

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

**MINUTES OF THE
FLOOD CONTROL ZONE 9 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD
7:00 PM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015
AT SAN ANSELMO TOWN HALL
525 SAN ANSELMO AVENUE**

Board Members Present

Sandra Guldman (SG)
Richard Gumbiner (RG)
Dan Hillmer (DH)
Peter Hogg (PH)
Chris Martin (CM)
Tom McInerney (TM), Chairperson
David Weinsoff (DW)

District Staff Present

Neal Conatser, Ross Valley Program Manager (NC)
Scott Lyle, Principal Civil Engineer (SL)
Felix Meneau, Assistant Engineer (FM)
Raul M. Rojas, District Engineer (RR)
Craig Tackabery, Assistant Director (CT)

Other Staff Present

Tom Jordan – Marin County Sheriff's (TJ)
Office of Emergency Services

Item 1. Approval of meeting minutes for September 21, 2015

Action by Board: approve September 21, 2015 minutes

M/S: DW/SG , **Ayes:** All, **Nay:** None, **Absent:** None, **Abstain:** DH

Item 2. Open time for Items Not on the Agenda

Public comment was provided by Steve Lamb of San Anselmo regarding a recent article in the Marin Independent Journal (Marin IJ) regarding leadership of the Ross Valley Program.

Warren Karlenzig and Ford Greene of San Anselmo, Kiki La Porta and Frank Egger of Fairfax: spoke about promoting Low Impact Development (LID) and similar green solutions (see enclosed December 15, 2015 Marin Voice article titled "Let's look at greener solutions for Ross Valley's flooding").

Advisory Board commented that the Town of Fairfax is already implementing this approach and it will continue to be considered even with the understanding that LID, when implemented alone, is not a feasible solution to address all of the stormwater needed to prevent flooding.

RR agreed that LID can be effective and will, therefore, continue to be considered as a piece of a larger set of solutions required to reduce risk of flooding in the Ross Valley.

Public comment was provided by Diane De Marlie of Fairfax inquiring how much program funding is going towards recreational facilities.

Public comment was provided by Frank Egger of Fairfax promoting projects that can both serve joint goals of the Ross Valley Sanitary District and flood risk reduction, and also suggesting solutions be presented to solve the current water shortage issue and the overflow of sewage during storms.

The Advisory Board agreed that the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Flood Control Zone 9 should collaborate with Ross Valley Sanitary District on potential joint projects serving

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

goals of both agencies.

Public comment was provided by Pamela Grant of Kentfield requesting expense breakdown of Flood Fee Funds including for any publicity and lawyers hired through the program to address project opposition.

Public comment was provided by John Peterson of Fairfax inquiring when the projects will be completed and who will pay if the projects are over budget.

Public comment was provided by Suzuki Cady inquiring if the meeting is being recorded. District staff answered that meeting minutes will be published and shared with the public once available.

Public comment was provided by Ross Asselstein of San Anselmo stating he had already provided shorter term solutions in past meetings and recommends funding the raising of homes and/or installation of flood gates and/or the reduction in permit fees to residents for pursuing flood reduction efforts.

Public comment was provided by Ford Greene of San Anselmo that the Town of San Anselmo is not implementing low impact development and/or Green solutions and that all flooding issues can never be completely avoided.

Public comment was provided by Jeff Martin of Kentfield that the process of tonight's public meeting could be improved.

Item 3. Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program Update

a) Storm Response Presentation by Marin County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services

Tom Jordan with Marin County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) presented regarding storm response.

Advisory Board asked how OES assures timeline response/notifications prior to, during, and/or post storm events. TJ responded that OES utilizes multi-modal outreach with AlerMarin.org and that message content will be unique and on a case-by-case basis.

Advisory Board asked how OES, District, and other government personnel communicate during a flood event. TJ responded that conference calls are held with partners during critical periods pre/during/post events, and communication is available in real time through the Web EOC web based tool.

Pamela Grant of Kentfield provided public comment that she would be willing to support the development of the next "Flood Preparedness" mailer sent to the residents in November 2015. The Advisory Board recommended she provide staff with her suggestions for improvement, including her ideas on:

- better website links for residents during storm events,
- including suggested evacuation routes,
- instructions to residents during storms,
- coordination with College of Marin on alternative and flood proof campus parking locations available to residents,

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

- improved coordination for elderly and special needs citizens, and
- ways to enhance public outreach such as to prevent debris from entering creek systems.

