

County of San Luis Obispo Agricultural Liaison Advisory Board



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**Agricultural Liaison
Advisory Board (ALAB)**

Positions/Members/Terms

CHAIR: R. Don Warden

District One: Mecham Appt.
Dee Lacey (1/13)

District Two: Gibson Appt.
Lisen Bonnier (1/11)

District Three: Hill Appt.
Tom Ikeda (1/13)

District Four: Achadjian Appt.
Bill Struble (1/11)

District Five: Patterson Appt.
Noah Small (1/13)

Agriculture Finance Rep.
Mark Pearce (8/10)

Cattlemen Rep.
Dick Nock

Coastal San Luis RCD Rep.
Jean-Pierre Wolff (8/11)

Direct Marketing/Organic Rep.
Eric Michielssen (4/12)

Environmental Rep.
Anne McMahon (5/11)

Farm Bureau Rep.
R. Don Warden

Nursery Rep.
David Pruitt (4/12)

Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD Rep.
Charles Pritchard (1/10)

Vegetable Rep.
Richard Quandt (4/12)

Wine Grape Rep.
Neil Roberts (4/12)

County Agricultural Commissioner
Bob Lilley, *Ex-Officio*

U.C. Coop. Extension / Farm Advisor
Mary Bianchi, *Ex-Officio*

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 3, 2009

Guests Present: Murry Wilson & Michael Conger, Planning Dept.,
Supervisor Patterson

Absent Members: Mark Pearce, Eric Michielssen, David Pruitt, Chuck
Pritchard, Richard Quandt, Neil Roberts

1. **Call to Order:** 6:09 PM. Quorum Present. New member Noah Small introduced (Sup. Patterson's Representative)
2. **Open comment:** Lisen Bonnier: Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) impact.
3. **Member/agency reports**
 - Brenda Ouwerkerk (Ag Dept)
 - LBAM detected in Los Osos residential area. Provided press release, general information brochure, and extensive host list. Directed people to Department and CDFA website. Current quarantine area encompasses 1.5 miles from LBAM find. Specific shipping requirements on the movement of commodities will be put into place. Certification will be required for some products. Detection trapping will continue to determine extent of infestation. Quarantine requirements are diverse and depend upon, location, crop and shipping destination specific.
 - Provided handouts from Planning Dept. with additional info on SB375 and AB32, climate change legislation
 - Announced COSE at Planning Commission (PC) August 13 and August 27. Finishing Air Resources, then Biological Resources Chapters
 - Provided handout of first page updated ALAB roster

4. **Minutes:** June 1, 2009 and July 13, 2009,

Motion – Dee Lacey. 2nd – Tom Ikeda. *Approved: Unanimous. Abstentions: None*

5. **Grading and Stormwater Management Amendments to the County General Plan and County Code. (Michael Conger and Murry Wilson, Planning Department).**

- Murry provided the rationale for amendments:
 - Federal and State Water Law relating to general construction requirements (State General

