

**McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee**  
**ZOOM PLATFORM - ONLINE MEETING**  
January 13, 2021 6:00 pm

**MINUTES**

**1. Attendance**

Members Present: Maya Conrad, Bonnie Oliver, Twila Sanchez, Pat Kaspari, Barbara Georgianna, Greg Orsini, Kevin Dreyer.

Members Absent: Kevin Jenkins

Guests: John Ford, Director of Humboldt County Planning Division (HCPD), Michael Richardson, HCPD Supervising Planner, John Miller, HCPD Senior Planner, Kash Boodjeh, Architect.

**2. Public Comment on items not on the Agenda:** none.

**3. Event Announcements:** none.

**4. Discussion / Information / Action Items**

**A. County Planning Staff presentation of revised Draft Town Center Wetland Policy:**

Michael Richardson presented and explained the revised Draft Town Center Wetland Policy. He clarified that there were no changes to policies outside of the Town Center area and reviewed why this is the case, in response to a community member's letter. (See Attachment 1.) He then went through each policy item related to Wetland Areas Within the Town Center, explaining the changes from the previous draft presented on November 18, 2020 in response to comments from community members, Greg Pierson (representing the wetland area's property owner), Misha Schwarz of GHD Consultants (hired by Piersons to do wetland delineation) and Greg O'Connell of CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. The following are questions and comments from MMAC members and the public:

- Kevin Dreyer mentioned that while wetland policy "outside of the Town Center" is not part of our discussion now, it is something MMAC could choose to take up sometime in the future. He asked whether suspended walkways and bridges closer than 25' away from the wetlands would be possible within the Town Center area, how easy it is to get conservation easements and expressed support for changing the ratio for replacement of wetlands to 1:1.25 rather than 1:1.5 as proposed in the policy (24.A, see Attachment 1).
- Twila Sanchez also expressed an interest in bridges and suspended walkways and asked for clarification on community input for development within retained or created wetlands and buffer areas.
- Michael Richardson explained how public input is a part of the County's Special Permit processes. He also answered that he thinks it is likely that MCSD, McKinleyville Land Trust or maybe even the County will step up to form the conservation easement because of the high value it would have for the community.

- Planning Director John Ford commented that they are trying to create certainty and clarity for property developers through the policy and eliminate “discretionary decision making” by Planning Staff. He also mentioned that CDFW may consider the 1:1.5 ratio in policy item 24.A to be too low.
- Maya Conrad asked how the revised draft addresses the issue of “no temporal loss” related to wetlands. John Ford confirmed that the revised policy does not provide this. Maya also asked for a definition of “Incidental public services purpose” in item 25. D. County Planner John Miller confirmed that this refers to buried cables and pipes and the inspection of these public utility lines as required.
- Greg Pierson commented that he thinks the TC Wetlands Policy document looks pretty realistic although he would prefer a 1:1.25 ratio for created wetlands to replace wetlands removed.
- Misha Schwarz commented that it would be hard to include raised walkways and bridges in created wetlands but they may be possible in existing wetlands.
- Maya Conrad raised the issue of making walking trails accessible in accordance with California’s ADA requirements. She also suggested consulting with Colin Fiske of the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities on the design of the pedestrian and bike trails. Colin, who was in attendance, indicated he would be happy to help. Maya also asked whether policy item 28.A was too subjective now that a maximum percentage figure for impervious development in buffer areas has been removed.
- Anne Pierson (Town Center wetlands area property owner) expressed her support for making some balance of the pedestrian trails accessible which may require non-permeable paving.
- John Ford commented that there are now many “hardscape” products for trails that are permeable, including permeable asphalt. He also would support ADA accessible pedestrian pathways wherever practical.
- Maya Conrad and Kevin Dreyer asked for clarifications on policy items 28.D (filtration), 28.E (credit for native plants) and 28.F (site lighting) which the planning staff was able to clarify.

**B. Presentation of the draft conceptual plans for the wetlands and open space areas of the Town Center:**

Architect Kash Boodjeh presented and reviewed the updated “Wetland and Open Space Areas of Conceptual Study”, “Area of Wetland Impacted by Conceptual Study” and “Trails, Paths and Open Space of Conceptual Study” drawings. He clarified that we will move on to address the Central Avenue and Pierson Park areas in future meetings, including the issue of pedestrian crossing(s) of Central Avenue.

- Kevin Dreyer asked about where parking would occur. Kash referred to the Memo from County Planning from February 20, 2020 which includes parking development options and clarified that this will be part of specific project planning rather than Land Use Planning. He encouraged MMAC to review this document as we will be returning to it as the Town Center Ordinance process continues.
- Pat Kaspari clarified that all the trails shown on the drawings are 25’ from the boundaries of the existing preserved and created wetlands.
- Colin Fiske recommended that existing bike and pedestrian paths along Central Avenue be added to the drawing.

- A community member noted that the Town Center transportation hub is missing from the plan, which could include amenities like cycle rental and airport shuttle service. They also commented that wetlands value should be considered from the perspective of their habitants.
- Anne Pierson recommended that 45degree parking along Hiller Road be considered. Both she and Greg Pierson requested that the trail shown on the north side of the extension of Pickett Road be moved to the south side within the designated open space area (along the redwood tree row).

**C. MMAC led public comment and discussion:**

MMAC expressed their thanks to County Planning Staff and Kash Boodjeh for their work and presentations.

- Maya Conrad asked Anne and Greg Pierson to share whether they could get behind the presented Wetland and Open Space Areas Conceptual Study including the proposed 18.35 acres of total open space area.
- Anne Pierson supports having a green connection from the Town Center to the Coast for people and animals and thinks we have a win-win opportunity here. She thanked John Ford for his flexibility in the ordinance development noting that “organic” future development should be allowed.
- Greg Pierson described the Conceptual Study as pretty reasonable but noted that additional open space should not be required in future development because of the 18.35 acres that would be here dedicated.
- Maya followed up with a question to Greg Pierson of whether they could accept TC Wetlands Policy item 24.C which calls for a permanent conservation easement or similar for the created wetlands and buffer areas. Greg answered that he would support this eventually but is not sure if it should be mandatory.
- Bonnie Oliver expressed her support for the revised Town Center Wetlands Policy as proposed and presented by County Planning.
- Twila Sanchez also expressed her support, especially for the 1:1.5 ratio for wetland area being replaced to created wetland areas.
- Greg Orsini expressed support for revising the policy to a 1:1.25 ratio.

**D. MMAC deliberation and vote on Wetland Policy:**

Planning Director John Ford recommended that they do one more round of revisions to the policy before voting on a motion. This will be presented at a future meeting. MMAC concurred.

**5. Next Meeting:**

Our next regular meeting will be Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 6:00 pm, Zoom format.

**6. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Bonnie Oliver