Public comment was provided by Alrene Fox of Larkspur that the District should consider improving usability of Marin.OneRain.com website and an inquiry was made regarding how OES addresses staffing during emergencies. TJ responded that in addition to relying on District staff for emergency flood information, OES also obtains time-sensitive information from Sheriff/Police/Fire and through gages and other similar automated weather station devices.

Public comment was provided by Terry Gill of San Anselmo asking why no follow up was received from Ross Valley staff for the 30 or so volunteer residents that recently completed the Emergency Response Team Training.

b) El Niño Presentation

Craig Tackabery introduced Neal Conatser (NC), the new Ross Valley Flood Control Zone 9 Program Manager with the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District). NC presented on El Niño.

Advisory Board asked if past El Nino events and past flood events are correlated. District staff responded that there is no direct correlation at this time and Marin County has historically been more susceptible to shorter and more intense storm systems than past localized weather related phenomenon associated with El Nino.

c) Director's Report – Program Status Review and Path Forward

Following up on the discussion on acceleration measures (see [presentation from the September 21, 2015 Zone 9 Advisory Board](#)), Raul Rojas, Marin County Director of Public Works, discussed the current status of the Ross Valley Program (Program), and presented ideas on moving the Program forward.

RR recommended the budget sub-committee consider evaluating funding of:

- expanded creek clean-up efforts,
- Morningside/Mountain View Study,
- new rain gages and flood risk reduction efforts,
- continuation of Phoenix Lake IRWM Retrofit, Corte Madera Creek Units 2, 3, and 4 Project (in communities of Larkspur, Kentfield, and Ross),
- re-evaluate 70% required outside funding within the current principles and goals of the program,
- localized flood improvement projects.

The Advisory Board asked what might be a benefit in changing the program principles currently requiring 70% outside funding. RR answered that completing certain phases of the project without necessarily waiting to secure 70% outside funding can result in time savings and benefit the project schedule.

Advisory Board expressed support for evaluating each proposed project's economic and political feasibility in addition to continuing to evaluate design feasibility.

District staff explained the concept of flood risk reduction.

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Advisory Board commented that program benefits should be allocated equally across the Ross Valley, and that any future shifting of program/project priorities, such as through additional creek improvement efforts, should not serve as a substitute for larger-scale flooding solutions.

Ross Asselsetein of San Anselmo commented that:

- some program cost estimate line items have not been updated in four years, and
- he is concerned about the concept of active detention basins and if personnel will be able to operate them in a timely manner.

Ford Greene of San Anselmo commented that he agrees with current program principals and goals involving the pursuit of measures that 'maximize benefit at minimum cost.

Diane De Marlie of Fairfax commented that:

- she would like to know how much program funding is dedicated to recreational facilities,
- other sites aside from Lefty Gomez which are not as widely used by the community should be pursued.

1) Morningside Neighborhood

District staff recommended the Advisory Board fund a proposed engineering study for completing field surveying, hydraulic modeling, and conceptual design work to contain the 25-year flood from above Broadmoor Avenue to below Mountain View along Sleepy Hollow Creek, see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#).

The Advisory Board commented that the Morningside/Mountain View neighborhood is one of the hardest hit areas regarding flooding and would not have seen benefit from previously proposed Memorial Park Dual-Use Facility

Public comments were provided by San Anselmo residents Dennis Norton, Eric Russell, and Ford Greene that they were supportive of measures proposed today to reduce flooding within the Morningside/Mountain View area.

Action by Board: Advisory Board recommended a budget of \$35,000 to proceed with the Stetson Engineers proposal to perform a study of the Morningside Neighborhood area. Budget is available in Fiscal Year 2015/16 Budget under Professional Services, reallocating the budgeted \$50,000 professional services line item for Matt Smeltzer to perform geomorphic assessments.

M/S: DW/CM, **Ayes:** All, **Nay:** None, **Absent:** None, **Abstain:** None

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

2) Creek Maintenance Program

District staff discussed the Creek Maintenance Program, see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#).

