

**SONOMA VALLEY CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING MAY 27, 2015  
SONOMA POLICE DEPARTMENT, COMMUNITY ROOM  
175 FIRST STREET WEST, SONOMA  
6:30 p.m.**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Cynthia Wood, Jack Ding, Pat Pulvirenti, Ditty Vella, Gay Johann, Margaret Spaulding, Pat Stevens, Ryan Lely, Bruce Green, Sean Bellach, Dick Fogg, Rachel Hundley

**EXCUSED:** Tom Martin, Angela White

**1. Call To Order: 6:30 p.m.**

**2. Minutes Approved of April 22, 2015 Meeting**

**3. Public Comment (Limited to items not appearing on the agenda):**

Cheryl Carlucci, co-owner of Sonoma Valley Airport and Vintage Aircraft: Re: last month's meeting due to gross inaccuracies given. The Commission is being provided with copies of documents refuting the info given. Sonoma Valley Airport is a gateway for visitors from all over the world. The Leland application to pursue flyfishing in a pond stocked with sportfish next to a runway at a 70 year-old public use airport is in conflict with safety and the diligence we exercise in running our business. Mr. Fogg jeopardized that safety when using his position to advise the Commission not to take interest and issue with matters of public safety re: the project application and possible detrimental impact on existing business and public safety. He diverted the safety question by using his position to minimize the proactive attentiveness others should have considered. By pushing aside his assessment of the situation by stating that "the airport and Leland have a long history and you would get tied up in your underwear if getting into what various levels of safety are re: pond." Frankly, I would like you to get tied up in your underwear for public safety. It's critical to our business and the health and welfare of Leland's patrons and the public. Mr. Frasier's permit problems are impacting the airport fiscally, environmentally, and socially by pulling the airport into his unilateral agenda. Mr. Frasier told you he's been compliant since 2007. He should have to explain the 2009 code enforcement actions that resulted in abatement hearing followed by Sonoma County resorting to filing a lawsuit in 2011 for continued non-compliance. Why wouldn't you Commissioners want to know more? We are disappointed and deeply troubled that the SVCAC affirmatively disregarded the importance of air safety concerns raised by the Leland flyfishing application to place a pond stocked with fish next to an active public use runway. It is particularly disturbing when compared with the Commission's approach to traffic safety in general. You had no problems tackling a Cal Trans auto safety issue expressing great interest in traffic problems and worry for the public safety when travelling the road. Why not the same concern for the public's air travel? Juxtapose your concern for public safety in the automobile with the lack of interest and concern of air safety by a project that negatively impacts air travel, so why is the safety of a different form of transportation so completely disregarded? Cal Trans Division of Aeronautics expressed safety concerns in a number of letters to the County and has objected to the County approval to a facility that has large waterfowl and other wildlife by building man-made bodies of water near a runway's edge and further exacerbating it by stocking the ponds. The most recent Cal Trans communiqué was March 15, 2015 and should have been discussed at the April 22 meeting, but I don't believe you got a copy of that. The Airport Land Use Commission found the Leland pond project an incompatible land use creating hazardous avoidable nuisances to the safety of air travel. Please be advised that these ponds were never required by County Fire and not a required build as you were led to believe. Leland's project has the potential to create a traffic hazard along Highway 121. We did not hear this Commission shy away from addressing that issue or admonish to stay away from talking about auto safety. So why the double standard when it comes to air traffic safety? Air traffic at a public use airport are members of the travelling public and they, like drivers of automobiles, expect their government to maintain basic safety standards. Mr. Frasier had prior knowledge of the safety issues his large pond presented before he dug the holes. There's no principled reason why this Commission would rubberstamp or wave through a project that presents serious safety concerns whether they're on the street or on the runway – that's what happened on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. These ponds were absolutely stocked with trout by Mr. Frasier; in your packet, you'll find that evidence. This is Mr. Frasier's 3<sup>rd</sup> application attempt for ponds and flyfishing. Permit #1 in 2004: no permits were granted for the very same safety reasons discussed tonight. Five years passed and the ponds are built and stocked and permit #2 in 2009. After the fact, he applies for flyfishing school and fishing ponds

but prior to the October 2013 BZA hearing revised that application and dropped the fishing school and ponds to fire suppression to get them permitted. Now permit #3 attempted to piece the permits together to complete his ranch and flyfishing school as if by piecing the permits together somehow eliminated the hazards and makes everything OK. We respectfully request to revisit this project knowing the facts and determine if allowing serial permit violations and condoning piecemealing of permits is at a public safety expense.

