

Pojoaque Valley Planning Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, October 20, 2005 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Sammy Quintana Community Board Room

(Note: This is a meeting summary and is not intended to give the meeting contents in its entirety. If you would like to get more details about the meeting, please contact another committee member that was present at the meeting, or the SF County Planning staff.)

David Dogruel opened the meeting and asked for reports from community members.

Aamodt Meeting

Carl told us about a Pojoaque Basin Water Alliance meeting he attended. Some information is confidential, but he told us what he could. There is now an agreement in principle that will be made public soon. They are on track to get an agreement to the judge by the end of the year. Some details have not yet been worked out. Because the agreement won't go into effect for 10 years, there is a need for an impairment fund for situations in which, for example, someone's well runs dry or is diminished because of pumping by the Pueblos. Another question is the power of the water master vis-à-vis the Pueblos and if the Pueblos might resell water. Also whether the Federal Government would fund this project. We may not have a big enough population base to concern politicians.

The Alliance commissioned a hydrological study that is a reevaluation of the original studies done. This study concluded that the inflow into the basin is 23,000 acre-feet per year. The Pueblos are entitled to 3660 acre feet based on priority rights. Non-pueblo domestic well users consume 200-500 acre-feet per year. We found this information puzzling since it implies that there is a large surplus of water.

We decided to stop this discussion because we needed to discuss other items on the agenda. In addition, David Ortiz told us that the Rio Pojoaque Acequia and Water Well Association would have a meeting to discuss this on November 8th at the Community Board Room.

Land Use

Renee passed out some summaries and explanations of the County Code regarding land use regulations in the traditional communities.

We picked up the discussion about the Jacona Land Grant's proposal to become part of the traditional community. Some had the impression that the Land Grant's request was a quid pro quo – if we added part of the land grant to the traditional community, the Land Grant would donate land for a trail system. David O. said that the Land Grant is about 6800 acres. David D. said that the proposal is to convert the strip of the Land Grant that passes through the traditional community to traditional community status while leaving the southern area in its current status. Lynn Velasco wondered whether the open areas would be left undeveloped in perpetuity. Jack suggested that we ask the Land Grant members to meet with us and map out their ideas.

David O. told us that the last Legislature made the Land Grants local government entities. Jack and David O. thought this might have implications for the plan to include a section of the Land Grant in the traditional community. Would the Land Grant be willing to give up authority? How does this status differ for the Jacona Land Grant whose status is unincorporated?

Jack commented that section 4.2 in the County ordinance gives us the right to expand the traditional community boundaries.

David D. commented that the area north of what used to be the dairy in Nambe is not currently part of the Traditional Community. This might be another area that would be appropriate to add. Jack said that zoning was not the original reason for designating an area as traditional community. The reason was to recognize historical entities. If we added land to the traditional community, we could designate different zoning for this added land.

David O. commented that if we open this land it would help keep people from building on agricultural land. Lynn expressed concern about subdividing because it would kill wild creatures. We need to look carefully at the geography. Even if land cannot be irrigated, it may still be worth preserving for other qualities. Elaine asked whether the land from the Land Grant would be affordable and expressed concerns about availability of water. David D. said that the Land Grant sold land to the schools for \$8000/acre. David O. said that people could sell their unused acequia water rights to the land grant, which would provide water and also funds to buy land. Elaine said that this might diminish the flow in the acequias to the point where there would not be enough water to get to the end of the ditch. David O. said that selling acequia water rights would not necessarily diminish the flow in the acequias. Carlos said that we need controlled growth and affordable housing, but that water is a real concern. We have approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the water we need to irrigate now. If people start pumping from wells, irrigation will be affected.

Elaine questioned whether growth is inevitable, citing Boulder as an example of a place that has forbidden additional building. Jack said that when you stop growth in an area, it stimulates growth in the surrounding areas. David D. said that we have to think about where people are coming from and where they work. Carl said that there are 10 to 12 thousand people in the Valley at present. If we assume average demographic growth, we would have another 3 thousand people living here in 40 years.

Mary Lou said that an important component of community planning is educating the community. Lynn added that we could educate people to develop in a more sustainable way.

Jack said we need to look at what the current rules for development are – what works and what doesn't, so that we can think about rules for new areas that we might include. He said that the current Code is very difficult to understand. It seems contradictory in places. It is very important to get the code clarified. We began looking at the material Renee had compiled.

We discussed the lot size requirements in the traditional community. Family transfers can lead to lot sizes smaller than the .75 acres required for a traditional septic system. Lots can go as small as $\frac{1}{3}$ of an acre if there is an approved community water and wastewater system in place. Jack said that he was unsure what the minimum lot size was if an alternative septic system is used, but he would find out. He added that although we have no nitrate problems in our drinking water now, we might start to if all lots were subdivided down to .75 acre size.

We then discussed commercial development in traditional communities. There was confusion about two different sections of the Code that Renee had summarized – one seemed to refer to industrial development, the other to commercial development that was more like service industries. Jack and Renee agreed to learn more about these issues. Jack said that in the traditional community commercial development was not restricted by geographic area. Renee added that if you wanted to change the use of the land you would still need to go through a rezoning process. They agreed that variances are the biggest loophole, but said that the

number of variances that are granted in the County has decreased markedly through the years because the process isn't as easy as it was before.

David D. suggested that we could encourage commercial development in certain areas by zoning them commercial, thus making it easier. David O. said that we should turn to the focus groups to learn which areas are appropriate for commercial zoning.

Jack reiterated that he and Renee need to clarify the existing Code regulations so they could explain better. We should not do focus groups until we can answer questions. Renee felt that we need to bring one of the development review staff with us to the next meeting to help answer more questions. David O. suggested that we contact our representative on the CDRC and ask him to attend our meetings. No one knew who the representative was, but Renee said she would find out.

We agreed to have our next meeting on November 10th. The meeting will be at the same time and place. David D. suggested that the County bring material like maps and satellite photos so that we can define areas where development makes sense and areas where the land should be preserved.

David O. announced that the S.P.M.D.T.U. is sponsoring a cleanup of 503 on November 5, starting at 8:00 AM. Please help clean up the community.

Diane raised the question of a potluck. We agreed to have it on Saturday, December 3rd, at Diane's house, starting at 4:00 PM.

Notes by E.B. and R.V.