

**Sonoma Coast Municipal Advisory Council**  
**Brian Leubitz, Chair**  
**January 19, 2023, 5:30 – 7:30**  
**Online Zoom/Facebook Meeting**

**Meeting Called to Order – 5:30 pm**

Cindy Culcasi

**Pledge of Allegiance**

All

**Roll Call – Present**

Brian Leubitz - Chair  
Marti Campbell  
Scott Farmer  
Abreanna Gomes  
Caroline Madden  
Ginny Nichols  
Beth Bruzzone  
Jill Lippitt

Liz Gallagher (alternate)

**Absent**

Che Casul (alternate)  
Carl Osier (alternate)  
Annie Cresswell (alternate)  
Wanda Swenson (alternate)

**Approval of Agenda**

Marti Campbell moved to approve the agenda and Beth Bruzzone seconded. The motion carried 8-0.

**Statements of Conflict of Interest: if any, from Council members**

Cindy Culcasi asked if there were any conflicts of interest. There were none.

**Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

Chair Campbell spoke about two letters that were approved. The first was to be sent to Senator Mike McGuire in the November meeting regarding funding of State Parks and the second letter was to be sent to the Board of Supervisors regarding making broadband available to the unincorporated areas in Sonoma County. Chair Campbell noted that she did not receive a response to either letter as of yet.

### **Consent Calendar**

Brian Leubitz motioned to approve the minutes and Jill Lippitt seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 8-0.

Before turning the meeting over to Elise Weiland to do the election of Officers for 2023, Chair Campbell thanked everyone for giving her the opportunity to be Chair of the MAC. She will present the 2022 Annual Report during the March meeting.

### **Election of 2023 Chair – Elise Weiland**

Elise Weiland thanked Chair Campbell for her leadership.

Supervisor Hopkins thanked Chair Campbell for her steadfast leadership. She noted she appreciated Chair Campbell's ability to engage intellectually in complicated bureaucratic processes. Chair Campbell has been a thoughtful and strong advocate for both her constituents and the entire Sonoma County Coast.

Ms. Weiland spoke to the election process for the Chair position. She asked for anyone that would like to run for Chair to speak up. At that point, Brian Leubitz was the only candidate. No other MAC Representatives requested to be a candidate.

Ms. Weiland did a roll call vote to elect Rep Leubitz. The motion passed 8-0.

Ms. Weiland requested candidates for the Vice Chair position. Beth Bruzzone volunteered to run. There were no other candidates. Ms. Weiland did a roll call vote to elect Rep Bruzzone, and the motion passed 8-0.

The gavel was passed to new Chair Brian Leubitz to lead the meeting. Chair Leubitz thanked Ms. Campbell for her work during the past year.

### **Council Member Reports**

Chair Leubitz asked if there were any Council Member Reports. There were none. Chair Leubitz said he would be talking to members about the reports in the future. He would like to highlight the different communities going forward.

### **Public Comment**

- Carol Sklenicka (Public) – Ms. Sklenicka asked about the Wi-Fi presentation discussed in a previous MAC Meeting and if we could get an update. Elise Weiland confirmed she would talk about this issue later in her Staff Report.

### **Regular Calendar Items**

#### **Supervisor Lynda Hopkins**

Supervisor Hopkins acknowledged that the storm damage on the North Coast was significant, especially the wind damage. The issue was compounded by the drought stressed forest. The Operations Centers

were set up with unprecedented speed in partnership with their County infrastructure crews and first responders and fire departments. She will invite the infrastructure team and vegetation management team for open space to give an update to the MAC. She thanked Marti Campbell and Scott Farmer for giving her a tour of the damage. She added that an annual check in is needed to make sure that everyone has each other's phone numbers. All of the County Departments need to work in sync and update each other.

Supervisor Hopkins also spoke about the location of disaster supplies and having a conversation about pre-positioning the location. The Supervisor will be working with the Fire Departments about pre-positioning and storage of supplies since it can be difficult to get up the coast during a storm or emergency.