- 4. Applicant Name: Sequoia Warehousing LLC**  
**Owner Name: Michael and Susan Norton**  
**Site Address: 22020 Carneros Vineyard Way, Sonoma**

**Request for a Use Permit and Administrative Design Review to allow new wine processing facility to be used by three wineries with a total production of 300,000 cases per year and participation in industry wide special events on a 7.94 acre parcel.**

**Applicant presentation:**

Helge Bruckner, co-owner: We are 10 owners including the Nortons. We'll talk about how we treat wastewater and provide a brief history of 8<sup>th</sup> St. East. In the late 90s, a sewer district was formed. The large industrial building there was on septic systems which became obsolete. Now there are 150 acres of industrial land which was designated core commercial activities. The project is in Carneros Business Park with 17 lots, and 3 already built on. We will be the 4<sup>th</sup> building with a 150,000 sq ft. The treatment facility created for the buildings where wine waste was treated before releasing into the sewer kept sewer rates low but now it's even better. Mike will discuss the building plans and Patrick will talk about the water.

Mike Norton: The building is 3-toned and colors will blend in, not just a solid gray building. The plan which includes elevations and landscaping has passed the Carneros Design Review Committee who said it's a good fit for the environment there. We will take the wastewater from wine production and treat it so that water coming out will be as usable as water going in. We'll use the water to irrigate the entire property, not just our parcel, as well as vineyards on each end, and the grassy area next to the Airport runway. The building is constructed to accommodate solar panels and will be energy/water/resource efficient. There are currently 2 wineries, and the use permit is for production of 300,000 but may be bumped up to 500,000 depending on tenants.

Patrick Alcayaga, facilities manager: My chief responsibility is managing water systems – both drinking water and wastewater treatment. This project uses the latest technology - membrane bio-reactor technology. I manage 4 process treatment facilities on behalf of 16 wineries. This has membrane separation as well as a biological component. In the past, simple sedimentation or separation of solids was used, presently using nano-filtration removing all micro organisms and all solids. This process was developed by Wallace Systems out of San Luis Obispo, using BOD, biological oxygen demand - how much oxygen microbial activity is required to eat organic matter, and TSS, suspended solids. The technology will bring tertiary quality used for surface and sub-surface irrigation. Additional capital is invested into this vs. the older conventional technology because our goal is net zero water use and remove use of existing wells to vineyards. The building has infrastructure where water flows into trench drains by gravity into a collection sump and pumped up into the treatment system. Several are in use in American Canyon. Current negotiations are on who tenants will be and quantities they'll produce. Case production is in flux – quantity of water ranges from 2-4 ½ gallons of water to produce 1 gallon of wine. In contrast, 10-12 gallons of water for 1 of beer, 97 gallons for 1 of gas, and 400 gallons for 1 cotton t-shirt.

**Commissioner questions:**

Mr. Lely: How many gallons do you anticipate saving or reusing in the process?

Patrick Alcayaga: Our intention is to use every gallon consumed during the winemaking process, and reuse water for irrigation or for winery environment. Other technology needed to apply for net zero goal.

Mr. Stevens: Can you use it for groundwater replenishment?

Patrick Alcayaga: Recycled water will end up back into aquifer eventually. Our focus is on the opportunity for landscape irrigation.

Ms. Spaulding: Landscaping for business park could be set aside during this drought. I am concerned that water go for some other purpose, forgo landscaping and put into other vineyards or reuse for winery operations.

Patrick Alcayaga: The business park has common areas. The landscaping is not controlled by us – ours has a dual purpose – for sediment and water collection and retention. We're actively exploring other vineyards due east, Airport to the north, explore 14 acre tasting room, hooking up with the Water Agency, and determine legal avenues to pursue, as well as fire retention ponds to serve buildings. We hope to find a happy balance – to use resource wisely and eliminate the need for water to be pumped.

Mr. Green: Your water supply, are there multiple wells in this park?

Patrick Alcayaga: There are 6 wells – each parcel is responsible for their own water supply.

Mr. Green: Have there been studies on aquifer below the property to see how much water is there?

