with Kenwood.
- The Committee is also seeking answers to questions generated in a January Steering Committee meeting about the purpose of an Advisory Council and how it would interface with the Forum.

The next meeting date and location will be posted on the Forum website.

Michael wrapped things up with the following announcements:

- La Luz will speak at next month’s Forum meeting.
- Brad Surosky from Transcendence Theater may be available to speak at an upcoming meeting.
- Volunteers for the upcoming Community Free Meals are needed, so if you’re interested let the Forum know.
- If folks are interested in a Glen Ellen Chamber of Commerce to support smaller businesses in town, contact the Forum.

- **Important:** Positions for Forum’s Steering Committee, Board of Directors, and Committees will be voted on at the next regular Forum meeting on June 4th.
 - Steering Committee positions include Chair, Vice Chair, Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, and At Large (two positions).
 - Board of Directors’ positions involve a yearlong commitment with one annual meeting and bi-quarterly oversight meetings. Positions include Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and At Large (up to five positions).
 - Committee positions include Chair and Vice Chair.

Please volunteer or make nominations by contacting the Forum via the website at glenellenca.org or by speaking with any of the present steering committee members: Michael Furlong (Chair), Leslie Vaughn (Coordinator), Tracy Salcedo (Secretary), Margie Foster (Treasurer), Nancy Padian (At Large), Melanie Hayward (At Large).

Michael closed with a quote from Nelson Mandela, speaking on resistance to the anti-apartheid movement: “It always seems impossible until it is done.”

Next meeting: Monday, June 4, at 6:30 p.m.

Attendees

Leslie Vaughn	Arthur Dawson	Ron Smalley
Michael Furlong	Caitlin Cornwall	Judy Smalley
Nancy Padian	Shannon Lee	Stacey Vilas
Alice Wicken	Steven Lee	Anne P. Teller
Michael McClure	William H. Olson, MD	Lisa Hoxie
Tracy Salcedo	Pat Smith	Archie Horton
George Maurer	Alice Horowitz	Marge Everidge
Wendy B. Lindstrom	Claudia Meglin	Joyce Clover
Mary Guerrazzi	Wanda Smith	John Mundy
Vicki Hill	Norm Oliver	Blanche Mundy
Katherine Hargitt	BJ Blanchard	Nick Brown
Melissa Dowling	Mary Kate Carter	Candice Ludlow