She thanked the Director of Emergency Management, Chris Godley and also Director Alegria de la Cruz. Supervisor Hopkins spoke to financial help available for low and middle income individuals that need help as a result of the storm, e.g., for food, lost work, cost of running a generator, property damage, etc. Lupe Catalan volunteered in Guerneville at the Support Center for a couple of days. Over a four day period, around 600 people applied for financial assistance. She noted that getting the information regarding the availability of financial assistance to residents was a problem. One of the reasons was probably lack of internet. Some West County residents learned of the financial help late and funding was no longer available. Supervisor Hopkins urged people to reach out and share information with West County residents. Although the funding is exhausted, the County is still taking applications and holding them if/when additional funding is available.

Jill Lippitt (MAC) commented that she was disappointed that Jenner wasn't aware of these resources. She puts out a newsletter and would have included the information. The Jenner Community Club got power back early and opened up for Jenner residents. **Supervisor Hopkins** responded that the focus was further north of Jenner, but she can check with Director Chris Godley regarding including the Jenner area. There are funds available along the Coast for people who qualify (non-Coast residents are not included), and the phones were going to be open tomorrow. **Director Godley** noted they reached out to the schools, nonprofit organizations, etc. to reach residents in areas where general mass media doesn't cover. He also confirmed that North Jenner residents can apply for funds. Director Godley noted this is a bold big two year project that the County launched during the storms to help the underserved in the community. Residents with an income of less than \$85,000 are included. There is a scoring system that ranks the request depending upon their situation, e.g., a single mother with children would be high on the list. The funding is generally between \$250 and \$800 and meant to give timely assistance. The funding will be a cash debit card so the individual can use it for what is needed immediately.

Supervisor Hopkins noted this is to be used for the most vulnerable e.g., to put food on their table, or pay rent.

### **Storm Response and Recovery – Melinda Rivera, PG&E Liaison (Sonoma and Lake Counties)**

Chair Leubitz asked Ms. Rivera to give an overview and scope of the response and recovery.

Director Chris Godley interjected and noted that it had been many years since there was a storm of this magnitude. The BOS (Board of Supervisors) has discussed these are the types of storm sets, atmospheric rivers, and how they could be a challenge that exceeds the capabilities to respond. Director Godley's department and the Water Department received funding to look at catastrophic drought and catastrophic weather and flooding events that might challenge public safety and community resources. The cost of the damage in Sonoma County was modest compared to other areas of the state. FEMA will be in Sonoma County to assess damages and determine if Sonoma County can be included in the President's disaster declaration. **Rep Scott Farmer** noted that the winds were a big issue and the strongest he had seen since living along the Coast. Many trees could not handle the winds. Director Godley said they will continue to support communities that become isolated during future events.

- **Melinda Rivera** was joined by Joe Horack (PG&E local electric operations), John Leyba (Vice President), and Ron Richardson (Operations). Both Mr. Leyba and Mr. Richardson have regional roles along the North Coast (Humboldt County to the Golden Gate Bridge). Ms. Rivera noted there was significant damage and outages and most were related to trees falling. Many shared resources came into help since PG&E resources were stretched thin. There were contract crews who worked as quickly and safely as they could.

#### Lessons learned:

- Plans were already in place to energize the Salmon Creek Substation if it was needed.
- There were temporary generators on standby for the schools.
- Appreciative of partnerships with Sonoma County Emergency Services, CalTrans, and other local utilities.
- Trying to work parallel with other agencies.

There were crews along Hwy 1 almost immediately, however, they were pulled after dark due to the danger of falling trees. The crews worked alongside CalTrans to clear blocked roads. There was a microsite in Timber Cove, so PG&E crews did not have to drive back to Santa Rosa every night. About 30 crews were staged at the Gualala Airport which also made a difference in the response.