- Construction Permit – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)) relating to during and post-construction requirements.
 - Increase/strengthen enforcement procedures to be consistent with state and federal laws.
 - Incorporate stormwater requirements-municipal stormwater sewer system, a requirement of the county adopted Stormwater Management Program
 - Simplify the definition of grading: 50 yards=grading
 - Prohibiting grading on slopes > 30% w/ variance for > slopes
 - Modify procedures for agricultural exemptions
 - Implement draft/proposed COSE policy
 - Reorganize existing framework
 - Change coastal zone requirements to mirror inland requirements (with some exemptions)
- Public review process:
 - Draft ordinance released
 - Scoping meeting held Thursday, July 30
 - Prepare a draft EIR – scheduled for end of August release
 - 45 day comment period on draft EIR (through mid-October)
 - PC workshop on September 24
 - PC hearings to commence October 22 (tentative)
 - Board action (tentative early 2010)
 - State mandate deadline (March 2010)
 - Detailed information available on website: www.sloplanning.org. Ag Dept contact is Michael Isensee, 781-5753, misensee@co.slo.ca.us
- Michael Conger reviewed the *proposed* revisions which affect agriculture:
 - Exempt grading
 - Ag Exempt Grading
 - Alternative Review Program
 - Significant changes
 - Alternative Review Program required for new crop production fields on 20-30% slope and for any new roads
 - A ministerial “Ag Grading Form” for new fields up to 20% slope, new water pipelines and irrigation pits to be submitted to the Planning Dept.
 - Waivers
 - Existing Conditional Waiver for Irrigated Agriculture covers agricultural earthmoving in terms of stormwater ordinance revisions.
 - Ag Grading Form
 - Seeking to balance need to inform and educate graders, ensure exemptions are not abused, and provide for enforcement, while allowing enough flexibility for growers to not be impeded by paperwork. If people do not ask if they need a permit, violations will continue.
- ALAB Discussion - Questions, comments and concerns included:
 - incentive for growers to fill out Ag Grading Form.
 - whether term “ag exempt” is appropriate. Is “ag qualified” or “ag qualified exempt” more appropriate?
 - what kind of review will accompany proposed Ag Grading Form.
 - how is current Alternative Review Program working?
 - how to address violators.
 - methods to inform new purchasers of ag land about regulations.
 - how can incentives be provided to those who do the right thing? Alternative Review

- Program, permit coordination/Partners in Restoration seen as two incentive programs.
- need for robust enforcement / enforcement ideas.
 - issues of converting ag roads to serve development and methods to prevent the loophole.
 - appropriate ag road width: 16 feet is 4 ft less than CalFire road standard to serve residence or development. However, it may not be adequate for large row crop operations. An alternative is to allow for ag roads to be no more than necessary for the proposed ag use, to allow for wider roads on very low slopes, or to have Ag Commissioner determine the appropriate width.
 - appropriate thresholds for grading: Is 50 yards appropriate? Is there a way to change this standard, especially with roads? Counter-balance with the need to address roads as they are a primary source of erosion on rural lands, even with as little as 2% slopes.
 - list stock watering as a use for irrigation pits.
 - allow for more than one irrigation pit on a site, but not adjoining other pits.
 - need permits from other agencies even when a county grading permit is not required.
 - review 2 ft as the depth for ripping on erosive slopes. Is this standard adequate or too restrictive?
 - remove the list of work practices in 11a but keep in 11b (page 7).

MOTION: Approve of [the Planning Department grading ordinance] format for staff report and recommend similar format for future staff reports to ALAB.

Motion-Brenda Ouwerkerk **2nd** –Mary Bianchi **Approved:** Unanimous. **Abstentions:** None.

6. WRAC Ag Cluster Recommendations:

- Don Warden turned over the role of chairman responsibilities to Bill Struble. Vice Chair, Bill Struble took over the responsibilities of chairperson.
- Reviewed WRAC's comments on ag cluster revisions. Discussion about whether the number of clustered lots should be limited to existing developable legal lots or be based upon available water supplies. It was noted that despite APG11 regarding protecting groundwater for agriculture, health and safety requires that once residences are built they must be served with water even if this impacts agricultural water supplies. Concerns included areas with uncertain groundwater supplies, what occurs in areas where current agricultural water use increases due to changing cropping patterns (move from grazing to irrigated crops, for instance), and how the sustainability of groundwater for agriculture should be defined.
- Should ALAB adopt WRAC recommendations or not?
- Schedule for Ag Cluster amendments: Anticipated that draft ordinance will be available to ALAB in October, with the Public Hearing Draft ordinance to PC in January 2010. There will be additional opportunities to comment.

MOTION: ALAB has reviewed the July 28, 2009 letter to the Board from the WRAC, and conceptually agrees with the recommendations. However, ALAB may have additional recommendations relative to water later in the process.

Motion- Anne McMahon. **2nd**- None

Based upon general consensus: table/continue WRAC recommendation and ALAB action to next meeting

Meeting adjourned: 8:35 PM