Advisory Board discussed:

- expanding the creek maintenance program will still need to be complemented by larger Capital Improvement Plan projects in order to address Ross Valley flooding concerns,
- concern that privately owned creeks can bring about a difficult, slow, and laborious process when arranging creek restoration work to proceed on such privately held properties,
- larger concrete debris residing in creeks could be removed while still continuing larger Capital Improvement Plan flood control projects.

The Advisory Board asked how much funding has been set aside within the current year for the creek maintenance program, and District staff answered \$30,000 within the incorporated areas. The Advisory Board asked if an expanded creek maintenance effort would be a fluid approach and if it would include follow-up by District staff within each of the municipalities. District staff answered, yes, this would be the intent.

3) Field Surveys Program

District staff suggested Zone 9 funding be allocated to collect topographic data in Ross Valley, see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#).

Advisory Board commented that elevation certificates might as well be provided to homeowners if the District will fund completion of finish floor elevations for homeowners, and District staff responded that this would be evaluated.

District staff will return to the Advisory Board with a cost estimate for the field survey program.

4) Rain and Stream Gauges Program

Upper San Anselmo/Sleepy Hollow Creek Gage Proposal

District staff discussed potential expansion of the Ross Valley creek gage and weather station network, see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#).

Public comment was provided by Arlene Fox of Larkspur requesting status of the new tide gage proposed to be installed near Bon Air Road Bridge and if usability might be improved for the www.Marin.OneRain.com website Dashboard page.

Public comment was provided by Pamela Grant of Kentfield regarding where to access the rainfall link.

The Advisory Board asked if any rain gages will be reimbursable through grants, and District answered that the grant will allow other gages to be installed such as a new tide gage at or near Bon Air Road Bridge.

Dick Stutsman on the San Anselmo Flood Committee provided a schedule estimate of 4-weeks from today to complete the installation of the new proposed creek gage at Station 20.

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Public comment was provided by Jeff Martin of Kentfield inquiring if any creek gage existed near the mouth of Corte Madera Creek. The Advisory Board responded that there was data available online by performing a search for 'Corte Madera Creek tide gage'.

Action by Board: Advisory Board recommends a budget of \$10,000 allowing for the immediate non-reimbursable equipment purchase and installation work to proceed for a new creek stage gage at Ross Valley Fire Station 20 in Sleepy Hollow per Proposal 2. Budget is available in Fiscal Year 2015/16 under Professional Services, with \$15,000 remaining after the reallocation noted under Agenda Item 3. c) 1).

M/S: DW/DH, **Ayes:** All, **Nay:** None, **Absent:** None, **Abstain:** None

Action by Board: Advisory Board recommends a budget of \$550 allowing for the immediate non-reimbursable installation work to proceed for a new weather station rain gage system to be installed at White Hill Middle School. Budget is available in Fiscal Year 2015/16 Budget under Professional Services, with \$5,000 remaining after the expenditure in the Action noted immediately above.

M/S: DW/RG, **Ayes:** All, **Nay:** None, **Absent:** None, **Abstain:** None

Item 4. Project Status Updates (Information Item):

a) Phoenix Lake Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Retrofit Project

District staff provided an update to the Phoenix Lake IRWM Retrofit Project (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

A correction was noted in the Staff Report dated December 15, 2015 that the date AECOM/URS presented the analysis results and retrofit methods to Zone 9 staff and MMWD staff occurred on November 19, 2015.

The Advisory Board asked how long the Environmental Impact Report is expected to take, and District staff answered approximately 18-months.

The Advisory Board asked if the dam will be strengthened as part of the project, and District staff answered that yes, if required the dam will be strengthened in order to allow rapid drawdown necessary to support increased detention prior to future storm flows.

Public comment was provided by Pamela Grant that in the past no one was available to turn off the outlet valve during a flood event.

Public comment was provided by Ross Asselstein of San Anselmo regarding concern for ability to rely on active detention basin concept should personnel not be able to access the valve in a timely manner.

Public comment was provided by Jeff Martin of Kentfield that the existing condition of Phoenix Lake dam can pose a risk to residents downstream residing in the potential inundation zone, and he inquired how the public can obtain a copy of the past and upcoming geotechnical boring data

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

information completed or to be completed for the project.

b) San Anselmo Flood Protection Project

District staff discussed the San Anselmo Flood Protection Project established as a result of the passage of Measure D which removed Memorial Park Multi-Use Facility Project from the Program (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

The Advisory Board commented that the Morningside/Mountain View neighborhood would not have seen any direct benefit in neighborhood flood reduction from the previously proposed Memorial Park Dual-Use Detention Basin Project.

