

# Attachment 3

## Santa Margarita Area Advisory Council

[www.smaaconline.org](http://www.smaaconline.org)

May 5, 2014

Jim Bergman, Director  
Department of Planning and Building  
San Luis Obispo County

Dear Mr. Bergman,

We appreciated your attendance and your expressed commitment to the advisory council process at our April 2, 2014 Santa Margarita Area Advisory Council (SMAAC) meeting.

During the meeting James Caruso and Matt Ottoson, of your department, made a presentation at the direction of the County Board of Supervisors, about four Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) implementation strategies that address countywide water resource issues and the protection of agricultural water supplies. The strategies involve:

1. Growth Management Ordinance
2. Larger minimum parcel size for ne rural subdivisions
3. Merger of substandard parcels
4. Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) program

Your staff requested SMAAC provide any additional considerations to keep in mind when addressing water/issues/problems. A lively discussion followed with comments and suggestions made by council members and the public who attended the meeting. The council decided to forward you notes taken during the meeting for inclusion in the presentation they will make before the Board of Supervisors in late May of 2014.

On May 1, 2014 Robert Stockel, SMAAC Secretary, received a copy of the notes Mr. Ottoson took of the council and public comments made during the April 2, 2014 meeting. Review of notes Stockel and I took showed Mr. Ottoson did an excellent job of capturing the comments. I am including Ottoson's notes, as an attachment, for inclusion in the presentation for the Board.

Thanks again for your attendance and the presentation made by Caruso and Ottoson.

Respectfully,

Joe Patterson  
SMAAC Chairman

Attachment 4/2/14 SMAAC meeting notes by Matt Ottoson

**Santa Margarita Area Advisory Council** (Meeting date: Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>)

1. *Regarding Growth Management Ordinance*

- Those antiquated subdivision lots that can find water and last for 40 years, let them develop.

2. *Regarding Larger Minimum Parcel Sizes*

- Larger minimum parcel size requirements could lead to more substandard parcels.

3. *Regarding Merger of Substandard Lots*

- Merger of substandard parcels could go awry.

4. *Regarding TDC Program*

- No comments.

5. *Additional Comments*

- Salinas River needs to be managed better – if it was, it could run naturally all the way into Monterey County again. Management could include:
  - Cutting tree limbs near river;
  - Lopez Lake and Santa Margarita are shut to chain saws – need to open to allow greater vegetation management;
  - Removing invasive trees that use extensive amounts of water;
  - Cleaning up rivers to restore to more natural conditions that contained natural, deep pools of water to allow water infiltration into groundwater basins.
- Takes five years to go through all government agencies to get anything done – if County doesn't listen, go to State, if State doesn't listen then go to Federal Government to get vegetation management done.
- Issues with Planning Department getting involved in water.
- Money is always limited in both public and private arenas.
  - Let private sector hire engineers to determine the water availability and how to obtain water.
  - Need to utilize informed science more.
- SRA's – riparian setbacks need to be revised.
- Government agencies (i.e. Fish & Game, etc) need to be coordinated with better – the hands-off approach is not serving our area at all.
- Tamarisk, cotton wood/willows and other invasive, high water demand plants should be allowed to be removed as offset mitigation.
- Need better weed control – star thistle utilizes significant amount of water each year.
- Issues with Paso Robles agricultural offset program – RCD's focus should be on weed and vegetation management this time of year.
- Retrofit-on-sale and water waste ordinance at countywide scale does not have 'bang for the buck' and should not be considered.
- Planning Department should continue to be forward thinking and focus on the bigger picture.
- Focus on landscaping plans – Santa Margarita Community Plan could be revised to update landscaping requirements.
- Should be thresholds for wastewater treatment plant requirement, whereby no LAFCO process required at some point.
- Park Hill Area – residents cannot receive water currently, are County funds available to assist?
- Agree that these problems need to be studied, but what are costs to the County and taxpayers vs. hiring outside consultants?
- Potential liabilities for County in allowing houses to be built without water.

- Local well drillers provide information to County.
  - Why not include that information in reports?
  - Community knowledge should also be included within reports.
- Ground Squirrel Hollow wells never shallow, used to be 400', now 800'. Shallow wells are 50' to 100'.
- People have been trucking in water forever in Park Hill Area.
- Wells in Park Hill area have to prove certain gallons per minute production now per County regulations.
- Agree, not all programs will be appropriate for all areas of the county.
- No management vs. too much management – County needs to find middle ground somewhere/somehow.
- Dairies in the Central Valley reusing wastewater through improved technologies - need to look to new technology to allow for better processing of wastewater for local reuse.
- County should seek out grant monies to assist the community with local water reuse projects.
- Diablo Canyon – desalination water from plant in the millions of gallons. Water from PG&E should be able to be used by the local community.
- County should look to simplify permit process for new or expanded dams on public/private lands.
- Less permitting needed for new dams.
- No permits needed for bladder dams to infiltrate water into groundwater tables.
- Those of us who use septic systems return all water we used back into ground to infiltrate groundwater basin.
- More landscape requirements will lead to less greenery which purifies our air.
- The statement 'programs are not appropriate for all areas' has not been heard at Board meetings.
- Whenever new programs are adopted by the Board, they always exclude the coastal zone because they can't get programs through the Coastal Commission.
- Concerns with idea of metering new wells throughout the county.
- Not all factors are being considered with these new regulations.