#### Regional (Golden Gate Bridge to Humboldt County) Contact information:

John Leyva, Vice President [john.leyba@pge.com](mailto:john.leyba@pge.com)

Ron Richardson (Operations) [ron.richardson@pge.com](mailto:ron.richardson@pge.com)

#### Questions

- Beth Bruzzone (MAC) - Rep Bruzzone thanked PG&E for the response. The response time was impressive. She noted there were some serious communication issues. There were residents who had no power but were being told they had power. Other residents with power out had no information regarding the outage or the time that power would be restored. **Melinda Rivera** noted that PG&E has to look back and determine how to improve the automated messages that were sent since some were incorrect. Given the extent of the damage at the time, it was very difficult to pinpoint the time needed to turn the power back on. **Ron Richardson (PG&E)**

responded that there is definitely an opportunity to improve. It was difficult to estimate the times that power would be restored since there were four storms that hit. Every evening the team reviewed the outages to determine if there was more information that could be shared. It was difficult to gain access to West County during the storms. Mr. Richards asked for more information regarding residents who didn't have power, but PG&E was communicating that they did have power. **Rep Bruzzone** will share the information with **Ron Richardson**.

- **Scott Farmer (MAC)** - Rep Farmer noted that Timber Cove is very appreciative of PG&E, and the other agencies that worked during the storm. Rep Farmer asked for clarification regarding the policy to reimburse a business for fuel to run their generator. A local business was told they could request reimbursement, but upon asking for reimbursement were then told PG&E would not reimburse. **Ron Richardson** asked Rep Farmer to send him the details and he would follow up.
- **Ginny Nichols (MAC)** - Rep Nichols thanked PG&E for their work. She suggested that PG&E list the priority of the work by community in the communications sent to the public. This would allow residents to know where they fall in the priority list. **Ron Richardson** noted that hospitals and schools take the priority. They look at hubs and work to turn gas stations back on. This was a unique situation, and it was hard to get their crews into the area from Monte Rio to Gualala. The use of the Gualala airport as a base was significant and probably shaved off 3 days to restore power. Mr. Richardson said he appreciates the feedback regarding communication, and he sees PG&E is not hitting the mark. He is open to feedback to help improve communication.
- **Marti Campbell (MAC)** - Rep Campbell noted she is the representative from Sea Ranch/Annapolis. She said people are appreciative of your hard work and understand what PG&E was facing. Sea Ranch is estimating they lost 500 trees in the neighborhoods, and that doesn't include the forest. Rep Campbell was in Sea Ranch the entire time and didn't expect PG&E to tell her exactly when the power would be restored. She was happy that the Gualala airport was used as a base camp.
- **Scott Farmer (MAC)** – The one thing that was consistent in Timber Cove was the cell tower, which kept the community connected. As a group, we need to get cell service filled in for the future.
- **Brian Leubitz (MAC)** - It would be helpful to preplan and for PG&E to communicate that residents can go to the Centers that were set up by the County. We have a Ham Radio network, but it wasn't used for this situation. Perhaps that could be used next time to communicate. He agrees with **Scott Farmer** regarding the importance of cell towers. Chair Leubitz asked if underground power lines would ever be used along the Coast? **John Leyba (PG&E)** responded that people are probably aware of the initiative to bury the power lines. 40% of the tier 2 and tier 3 high fire danger areas are covered by underground power lines. Unfortunately, unless there is high fire danger, underground power lines are generally not utilized.
- **Marti Campbell (MAC)** - The nearest location of the comfort center to Sea Ranch was Fort Ross and Fort Ross was difficult to get to during the storm. She noted that the Sea Ranch and Timber Cove Fire Departments are working to address this issue and will reach out to Director Godley soon.
- **Kathleen Cruise (Public)** - Ms. Cruise is a PG&E retiree. She talked about a change in policy at PG&E that used to state "identify, communicate, respond", but now states "communicate,

identify, respond". She stressed it is important that customers know what is going on, e.g., it may be two weeks, but we are working on it.

