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PLANNING COMMISSION May 17, 2012

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COMMENTS ON THE GENERAL PLAN AND DRAFT EIR

I was appointed to the planning commission on May 18, 2010. I think it would be helpful to the supervisors to know when all the current members of the planning commission were appointed and what issues they actually voted on after they were appointed. For instance, neither I nor anybody else on the commission was present at every meeting after they were appointed. My understanding is that only written comments by either the general public or by planning commission members need be responded to by the staff.

My understanding is that the next step needed to implement the general plan is for the Board of Supervisors to enact a series of ordinances dealing with matters outlined in the general plan. If this is true, does the planning commission have any input on these ordinances prior to adoption by the supervisors?

When will the three issues in section 1.5.4. be resolved and by whom?

I think there should be some mechanism in place to monitor whether the new guidelines in the general plan are actually being carried out and if they are effective or become out of date; a version of adaptive management. As an example, suppose we reached the required reduced level of greenhouse gas emissions, or as now has happened our greenhouse gas emissions are less than the stated goal because we have closed down the pulp mills and various power generating stations that were large emitters of greenhouse gases. Does this then mean we should keep the status quo and not allow any more cars or pulp mills as an example? Suppose we reached the required level of salmon (whatever that may be.) Does that mean then that we can stop restoration efforts?

Is there a way to modify the current general plan to take into account changes in technology? For instance, wind turbines are considered by many to be an evolving and probably not sustainable technology. Hydrogen cars appear to be a technologic flash in the pan. The latest advance in automotive transportation seems to be electric cars. Is there flexibility in the general plan to accommodate future changes such as these?

I and the majority of the citizens in Humboldt County do not wish to have prime timber and prime agricultural land converted to other uses. I believe I joined the commission in the midst of these discussions, and I feel I should make my position clear now. TPZ land is valued and categorized by a site 1 to 5 classification. Taking site one, two or three land out of timber production should not be allowed, but the conversion of site four

or five TPZ land should be considered. There needs to be a more extensive assessment of site values in the general plan. This assessment is available but not included in the plan. The classification of agricultural land is in a state of flux. The NRCS agricultural classification will not be done for several years, if then. One of the definitions of prime agricultural land is that it supports one animal unit per acre. Most of the Arcata and Ferndale bottoms would meet this criteria, but none of the upland grazing areas could even come close to meeting this criteria. There needs to be a better assessment of prime agricultural land in Humboldt County. Truly prime agricultural lands should be kept in agricultural production, but lower-level agricultural land could be converted to other uses.

New development should be subject to impact fees to pay their share of public services. I did not find reference to this fee structure in the general plan update or the EIR.

After reviewing the water resources element, Chapter 11, I am not sure that all of my recommendations about water in Humboldt County are clearly delineated. I will attempt to summarize them further.

We currently export water from the Trinity River via the Trinity River Diversion to the Sacramento River and thence to the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California. We export from the Eel River via the Potter Valley diversion to Mendocino, Sonoma and Marin counties. It should be clearly stated in the general plan that Humboldt County desires to stop these diversions. If these diversions cannot be completely eliminated, they should be run in a manner that benefits people, agriculture and fisheries in Humboldt County.

The Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District has put forth a plan to export Mad River water in order to preserve their water rights. It should be clearly stated in the general plan that this proposed diversion is economically not viable and is not consistent with California water law.

The general plan should clearly specify a new groundwater ordinance, which relates surface water to ground water. All Humboldt watersheds should be assessed for their ability to provide surface and groundwater as well as stream water for fisheries. The amount of development in any watershed should be limited by the available water.