The Advisory Board asked if Staff had any information on the ability to reallocate the Memorial Park grant funding to other project(s). Staff answered that this is being evaluated and that reallocation of the grant funding could become a combination of one of several detention basin and creek improvement measures.

c) Lefty Gomez Field Dual-Use Facility

District staff discussed the Lefty Gomez Field Dual-Use Facility (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

Public comments and questions were provided by Fairfax residents: Ralph Loom, Frank Egger, Janusz Kolodziejczyk (written comments provided at meeting) Suzuki Cady (written comments provided at meeting), Claire Thuesen (written comments provided), Thue Thuesen, Diane De Marlie, and from San Anselmo residents: Ross Asselstein and Ford Greene regarding:

- safety concerns when using Lefty Gomez Field as a temporary detention basin such as from:
 - standing water causing increased bacteria/viruses/toxicity,
 - flood control drainage structures including concrete channels and walls can be dangerous to children,
 - documentation of historic drowning of children entering flood control facilities, and
 - potential impediments to evacuation routes necessary for the school and surrounding community,
- environmental concerns from impacts to:
 - nearby frog breeding grounds,
 - trees,
 - creek habitat when constructing a dam made of concrete, and
 - observed nearby animal refuge areas,
- community concerns from:
 - proposed 25% reduction in available playing field area after construction,
 - loss of available open field area by community and school children during construction,
 - potential impacts to available safe school access routes, and
 - any resulting changes in liability and insurance,
- concern that other flood reduction projects (i.e., several smaller detention basin sites to replace Lefty Gomez and/or increased support for low impact development/Green infrastructure) with similar flood control benefits may be more financially, socially, and technically feasible; i.e.:

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

- the 2015 Flow Reduction Study showed Former Nursery Site as being ranked higher than Lefty Gomez Field site yet it appears Lefty Gomez is moving forward ahead of Former Nursery Site,
- town of Guerneville still flooded after installation of two detention basins,
- operational concern with active detention basins such as the need to have operator present on site to manually operate the valve and whether operator will always be available during storm event/road closures,
- communication concern regarding how the community, including those unable to attend today, will receive answers to issues raised in past emails to staff and during today's meeting when upcoming meetings can be spread months apart.
- how much funding is being dedicated to recreational facilities?
- what is the address of the property on Shemran Court that would need to be purchased according to Table 27 and the Lefty Gomez Concept Plan?
- where are the evacuation routes for children and surrounding community with the project in place?

The Advisory Board commented that they understood concerns raised by members of the community regarding Lefty Gomez detention basin site. The AB discussed that the Ross Valley Storm Drainage fee was passed because no other solution other than large scale public works projects have been identified in order to address large scale flooding. A study was completed to look at many alternative measures to detention basin projects. If low impact development projects could be shown to have the greatest large scale flood benefit they would be made a priority for the program.

District staff clarified that the proposal to utilize Lefty Gomez Field as a detention basin was still very early in the process and, in addition to several past community meetings, there will be many more upcoming meetings before any determination is made as to if the project will proceed. No loss in ball field area would occur if a new field was added as part of the project through the Loma Alta Dual-Use Detention Basin Project Concept 'B'. In addition potential federal funding opportunities may exist if the project is not categorized as a dam.

Public comment was provided by John Peterson of Fairfax inquiring who will be responsible to fund any increase in anticipated project costs, and that Glen Drive used to be a seasonal lake to support flood reduction efforts and that the lake should be evaluated to determine if it can be used in this way again.

Public comment was provided by Gary Roth of West Marin Youth Soccer League:

- recommending a clarification note be provided on the Lefty Gomez Dual-Use Facility conceptual plan drawing in order to prevent any perception that the dual-use facility plan has been finalized,
- that consideration should be made on several smaller sized detention basin projects to take the place of the proposed Lefty Gomez Field Dual-Use Facility,
- that the existing field conditions at Lefty Gomez Field used to be poor but the field is now playable.

The Advisory Board agreed that a note and/or watermark should be added to the Lefty Gomez Dual-Use Facility concept plan to clarify that the current plan is conceptual, and Staff agreed to clarify this within the website.