- **Shona Campbell (Public)** – Ms. Campbell is a business owner in Valley Ford and a member of the Bodega Bay Chamber of Commerce, and Bodega Bay resident. She asked for better communication regarding the status of the roads, e.g., blocked, flooded, etc. Business owners and employees are impacted and sometimes they don't know what is going on. **Chair Leubitz** said he noticed there was a substantial lag regarding updates on the County website for the roads during the storms. He asked Director Godley about how the status of roads was reported.
- **Director Godley (County Emergency Management)** - When there are multiple situations all happening at once (rivers, creeks going up and down), they don't monitor the roads, but depend upon Public Safety and the Road Crews that are out in the field. When a report is received, the information is generally posted on the County website within a couple of hours. It is a challenge to keep track of the numerous roads. Director Godley stressed no matter what, don't drive into a flooded road. It is dangerous. There was a fatality this year and it was the first in years. **Chair Leubitz** asked about installing cameras on some of the roads. Director Godley said that would be difficult because the cameras would have to be wireless and use wireless broadband. The cameras on the main corridors cost about \$400,000 to purchase and \$20,000 a year to maintain.
- **Elisabeth Watson (Public)** - Ms. Watson lives in Sea Ranch and spoke to underground lines. Since residents did not have power for 11 days, she believes there are geographic circumstances that would merit another look. She thanked PG&E for all they did. **Melinda Rivera** responded that PG&E is still beginning to scope the underground miles and we are continuing to do our risk assessment.
- **Question submitted via Zoom – Kathleen Cruise (Public)** – Is the cost for underground PG&E electric service still based upon a ten times rate increase? **Melinda Rivera** – Current cost for undergrounding is a couple of million dollar per mile. PG&E is hoping as they add more miles, they will find more efficiencies and bring down the cost of underground miles. Rates are going up and she noted what will customers be able to bear regarding the cost of undergrounding and fire mitigation work? PG&E is trying to be good stewards with the dollars that they are allocated. Undergrounding is not the only solution. There were 600 job tags for storm work. This is an opportunity for PG&E to look back on the work done and look at all opportunities to improve their services. **Joe Horak (PG&E)** noted we constantly look at ways to improve infrastructure, equipment, and processes. There were near hurricane force winds and this storm hit hard, but we continue to look back to see how we can improve/maintain our infrastructure. Mr. Horak spoke to the increasing number of homes losing power, number of crews involved, and the safety of employees.
- **Scott Farmer (MAC)** - Rep Farmer's neighborhood is off grid and they had electricity throughout the storm. He noted that residents that are grid tied have lots of options to go off grid, some expensive, and others not so expensive.

Chair Leubitz thanked PG&E and the County for joining us on the MAC. He noted there is lots for communities to think about, especially the trees coming down and maintaining the trees that need to come down along the roadways. This may be an agenda item for a future MAC Meeting.

## **Caltrans SR1 Centerline Rumble Strip Project – Hannah Minderhout, Caltrans Environmental Planner**

The presentation starts in Zoom 1:34 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNFrSKmFS2g>

Arnica MacCarthy, Caltrans Senior Environmental Planner for Marin and Sonoma Counties started the presentation due to technical difficulties for Hannah Minderhout. Caltrans is the lead for the Rumble Strip Project. The project document is available for public review from January 17 through February 15, 2023. The draft initial study with proposed negative declaration will be presented in this meeting. The presentation will give a project overview, disclose environmental impacts, and allow the public to ask questions. The purpose of the project is to decrease head on collisions, centerline collisions and runoff collisions, along with as well as provide refuge area for bicyclists to use when being passed by motorists.

Yet Jangid, Project Manager, gave an overview of the project. The project is between post mile 0 (Monte Rio) and post mile 58.85 on state route 1. The fatalities from run-off road collisions meet the threshold for countermeasures. Mr. Jangid handed off the presentation to Luis Hernandez, Project Engineer. There will be 4 discontinuous segments of the centerline rumble strip, installation of wet-night visibility striping, and 50 spot locations where the shoulder will be widened to provide refuge for bicyclists when cars are passing by. The rumble strip will not be installed e.g., where the speed limit is less than 35 mph, over cattle guards, and pedestrian crossings. A TMP (transportation management plan) would be prepared by Caltrans prior to the beginning of construction. During installation, rolling one lane shoulder and lane closures are anticipated. There will be press releases to notify the public and others impacted by the project. Widening and paving of the 6 foot shoulder would happen separately from the installation of the rumble strip and restriping operation.

