## MINUTES OF THE SOLANO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## **Meeting of October 7, 2010**

The regular meeting of the Solano County Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Chambers, Fairfield, California.

PRESENT: Commissioners Barnes, Boschee, Rhoads-Poston, Karah and

EXCUSED: Chairman Mahoney

STAFF PRESENT: Mike Yankovich, Planning Program Manager; Jim Laughlin,

Deputy County Counsel; Jim Louie, Principal Planner; Kristine

Letterman, Planning Commission Clerk

Items from the floor - none

**The Minutes** of the regular meeting of August 19, 2010 were approved as prepared.

1. **PUBLIC HEARING** to consider rezoning certain parcels in the Suisun Valley to "A-SV-20" Agriculture-Suisun Valley District and "ATC" Agricultural Tourist Center District, consistent with the Solano County General Plan and Suisun Valley Strategic Plan. Seven "ATC" Agricultural Tourist Centers are established by the Solano County General Plan and Suisun Valley Strategic Plan at the following locations: Mankas Corner ATC; Gomer School ATC; Morrison Lane ATC; Rockville Corner ATC; Iwama Market ATC; Rockville Road ATC; Thompson Lane ATC. The Planning Commission will also be considering adoption of a Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact as recommended by the Solano County Department of Resource Management. (Project Planner: Jim Louie) **Staff Recommendation:** Recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors

Jim Louie gave a brief presentation on the history and process of the rezoning program. The topics he covered included an overview of the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan; A-SV & ATC Zoning Regulations; and Rezoning for General Plan and Strategic Plan Consistency.

Since there were no questions of staff, Vice-Chairman Boschee opened the public hearing.

Warren Sheldon, 5336 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield, submitted a written letter of comment for the record. He stated that he is one of the commissioners for the Suisun Fire Protection District. He said that the District has no objection to the establishment of an Agricultural Tourist Center District however they are concerned about the increased costs involved in providing fire suppression and rescue services once the project is implemented. Mr. Sheldon stated that adding ATC's at Mankas Corner, Gomer School, and the vicinity of the intersection of Morrison Lane and Suisun Valley Roads could increase the financial hardships of an already struggling district. He said the only reason they are able to maintain operations is because they have the only volunteer fire chief in Solano County. He stated that whatever decision is made regarding the ATC district they would hope the financial

problems that could be created for both rural fire protection districts, Cordelia included, will be given the consideration they deserve.

Gina Richmond, 4529 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield, stated that her family owns property that houses the old Suisun Valley Nursery which is located next door to the Pioneer Fruit Stand. She said that their property is part of the Morrison Lane ATC. Ms. Richmond stated that she is in favor of the proposed zoning because it would give them an opportunity to put something more interesting in the old building which is currently being used for storage. She said that they have a lot of ideas for the property and this would open up an opportunity to bring something nice to the valley.

Gary Darville, 2962 Vista Grande, Fairfield, stated that his family owns the CB Ranch on Rockville Road. He stated that this is something that is a long time coming for the Suisun Valley area. He commented that he was a captain with the Vacaville Fire District and concurred with Mr. Sheldon's comments, but stated that these sites are already existing or close to being in use, and he did not believe there would be a big impact. Mr. Darville stated that he believed this is giving the farmer an opportunity to try and solve a little bit out of what they can as a farmer, and he encouraged the commission to vote in favor of the proposal.

Jon Fadhl, 8320 King Road, Dixon, stated that his property is not within this particular zoning area, however, he did attend every meeting that was held for the General Plan update. He believed that this is one of the beginning rezoning acts, and that it will set precedence for the entire county. He stated that since he lives in the unincorporated Dixon area he has several concerns with the plan such as wineries being labeled in size, and requiring these wineries and vintners to report their yields to the planning department. He stated that as a farmer he is already required to submit crop reports to the Ag. Department and wanted to know the purpose of having to submit this information to the Resource Management Department. Mr. Fadhl questioned if this would lead to him having to start reporting the number of cattle or number of olive trees he has on his property.

Mr. Fadhl stated that another concern involves the matter of fruit stands. He said that this plan puts a limit on fruit stands of 25% of the crops they produce on site or on leased properties. He stated that he is a Solano County farmer and is looking for outlets to sell his product as well, and he believed it should include all Solano commodities. Mr. Fadhl stated that Mankas Corners is an existing ATC area and it appears this plan is downsizing what already exists, but increases it in other areas, and he suggested that this should be readdressed. Mr. Fadhl stated that another concern deals with bicyclists. He said that as he travels the county roads he observes numerous people from outside of the county enjoying the use of the roads, and noticed that this plan has annotations addressing cyclists. He stated that be believed there is a point in time that the county needs to ask these bicyclists to start paying a user fee and licensing their vehicles or bicycles in order to use the roads. He noted that in the Solano Transportation Authority Report it talks about paying one's fair share. He said that he can appreciate enjoying the environment that is provided to cyclists in the agricultural districts, but if the roads need to be widened to accommodate cyclists then maybe they need to pay a user fee. He commented that this is the user fee that the STA might be looking for in order to generate some of the funding to widen county roads.

