

Glen Ellen Forum
Regular Meeting Minutes
Aug. 7, 2017

Meeting called to order at 7 p.m. at Mayflower Hall in downtown Glen Ellen.

Michael Furlong reminded attendees that a donation jar was at the back of the hall. The most pressing funding issue is liability insurance for meetings, which will cost between \$500 and \$700 per year.

Neither the Mayflower nor the fire house are available as meeting places going forward. Leslie Vaughn is looking into securing a location in the SDC for the Forum's September meeting.

Michael noted that more volunteers are needed for all Forum committees, including the Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) that will serve as the community's conduit to the county, and the new Social and Community Promotional Committee, which organizes social events and promotes the Forum in the media.

Michael also noted he'd like to start including a presentation series at Forum meetings, where local organizations such as the Hanna Boys Center, La Luz, Dunbar Elementary, etc., could briefly discuss their roles in the community.

Leslie and Michael provided an update on the Forum social event planned for Friday, Sept. 15, at the home of a generous Forum member (yet to be announced). The idea is for attendees to bring someone new to the Forum to the event, and to bring food and drink to share. While the event is not a "serious" meeting, it is a chance to talk about community in an informal manner. It's also hoped it will boost Forum membership, which is now at 200 but is targeting the 4,500 people in the 95442 zip code (as a baseline).

Michael provided an update on the Forum's new website, which has migrated to WordPress. The hope is that the more flexible site will quickly be populated with useful information from all Forum committees.

Michael announced that a new logo for the Forum has been designed and will be up on website.

Jim Shere announced that the Glen Ellen Historical Society's board would hold a retreat at Glen Oaks to revise its bylaws and set out plans for next year. In focus: the human history of the SDC and Glen Ellen at large. The GEHS is administering a grant from the Sonoma Land Trust to take portraits of residents, families and caretakers to capture the "human story." The historical society also plans to host public meetings to explore the stories of other Glen Ellen notables, including Jack London, MFK Fisher, etc. He invited Forum members to become GEHS members.

Alice Horowitz provided [an update from the Eldridge/SDC Committee](#), reporting on the recent stakeholders meeting with the WRT, the firm hired by the State of California to assess the property. She also invited the Forum to take a look at the draft document that the Eldridge/SDC Committee has assembled outlining community goals and ideas for usage on the property. The [goals/potential uses document](#) has been posted on the website, and community members are invited to review and provide feedback. A meeting to discuss and refine community goals and potential uses will be held in September or early October, so that the committee can provide that feedback to WRT, as well as the state and the county.

Michael Furlong presented his ideas for a “5-Year Plan” for the Glen Ellen Forum, which includes:

- Securing nonprofit status
- Finalizing and ongoing maintenance and updating of the GEF website
- Development of a community center
- Increasing the community’s social presence online
- Initiating a village farmers market and community garden
- Addressing the need for affordable housing
- Developing walking paths and bike trails
- Developing a more pedestrian-friendly Glen Ellen plaza (“downtown” area)
- Conducting fund-raising events targeted to projects
- Hosting a community podcast/radio show

The list of five-year goals will be posted on the website.

County Supervisor Susan Gorin was invited to speak. She began by recapping county involvement with regard to closure of the SDC and redevelopment of the Eldridge property, noting that county goals were closely aligned with the community goals as summarized by Alice earlier. She noted the SDC Coalition had been involved in “sausage-making for years” with the state on the SDC’s future, and that the “jury is still out on our success.” Among the things she hopes to see on the campus is a “crisis stabilization center” for people with developmental disabilities. She also wants to make sure the redevelopment model “meshes with Sonoma Valley,” and noted that the loss of jobs will be significant, as the SDC is the biggest employer in the valley.

“I’m looking for ideas,” she told the group, noting the county will be formulating goals for reuse of the campus. She’d like to see industries on the campus that will help retain younger people in the county, such as career and technical educational projects, perhaps in association with the Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University. The county is also participating in stakeholders’ meetings, including one on Oct. 23.

Susan then moved on to discussing Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs), which is on the table as a formal GEF interface with the county. Essentially a MAC does what the Forum is doing

presently, Susan noted. The question she posed is, “Why does the Forum need the county?” One answer is to provide coordination between the Forum and the county to meet demands for services.

Susan listed these benefits of forming a MAC. The county could then help with:

- providing service for minutes
- insuring the GEF for liability
- providing funds to rent a meeting site
- providing funds to administer a website
- providing funds to plan neighborhood improvement projects

Two MACs are already in place (Dry Creek/Mark West Larkfield area). Both the Springs and Glen Ellen are actively pursuing formation of a MAC, and Kenwood might follow.

Once a MAC is formed, the Forum could nominate people to sit on the MAC who would then be appointed by the supervisor. Those people would receive Brown Act training. If five people were selected for the MAC, they could also serve on Forum subcommittees. These would be two-year terms. Susan would appoint the first chair and vice-chair. Susan advised the group to consider composition of the MAC representatives: Whether they would come from geographic areas, organizations like the fire department or the school, or be nominated at large.

Another consideration: Susan pointed out that Sonoma Valley has a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and overlapping responsibilities should be considered. The Forum could have a MAC member serve on the CAC. She also noted limits in authority: A MAC couldn't lobby state or federal government to advocate for something the county is not.

There were questions about how a MAC would fit in given there's already a Forum. While the MAC would not replace the Forum, it would be “the official voice of Glen Ellen” at the county level, the Forum's “arm into government,” as one attendee phrased it.

Arthur Dawson, who is drafting a MAC proposal, explained the role of the MAC as a vehicle for prioritization of issues, and the organization that will identify resources needed to work on issues.

The meeting was then opened for Q&A, which drifted back to SDC redevelopment, including the roles of the county and state in the process, the value of the property, what it costs to maintain infrastructure, and where revenue that's already being poured into the property is going.

Susan noted that everything on the property needs to be upgraded and refitted to code. Road patterns need to be mapped. Redevelopment is not “starting from scratch.” At the state legislative level, both Bill Dodd and Mike McGuire have been part of the process, and Cecilia Aguirre is also engaged. The county has ultimate land use authority for site, and Susan said the county is advocating for the state to develop a site master plan.

In response to a question about traffic on Madrone Road, Gorin noted that speed on the neighborhood stretch of the road and that the speed limit might be bumped up from 25 to 30 mph.

Leslie Vaughn reminded attendees that the Glen Ellen Village Fair is slated for Oct. 8.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Attendees

Leslie Vaughn
Anne & Gary Bryant
Dora Welsch
Bev & Dave Rodondi
Janie Soto
Ellen McKnight
Susan Varga
Kathy Pons
Susan Hoeffel
Nicki Artieres
Maud Hallin
Alice Howoritz
Deb Pool
Andy Deseran
Michael Wray
Eric & Alicia Hunt
Bonnie MacLaird
Susan Gorin

Anne Teller
Kevin Padian
Anne O'Brien
Susan Costello
Margie Foster
Nick Brown
John LemMon
Jerry Owens
Nick Dalton
Linda & Curt Duff
Vicki Hill
Archie Horton
Marge Everidge
Arthur Dawson
Michael Furlong
Tracy Salcedo
BJ Blanchard
Stacey Vilas