



# County of San Mateo Planning & Building Department Agricultural Advisory Committee

Natalie Sare, Chair  
John Vars, Vice Chair  
Daniel Theobald  
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou

Crystal Chaix  
James Oku  
Jess Brown  
Jim Howard

Dr. Igor Lacan  
Koren Widdel  
Peter Marchi  
Ryan Casey

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## ACTION MINUTES

Draft

Monday, November 18, 2024

**A full recording of this meeting can be accessed on the official government YouTube channel of the County of San Mateo at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8i-ocHkc\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8i-ocHkc_k)**

### AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**

At the Ted Adcock Community Center, in the South Day Room, located at 535 Kelly Avenue, Half Moon Bay, Chair Natalie Sare called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

2. **Member Roll Call**

Regular Committee Members Present:

James Oku  
Natalie Sare  
John Vars  
Peter Marchi  
Crystal Chaix  
Daniel Theobald

Regular Committee Members Absent:

Ryan Casey  
Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou

Nonvoting Committee Members Present

Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner

Nonvoting Committee Members Absent:

Jim Howard, Natural Resource Conservation Staff  
Jess Brown, San Mateo County Farm Bureau Executive Director  
Igor Lacan, UC Co-Op Extension Representative

Planning Liaison Present:

Olivia Boo, Planning Staff Liaison

3. **Oral Communications** to allow the public to address the Committee on any matter not on the agenda. If your subject is not on the agenda, the Chair will recognize you at this time. Speakers are customarily limited to 3 minutes. See instructions explained at the end of this

agenda regarding instruction for public comment. *Please note that the Committee cannot discuss or act on an item not on the agenda.*

**Public Speakers:**

None.

4. **Officer Elections** for Chair and Vice Chair. *(These positions are required to be filled by farmers.)*

Passed 5-0 (with 1 member absent during vote) to defer Item 4 and Item 5, for all positions including secretary position, to the December 9 AAC meeting, or the next hearing when more members are in attendance.

5. **Committee Nomination** for AAC Secretary.

See Item 4.

6. **Committee Member Update(s) and/or Questions** to allow Committee Members to share news and/or concerns for items not on the agenda.

Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner

- Growers workshop December 3, 2024 from 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., continuing education credit.
- Private applicator certificate training, examination. There will be 2 sessions held on Thursdays in December, the dates to be confirmed by Koren.
- Annual field worker safety training, March 5, 2025 in Pescadero and March 6, 2025 in Half Moon Bay.
- Invasive Shothole borers infestation found in a trap at Redwood Shores. San Jose found an infestation a year ago and Santa Cruz has also found an infestation.
- Two letters have been mailed out. One is regarding neo-nicotinoid prohibitions uses. Users for neo-nicotoid must be certified applicator. Second is regarding Anticoagulant Rodenticides and prohibitions on uses.

Daniel Theobald, Committee Member announced:

- Straw bales are not available this year. Is there a program thru the County that provides straw bales?

Dante Silvestri, Public Member, asked if there is an existing mechanism in place that is available to gauge accurate data for rainfall?

Eliza Milio, San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) staff/Agricultural Ombudsmen, will ask her team regarding gauging rainfall. There is a weather station at Harley farm that tracks rainfall. RCD has funding for another rainfall station but a location hasn't been determined.

7. **Planning and Building Department Director's Report.** *(Planning Liaison)*

Natalie Sare, Committee Chair - requested staff to share a copy of CDX application, PLN2024-00285.

8. **Discussion Items:**

- a. **Pescadero Fire Station Mitigation Measures – Committee Member Chair Natalie Sare - Committee submitted a letter written by the AAC, addressed to the County on October 22, 2024.**

- Planning Liaison will send Planning Department management's response to committee by email.
- Mike O'Neill, District 3 Legislative Aide, noted that if an appeal was filed to California Coastal Commission (CCC) for the LCP Amendment associated with the Pesadero Fire Station project, then it was an appeal filed directly to the CCC, bypassing the County.

**b. Committee Member Chair, Natalie Sare - Drafting steps and paths for the County to help preserve and promote farm labor housing.**

- Natalie Sare, Committee Chair, asked for the status of letter sent to District 3 Supervisor Mueller, regarding the Farm Labor Housing forgivable loan program.
- Mike O'Neill, District 3 Legislative Aide, responded that Supervisor Mueller is still exploring: a) potential money sources, and b) finding a source to implement the program.
- Daniel Theobald, Committee Member, raised concern for housing for families and multi-generational farms; there's no place on farms for future generations. In order to keep family generations, the housing is needed. As the criteria is now, it's not conducive.
- Jon Vars, Committee Vice Chair, raised concern that there may be too many topics under this topic. Suggestion to create 2 topics: a) helping farmers stay in the area, and b) helping to retain generational farming.
- Natalie Sare, Committee Chair, shared that she has been meeting with Jess Brown, Farm Bureau Executive Director, to look at Santa Cruz regulations. In January, she wants to talk to other farmers to obtain feedback. What is the cost to rent the larger room at Ted Adcock?
- Peter Marchi, Committee Member, suggested to publish these topics as the first agenda items on future AAC meeting agenda and propose to collect feedback. If needed, this would be the only items on the agenda.
- James Oku, Committee Member, added that farmers are welcome to attend AAC meetings. He wants to confirm a wide variety of farmers input can be collected.
- Dante Silvestri, Public Member, suggested that these items likely have to be covered in special meetings with a larger venue in 2025; an evening meeting time is better.
- Daniel Theobald, Committee Member, suggested to consider inviting farmers from different regions at a time. Break down the groups that are invited by a specific category.
- The ultimate goal of these special meetings is to collect feedback from farmers regarding how to help farmers and preserve farms.

**c. Committee Member Chair, Natalie Sare – List of methods to help farmers stay in the area.**

- Committee also wants to break down each meeting to invite farmers as noted per listed category as follows:

- Flowers/nursery growers - subcategory indoor/outdoor (xmas trees, cut flowers, nursery stock, potted plants) – (January meeting).
  - Ranchers - livestock
  - Row crop growers – 30 - 40 people
  - Ornamental growers
  - Vegetable growers - 30 farmers
  - Fruit/nut crops
- Koren Widdel, San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner, will assist by sending emails to invite the farmers per category. She can contact farmers for the January AAC meeting, to invite flower/nursery growers.
  - Crystal Chaix, Committee Member, offered to make announcement at Farm Bureau.
- d. “Agritourism Event Application” title – discussion to recommend revision to the application title to encourage new applicants.**

Natalie Sare, Committee Chair, proposed revising title to “Agritourism Permit Exemption”.

Peter Marchi, Committee Member, motioned for this proposed name change as suggested by Committee Chair Sare and Crystal Chaix, Committee Member, seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously

- e. Pescadero Fire Station Pipeline - Committee Member Cole Mazariegos-Anastassiou suggested the Committee draft a letter for this topic, addressed to the County.**
- The Committee decided to defer this item to December as sponsoring Committee Member Mazariegos-Anastassiou is absent.
  - Questions posed by the AAC include how many acres was the original parcel for mitigation, what is the mitigation requirement?

**9. Adjournment**

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Natalie Sare.**