Patrick Alcayaga: I take monthly groundwater depth to water reading. The last 12 months, 1 well that dropped 18" has rebounded 6 of those. The equipment for barrel washing has improved significantly and there's 10-20% water consumption drop at our facility.

Mr. Bellach: Have you spoken to your neighbors? Are people using reclaimed water for vineyards and winemaking?

Patrick Alcayaga: It's different than domestic waste, no harmful pathogens exist in the water.

Mr. Bellach: Any tenant/winery signed on to do this?

Patrick Alcayaga: We're still in negotiations. It hasn't been done locally - we're working on the technology and educating wineries.

Helge Bruckner: It's very early in the process - we're speaking to vineyards - many are trucking in water from further away. This is a new type of system.

Mr. Bellach: if you have takers, all reclaimed water will be used?

Helge Bruckner: Yes, we're giving it away, not charging so the incentive will be there.

Mr. Bellach: What are the color schemes?

Mike Norton: Gray, silver, redwood.

Chair Ding: What do you anticipate if drought is worse? How deep is groundwater for the 6 private wells? Are you a member of the groundwater management program?

Helge Bruckner: We need to use wells, since we won't get water from VOM water district.

Patrick Alcayaga: Not a member. Wells vary from 300-600 ft deep, based on building size, use, and year built.

Ms. Vella: Every year, you're still pumping 1 to 4 million gallons of water to generate wastewater. The fire retention ponds are lined or will water seep slowly into the ground?

Patrick Alcayaga: It's evaporation water loss, not recharged.

Ms. Vella: You're still pumping a lot of water out. You mentioned a bio swale – does the roof run into it and have you considered permeable paving?

Helge Bruckner: The last project, retention system had 6-8 ft diameter pipes put into the ground. On the downhill side where water got out, filters were used and system collected stormwater and released it slowly. Now it's a grassy swale or bio swales of 900 ft. Runoff from roofs/gutters/pavements will go into bio swales and filters water which ends up in storm drains, and a large wetland area.

Ms. Hundley: What are annual productions of other wineries?

Patrick Alcayaga: 16 wineries - 1600 cases for boutique wineries up to 45,000 cases. We maintain the use permit for the building – 235,000 cases production. Each tenant is a co-applicant to the use permit and responsible to report to us and the County so that everyone is staying within approved limitations.

Ms. Hundley: Other warehouses in the area as high as yours? If this falls through, will you resort to traditional water disposal?

Helge Bruckner: No other as high. System is already in use in American Canyon since 10 years, Southern California – 2 wineries using it, this area – new in Sonoma Valley but not in California. We won't do the building without the system.

Ms. Vella: How many sq ft does this system take – it sits in your building?

Patrick Alcayaga: It fits in confines of building - 6,0000 sq ft for treatment equipment and 2 modules of 30 x 12.

Ms. Vella: 6,000 sq ft is for 500,000 cases so for 50,000, you don't need that much space.

Patrick Alcayaga: It's designed/sized with respect to the use permit.

#### **Public questions and comments:**

Kathy Pons, VOM Alliance: I have 3 main comments. 1) On a positive note, this wine processing facility is appropriate for local zoning – it belongs there and not in rural residential areas; 2) This location may have groundwater concerns with 2 areas with declining groundwater levels in the deeper aquifers. SCWA said that this project falls at the southern margin of an area where groundwater levels in the deeper aquifers have fallen below sea level and immediately north of the area where more brackish groundwater exists. The hydrographs show shallow well stability but deeper wells show declines ranging up to 50-60 ft. Two wells with groundwater levels below sea level is an invitation for salt water intrusion. Within this application, there are no estimates of water usage for the 300,000 cases. Maybe this location is not right for such water consuming activities; 3) This is a new facility application – don't we have enough wine production already? Sonoma Valley is approved for 6 ½ million cases a year with 6 permits of over 300,000 cases a year. With 13,000 acres of vineyards in the Valley, and 1 acre of grapes yielding 3,958 bottles of wine, and with 12 bottles per case, it works out to over 4 million cases in production. This means the County has already approved 1/3 more production capacity than actual grapes grown in Sonoma Valley. Please take these concerns into consideration.

Kim Holden, Napa Rd: Groundwater is my greatest concern. My neighbor has had his well run dry twice already. I appreciate the info on the reuse of water but with such a saturation point of wineries, I'm concerned for the residents of the area – all their wells are going dry. What groundwater will be available in Vineburg? Please take this into consideration.