Hannah Minderhout spoke to minimization strategies for the project. When the project is completed, there will be a revegetation process and a 5 year plant establishment strategy. Ms. Minderhout discussed the environment impact (Zoom 1:47) of the project. Specifically, resource areas with no impact, and less than significant impact. She also noted the project milestones:

- Public Review Period – January 17 – February 15, 2023
- Final Environment Document – March 2023
- Finalize Bid Package – June 2024
- Construction Begins - January 2025
- Construction Complete – December 2026

The 5 year plant establishment project will start immediately when construction ends.

Where to review the draft environment document:

Online

<https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-4/d4-popular-links/d4-environmental-docs>

In Person – See Zoom 1:49

Submit Comments:

Email - Son1centerlinerumblestrip@dot.ca.gov

Postal Mail:  
Attn: Arnica MacCarthy  
Senior Environmental Planner  
PO Box 23660, MB 8B  
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

#### Questions/Comments

- **Beth Bruzzone (MAC)** - Rep Bruzzone had both comments and questions.
  - Rep Bruzzone spoke to the comment that agriculture will not be impacted by the project. She noted that doesn't mean don't do the project. Rep Bruzzone said the livestock are creatures of habit and they will be impacted.
  - She asked if landowners will be personally contacted regarding the project and communication will not be via media and signs. **Arnica MacCarthy** - A traffic management plan will be developed during the design phase of the project. She urged Rep Bruzzone to put her concerns into writing using the email address or postal address so Caltrans will call this issue out during the planning phase. **Rep Bruzzone** responded that during a recent State Route 1 project, there was heavy equipment blocking her gates for a long period of time and she had no one to contact to move them. She would like to see Caltrans establish a responsible communication with all the property owners adjacent to the roadway. **Yet Jangid** said they do have public outreach for the project before construction. There will be a mailer and other communication. **Rep Bruzzone** has not received a mailer and social media won't cut it. She thanked Caltrans.
- **Scott Farmer (MAC)** - One of the challenges of Hwy 1 is that it is very curvy, and there are people who are enjoying the views slowly, rather than moving along. There are pull outs, but most are loose material, will they be paved? **Luis Hernandez** responded that of the 50 pull-out locations (which include the pull-outs you refer to), many are not paved. The pull-outs are from the edge of the road to six feet out. **Rep Farmer** will write a comment. He noted that many of the current unpaved pull-outs have a steep drop off and many cars will bottom out.
- **Pat Paterson (Public)** - Mr. Paterson said he wanted to check that turn-outs won't be widened, but will be taken out to 6 feet? There is only one northbound and one southbound turn-out from the Russian River to the Marin County border. Can you fix that? **Yet Jangid** asked Mr. Paterson to send an email with the question and Caltrans will take a look and see what they can do.
- **Carol Sklenicka (Public)** – Ms. Sklenicka thought the rumble strips are already in place south of Jenner. She likes them. Can someone speak to if the existing strips are part of the project or something different? **Yet Jangid** responded that the project discussed will begin in 2025. That is not part of the project.
- **Zoom Question** – Where are the turnouts located? **Arnica MacCarthy** responded that the draft project document lists the turn-out locations by Post Mile.

Chair Leubitz thanked Caltrans for the presentation.

## **Council Member and Staff Reports**

### **Final Roads Report – Elise Weiland**

Ms. Weiland spoke to the bi-annual pavement preservation plan. She received a number of suggested roads from all up and down the coast and in the interior of West County. Debbie Ramirez and Ms. Weiland split up and drove all of the suggested roads. They next ranked the roads, keeping in mind if the road was an evacuation route and the location. A report was given to Public Infrastructure (formerly Public Works). They will put prices for each road and the next step will be to determine the budget and which roads will be paved. The roads not completed will roll into the next year. When the report is updated and returned, the results will be shared with the MAC.

