

Meeting Notes for January 14, 2010

Neil Havlik, Natural Resources Manager, reminded the group of constraints of plan and that there will be a formal process after the workshops. The plan is subject to CEQA and must go before the Planning Commission and Council for public hearings.

Comments of Meeting Notes from 12/10/09:

Mila Vujovich-LaBarre was concerned that her comments were not included in the notes. Specifically, Mila wants to see the entire property (both Phase I & II) develop in a rectangular fashion (closer to the property that has already been developed) to provide for contiguous open space. * *The meeting notes attempt to include all points of view. If individual comments have already been stated and recorded in previous meeting notes, they will not be duplicated for each meeting.* *

Assistant City Manager, Shelly Stanwyck, noted that this would require changes to the circulation element and General plan, which is outside the scope of this project.

Michael Sullivan disagreed with Shelly's interpretation of the General Plan. His written comments from the 12/10/09 workshop are posted on the [website](#).

Eric Veium noted that the property renderings were created by Kate, not Kim, Barton. The meeting notes were changed to reflect this error.

Other comments contributed included: creating a water filtration system; planting an herb garden; that grants are available for this type of project; composting should be included; educational facilities are important for this facility.

Comments on Staff recommendations (listed below):

Phase I: Focus on putting the 13 acres that the City currently owns into use in a timely manner and integrate five or six different areas (as suggested in the community workshops) into the farm.

1. Form a nonprofit for the community farm
2. Focus on education, not profitability
3. Use several of the design features that Kate Barton proposed in her [Master Plan](#) including:
 - a. parking
 - b. tool and equipment shed
 - c. edible garden demonstration
 - d. orchards
 - e. sustainable dry farm
4. Consider an area for a Native Plant Nursery to grow plants for City use (see #5)

5. Make sure that all areas of the farm are not competing with local businesses and growers
6. Consider other locations (Botanic Garden, Octagon Barn, etc.) for classroom style education for Phase I to avoid duplication
7. Define the bike path placement
8. Dismiss community gardens from this project because of the size of the farm and relative difficulty of reaching it
9. Dismiss promoting the farm as a tourist destination

Neil Havlik noted that a non-profit is essential for running the property. A new non-profit would take approximately 1 ½ years to set up. If an existing non-profit wanted to allow the farm to work under their umbrella, the process would be significantly shorter. Clint Slaughter, Chairman of the ECOSLO Board, offered ECOSLO as an umbrella organization. Staff encouraged the group to pursue this avenue.

The group was not amenable to dismissing community gardens or using the property as a tourist attraction at this point. Staff made these recommendations based on infrastructure costs, safety issues, parking facilities, and costs associated with potable and drinking water issues. Staff will complete and analysis of the infrastructure costs for this site vs. the recently approved Meadow Park community gardens site. The group wants to promote the area as a tourist destination to demonstrate the possibilities to other communities.

Staff clarified recommendation #5 (non-competition) with retailers in the area. It was recommended that staff research what other similar ventures are doing.

Other comments:

- ◆ Put buildings on site for processing and a Farmers' market; CSA
- ◆ Create something similar to Avila Barn
- ◆ Use Grizzly Academy; Transitions Mental Health; homeless population as a workforce
- ◆ Farming is not a commuting job so need to provide farmer housing
- ◆ There is a lot of inexpensive technology for infrastructure possibilities
- ◆ Produce food for local schools with a contract farmer (Sue Thorson is Food Service Director for San Luis Coastal)
- ◆ Find a relationship that builds economic momentum like school/farming

Major Challenges:

1. How do we engage a major champion?
 - a. The plan must come first
 - b. An entity would adopt a plan after Council approval
 - i. ECOSLO Board offers help to form a non-profit
2. How do we engage farming experts?

Meeting Wrap-Up:

1. Staff will rework its recommendations, taking into account the group input from this meeting
2. Participants are encouraged to send in layouts and ideas
3. Participants are encouraged to meet with City staff regarding plan specific ideas
4. If a meeting between the school district and ECOSLO occurs, please let City staff know.
5. The next meeting is March 4 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Hearing Room