#### **Commissioner comments and discussion:**

Helge Bruckner: We don't use water without recharging. We're not creating new wineries, just moving into a new facility those already existing in Sonoma Valley, although it doesn't mean production will not be increased eventually. We're monitoring the wells and there's been no decline. We'll monitor how water will be used.

Chair Ding: This is a more efficient, water saving facility.

Mike Norton: This is a model for others to follow and to put the burden on builders and find ways to save water.

Mr. Green: The existing building with 16 wineries – do you track how many tons of grapes come from Napa vs. Sonoma?

Patrick Alcayaga: There's a reporting method all wineries adhere to track where grapes come from. We don't question, but the lion's share of wineries in our facility are Sonoma branded wineries - we don't track what's coming in.

Ms. Spaulding: So no net new wineries and just consolidating existing wineries to make them more efficient?

Helge Buckner: This building will put all into one and control the process.

Ms. Spaulding: Net additional production in Sonoma Valley but no new facilities or wine producing activities in County.

Helge Bruckner: There will be potential growth. Our use permit is for 500,000.

Chair Ding: Project is one of biggest in Valley, area as big as Plaza, consolidate wineries.... I'm in favor.

Mr. Bellach: If not faced with drought, it would be less controversial. I appreciate reuse of water and that you're being responsible but I'm concerned with use of water, maybe there should be a Plan B. If vineyard/wineries not OK with using recycled water, there are places that could use it. Landscaping is not efficient, should be drought tolerant, look at recharging water, eliminate the need for watering landscape.

Ms. Spaulding: This is too big of a project for an experiment – 300,000 already big, if done incrementally and see how it's working, I'd be more comfortable.

Ms. Hundley: Groundwater use is a huge concern, how much wine is needed? There should be limits to keep the community secure. The project is cool if the groundwater supply is not being used. Down the line, there'll be more large projects/buildings.

Mr. Green: Any CC+Rs to prevent any others from doing the same project?

Helge Bruckner: We only own 2 lots. CC+Rs don't prohibit another winery from coming in. Owners have a vote on who comes in or what kind of building.

Mr. Green: Do you have concerns if other wineries come in, and would that affect your availability of water?

Helge Bruckner: I own other buildings to the north and west and there are wineries there. Wineries are better at using water and there's less water use. This building will not be ready for occupancy until this time next year – gives us time to improve the system.

Chair Ding: I suggest that you apply for membership to Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management and share your experience with each other.

Ms. Spaulding: Let me clarify. Tertiary treated water has been known for over 20 years to be a safe solution for reuse of water. When I said experimental - who will take and use and if it can be recharged in effective ways.

Mr. Fogg: 8<sup>th</sup> St. East is a recognized success. A big part of that is Mr. Bruckner. He is not irresponsible and there are no zoning issues, but this is a significant potential water issue. I would recommend to PRMD by itself it's a good project and we should not have to resolve more global issues. The applicant, the Water Agency, the water basin people should all get together and look at this to do something new and different and to do this the right way. **Have a public hearing for constructive use.**

Chair Ding: I make motion to approve project with consideration....Mr. Bellach, go ahead.

Mr. Bellach: What Dick said, with consideration to work with the Water District, Sewage Facility, PRMD and partners in business park on 8<sup>th</sup> St. East general area to hold public hearing to vet out water and issues of water. Let's try again – Approve the project with consideration that applicant will work with Sewage Facility, the Water District, businesses on 8<sup>th</sup> St. East and PRMD to publicly vet the issues of water and reuse of that water.

Chair Ding: More precisely....

**Motion: Mr. Bellach. Approve project under consideration that applicant will work with the Sewage Facility, the Water District, PRMD, and 8<sup>th</sup> St. businesses so that when this gets heard, that a solution or mitigation for constructive uses will occur then. Ms. Johann seconded. 8 in favor, 1 opposed (Ms. Spaulding). Motion passed.**

Mr. Bellach: As Mr. Fogg said, all the pieces are there. This could be worked out in that spirit approving this project under those conditions.

**5. Consideration of items for Future Agenda**

Pat Gilardi: June agenda: VOM Alliance presentation on events, nothing beyond that. Tentative informative tour of sanitation district will be on 6/25 at 3:30.

**6. Adjourn 8:10 pm**