### **Questions/Comments**

- **Beth Bruzzone (MAC)** - Rep Bruzzone noted that many constituents have reached out to her to ask what the Preservation Plan includes. **Elise Weiland** responded that the roads are repaved.
- **Supervisor Hopkins** stated that the roads are actually analyzed to determine the process, e.g., chip seal, resurfacing, or a complete renovation of the road. The road is not widened or changed, only repaired sticking with the current road map exactly.
- **Beth Bruzzone (MAC)** - How much money does the County have to repair the roads? **Elise Weiland** said the County budget for 2023/24 is \$12 million.

### **Administrative Update regarding In Person Meetings- Elise Weiland**

As of March, the MAC needs to go back to in person meetings. There will be hybrid meetings (in person meeting and streaming). We need to meet in places with good wi-fi capability thus meetings will probably be in Bodega Bay, Timber Cove, and Sea Ranch. We won't meet in every single community like we did in the past. Some testing will be done to prepare for the hybrid meetings. The members need to be in the in person meeting.

**Supervisor Hopkins** said we can get a representative from County Counsel to attend the next meeting and answer questions or provide an update via a formal memo. There will be very limited exemptions (e.g., you are ill or taking care of a family member) to attend remotely without sharing your remote address. It is a case-by-case situation. There is ongoing advocacy to fix/improve this legislation.

### **Equitable Access California Free WiFi Program – Elise Weiland**

This was pushed back a bit because of the storms. We are waiting for Starlink equipment for Jenner. Cazadero is wrapped up and the free wi-fi should be happening. Next week the town of Bodega should be done if all goes well. In Bodega Bay, they are trying to get ahold of the owner of the Pelican Inn.

### **Questions/Comments**

- **Scott Farmer (MAC)** - Is there any movement getting hazardous waste day in the North Coast? It is in Sea Ranch and have been cancelled for maybe a year (Marti Campbell may know). **Elise Weiland** noted that the Lower Russian River MAC has a great Trash Committee. The Coastal MAC could set up an AdHoc Committee as well. The Russian River MAC has created a manual regarding hazardous waste and Ms. Weiland said they would be happy to help you with this issue. **Rep Campbell** noted that North Sonoma Coast Fire formerly participated in a Mendocino County Program, but that has since been terminated. **Rep Farmer** stated it wasn't that simple

since people had to wear hazmat suits. **Elise Weiland** will put Rep Farmer in touch with the right people to work on this issue.

### **Future Agenda Items**

Chair Leubitz asked about future agenda items. He noted that IOLERO (oversight of the Sheriff's Department) would be on a future agenda.

Beth Bruzzone had suggested at the end of the November Meeting an agenda item on the NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations) and non-profits and what impact they have on policy and programs such as the Local Coastal Plan. Ms. Bruzzone believes that the community is interested in this issue.

There was a procedural correction in the vote for the Chair per Elise Weiland. She failed to take public comment. Someone needs to make a motion to appoint Chair and Vice Chair and allow public comment before there is a roll call vote. Rep Farmer made a motion that Brian Leubitz be Chair and Beth Bruzzone be Vice Chair and Jill Lippitt seconded the motion. Elise Weiland asked for public comment on Chair and Vice Chair. There was none.

Elise Weiland asked for a roll call vote. The MAC elected Chair Leubitz and Vice Chair Bruzzone 8-0.

Chair Leubitz announced that there is a workshop for MAC Board members this Sunday, January 22 at the Monte Rio Community Center. The workshop will be streamed also.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Leubitz asked for a motion to adjourn. Marti Campbell motioned the MAC adjourn and Vice Chair Beth Bruzzone seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:53pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Culcasi, Clerk