With regard to wineries, Jim Louie stated that he believed Mr. Fadhl was referring to the designation of small, medium, and large wineries based on gallonages. He stated that these numbers are already being reported to the Ag Department it this would just be a supplemental number that would be provided to the planning department for verification that the winery is operating within their limitations. He noted that this is only in reference to wineries.

Ron Lanza, 4756 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield, stated that his family operates the Wooden Valley Winery. He commented that he has been involved in this planning process as a committee member for the past 4 years. He said that this is something the county has done extremely right from the start by involving the community, working together, and coming up with all possible scenarios. He stated that there was a lot of discussion with regard to the 25% limitation on produce and there are reasons why those numbers are in place as well as the winery requirements. Mr. Lanza stated that there has been a lot of effort that has gone into the planning of this, and it is a very good, very well thought out plan and is critical for the Suisun Valley. Mr. Lanza commented on the Suisun Valley Fund which provided grant monies and has been used over the past 8 years, but is now almost depleted. He said that the Fund has allowed a lot of progress to take place in the valley. He stated that this project is a key component to finish out the valley and to move forward to making Suisun Valley sustainable in agriculture. He commented that the Suisun Valley is different than other sections in the county in many ways and it needed the special attention that it got.

Derrick Lum, 2506 Mankas Corner Road, Fairfield, stated that this has been a long process and he would like to see Suisun Valley move forward giving urban people something to enjoy out in the county. Mr. Lum spoke on behalf of his aunt and his cousin who would like their property to be considered as an ATC zone. He stated that his aunt and cousin have cooperated with the STA on the North Connector which split their ranch in half. He said the property is designated agriculture and they would like to be considered and rezoned into the ATC to compliment the property. Mr. Lum stated that this project is a push forward that is needed so that the valley and all the farmers can survive.

Since there were no further speakers, Vice-Chairman Boschee closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Barnes stated that he attended several of the community meetings with regard to this project, and he asked staff to expand on their explanation with regard to the 25% limit on produce for fruit stands.

Mike Yankovich stated that the 25% is a minimum. He explained that if a farmer has at least 25% of the crop grown on their property or on land leased by them then it is allowed by right. It is when that number goes below 25% is when a use permit is required. Mr. Yankovich stated that this number was vetted through the Agricultural Advisory Committee. He said there are several growers on that committee where staff was able to enlist their input with regard to what would be the minimum threshold that would be used in the definition of whether or not it be an allowable use or a use permitted by a conditional use permit. Mr. Yankovich stated that this verbiage already exists in the County Zoning Ordinance which covers the entire county, and it was incorporated into the Suisun Valley because a number of the growers in the Valley were comfortable with that threshold.

Commissioner Rhoads-Poston asked for the names of Mr. Lum's relatives who requested that their property be considered for rezoning. Mr. Lum provided the commission with their names.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rhoads-Poston and seconded by Commissioner Barnes to recommend approval of the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan to the Board of Supervisors. The motion passed 4-0. (Resolution No. 4539)

A motion was made by Commissioner Rhoads-Poston and seconded by Commissioner Barnes to recommend approval of an Ordinance (ZT-10-03/Z-10-01) amending Chapter 28, Zoning Regulations of the Solano County Code, implementing the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan Zoning Regulation Revisions, and Rezoning the properties within the Suisun Valley Strategic Plan from A-40 and A-20 Agriculture to A-SV Agriculture-Suisun Valley, and A-40 Agriculture and CN Neighborhood Commercial to ATC Agricultural Tourist Center to the Board of Supervisors. The motion passed 4-0. (Resolution No. 4539)

A motion was made by Commissioner Rhoads-Poston and seconded by Commissioner Barnes to recommend approval of the Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact to the Board of Supervisors. The motion passed 4-0. (Resolution No. 4539)

Vice-Chairman Boschee commended staff and the citizens who worked on this project. He stated that it is the best way of putting something like this together by getting the people involved who are impacted by the plan. He stated that agricultural tourism is a big thing nowadays and believed that the county needs to aggressively pursue this and to encourage the development of a plan to advertise and bring people to Solano County so they can appreciate the agricultural history and farms and wineries that exist today. He stated that it could bring a lot of revenue to the county and also support the farmers who are trying to make a living. He said that this is a great achievement and he hoped that the Board of Supervisors will smile upon it.

## 2. ANNOUNCEMENTS and REPORTS

Mr. Yankovich informed the commission the latest zone text amendments were unanimously approved by the Board. He also let the commission know that the next agenda would contain the Sea Level Rise Strategic program as well as a revision to the Montezuma Wetlands project. He noted that the Shiloh III wind turbine project is tentatively scheduled for the first meeting in November.

Commissioner Barnes noted that he received information from the California Planning Commissioner's Association with regard to the upcoming conference. Mr. Yankovich stated that staff would provide conference information to those commissioners who are interested in attending.

3. Since there was no further business, the meeting was **adjourned**.