Public comment was provided by Kiki La Porta of Fairfax that she appreciates the information

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

provided today and efforts being made to reduce flooding, including in downtown San Anselmo, such as through continuation of the Lefty Gomez Dual-Use Facility project feasibility phase and consideration of Low Impact Development/green solutions described in the Independent Journal article today.

Public comment was provided by Dan Backly of Fairfax that he appreciates the efforts being made and he would like the community to be considered during the process.

Public comment was provided by Steve Lamb of San Anselmo inquiring if the legislature can allow grant reimbursement for costs incurred prior to grant application submittal.

d) Loma Alta Dual-Use Facility

District staff discussed the Loma Alta Dual-Use Facility (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

District staff clarified that:

- Concept 'B' would serve as both a new playing field area near the north end of the school in addition to serving as a detention basin by allowing inundation of a portion of School District and Open Space District property.
- Concept 'B' is estimated to cost less and take less time to complete than the originally conceived concept 'A'. Concept 'A' involved a proposal to construct a detention basin entirely within Open Space area north of Ross Valley School District property.
- A Memorandum of Agreement would be necessary between the District and the Ross Valley School District allowing concept 'B' to move forward.

Public comment was provided by Tina Sultan of Fairfax asking if an island will be created at White Hill Middle School if Lefty Gomez Field and Loma Alta Open Space are both used as temporary detention basins, and she suggested both projects be discussed at the upcoming community meeting in February 2016. The Advisory Board agreed that both Lefty Gomez and Loma Alta projects should be discussed together.

e) Deer Park Dual-Use Facility

District staff discussed the Deer Park Dual-Use Facility (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

f) Former Nursery Growing Grounds

District staff discussed the Former Nursery Growing Grounds (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

District staff discussed that the owner agreed to proceed in allowing the installation of groundwater monitoring wells.

g) Bridge Replacements in Town of San Anselmo

District staff provided an update to the San Anselmo Bridge Replacement projects (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

h) Winship Avenue Bridge Replacement in Town of Ross

District staff provided an update to Winship Avenue Bridge Replacement project (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

i) Azalea Avenue Bridge Replacement in Town of Fairfax

District staff provided an update to Azalea Avenue Bridge Replacement project (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

j) Corte Madera Creek Units 3 and 4 Project

District staff provided an update to the Units 3 and 4 Project (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

The Advisory Board recommended the proposed flood wall cross section views should show the proposed new wing walls and flood walls as not necessarily placed symmetrically on either side of the creek center line, but as optionally being placed with varying offsets on either side as long as necessary hydraulic characteristics are obtained.

Public comment was provided by Frank Egger of Fairfax that the Corps miscalculated the flow in Corte Madera Creek when installing Units 1, 2, and 3, and as a result this has and continues to cause flooding.

k) Lower Corte Madera Creek Improvement Project

District staff provided an update to the Lower Corte Madera Creek Improvement Project (see [Staff Report dated December 15, 2015](#)).

The Advisory Board asked staff to coordinate with City of Larkspur regarding public outreach for geomorphic dredge concept/approach currently being evaluated. AB member Hillmer stated City of Larkspur resources would be supportive in this effort.

The Advisory Board, San Anselmo resident Nancy Oswald and Larkspur resident Arlene Fox of Larkspur inquired when the dredging of Lower Corte Madera Creek would occur.

Public comment was provided by Ford Greene of San Anselmo regarding observed siltation has reduced capacity of the creek. Advisory Board member Hogg responded that in the last 10 years there has been no measured sediment accumulation in Lower Corte Madera Creek and any dredging in the tidal reach has no flood reduction benefit.

District staff responded that dredging the entire width of the creek would be expensive and likely fill back in, therefore a geomorphic dredge of a narrower channel is being studied including the ability to have a narrower channel that is self cleaning while assuring outfalls drain property within the tidal reach.

The Advisory Board asked when the geomorphic dredge study would be available, and District staff responded in the fall of 2016 the study would be available with cost estimates.

The Advisory Board commented that navigation improvements should not be funded through the

Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

project.

Item 5. Adjourn, Determine Regular 2016 Meeting Schedule and Next Meeting Date

The Zone 9 Advisory Board set their next meeting for April 19, 2016, and subsequent meetings for the 2016 calendar year during the third Tuesday's in June, September, and December.