



Sonoma County Community Development Commission
Housing Authority • Redevelopment Agency
1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-4107

Monte Rio Wastewater Task Group

Meeting Notes

June 21, 2010

6:30 pm

Monte Rio Community Center

Introduction

Task Group Members Present:

Dan Fein, Ken Wikle, Steve Mack, Jim Quigley, Rene DeMonchy, Lee Torr IV (left 6:43 pm & returned 8:25 pm), Gary Getchell (arrived 7:10 pm).

Task Group Members Absent:

Supervisor Efren Carrillo, Rich Holmer, Doreen Atkinson, Chuck Burger, Preston Smith, Suzie Baxman.

Staff Present:

Kathleen Kane – Community Development Commission
Jane James – Transcriptionist

Review and approve prior meeting notes

Notes of 5/17/10 meeting were corrected to show the following Task Group members as absent: Supervisor Efren Carrillo, Jim Quigley, Lee Torr IV, Suzie Baxman, Rene DeMonchy.

Discussion of Symposium

A. Review outlines

- 1) Overall
Review CDC role (convener of MRWTG, then funder of work), process to date, and goal of symposium to say what the problem is.
- 2) How Septics Work
Verbal presentation would be condensed version of presentation at 12/21/09 MRWTG meeting. Rather than going through the different types of systems that are available, focus on what all septic systems have in common. More detail will be in informational booths. Need to explain that all leachfields have a life span and the problem comes up when you need to replace a failing leachfield.

Someone with a currently working system may face the issue in future when leachfield fails.

- 3) Regulation
Working on presentation. Focus would be the actual regulatory entities, specifically what regulations we are going to be facing in Monte Rio coming from the regulatory entities. Keeping it concise, devoid of opinions, just stating the facts. Have representatives of the regulators available, as at 1/11/10 MRWTG meeting. Luis Rivera would probably fit better into this presentation than the History presentation. Water Agency is not a regulator, and Environmental Health doesn't really have a role. The regulators are the Regional Board and PRMD. Regional Board setting policy and PRMD enforcing. Water Agency discussing what's happening at Guerneville Plant might be better for Other Communities session. Need to explain what the Waiver Prohibition is and how it is related to Basin Plan requirements.
- 4) History
Discussion of the prior work would be brief. Have John Bauer focus on lessons learned. Core of presentation would be review of the engineering documents.
- 5) Other Communities
Include septic management districts, Stinson Beach, Sea Ranch, Bohemian Grove system. Didn't cover Bohemian Grove last time. Steve and Jim will visit and get pictures and see what's going on there to find out if what they do would apply to what is needed for Monte Rio.
- 6) Available Technologies (some new, some not)
Presentations were good but hard to put into shorter version. May be better as informational booth presentations. Get the crux, or commonalities, of the technology during the presentation, then the remainder in the booth information.
- 7) Next Steps –
 - a) Study governance alternatives. Governance issue needs to be determined before asking for proposals. This will be biggest challenge for getting community agreement.

Various comments/questions posed:

People with currently working systems will not want to have another taxing entity put on them.

Governance system should encompass all properties within Waiver Prohibition Area, but each property doesn't necessarily have to buy into whatever system is created if their system is currently working. They should be able to wait until they have to do something. But it would be in place for when they need to connect.

How do you get all people to levy taxes on themselves?

Is there just one community services district for all areas?

General agreement that LAFCO wouldn't let multiple districts formed for different small areas. Also, economics would be more effective for larger area.

One governance system could be used for multiple types of disposal solutions and would be responsible for ensuring compliance. Governing body could put together a different, separate system for a smaller community, but they would manage area as a whole.

Need to avoid inequality in assessment charges if different areas have different systems at different costs.

Could have different zones with different rates. There are consultants who are knowledgeable about these things. Need to hire expert advice on it.

- b) Community meeting #2 with roadmap for establishing governance structure.
- c) Research funding alternatives.
- d) Alternatives analysis led by governance entity to identify a solution or group of solutions that regulatory entities will accept and develop information to educate public.
- e) Community meeting #3.

General discussion re: symposium - core is to define what problem is.

Various comments offered:

In this area, have lots that are too small, too steep, too close to river, in floodplain, & not adequate to dispose of wastewater in compliance with state regs and need to find alternative.

Most serious element of problem is that there are existing onsite wastewater treatment systems that are not in compliance with the Basin Plan.

Have a community that's developed with septic systems or less in an area in a concentration that's not suitable and something needs to be done as we move into the future.

Density not suitable, terrain not suitable, proximity to river not suitable, floodplain not suitable.

Substandard subdivisions, close to river, steep hillsides, trails not roads, chiseled out of embankments – problem with fire protection. Getting into bigger problem with development and the fact that cost of larger system gets prohibitive that property not worth it. May need to get rid of some of it through buyouts. Fixing what we have here

ok, but trying to serve more on these lots that are substandard will create other problems and could drown system itself.

Not enough flat land to work with in Monte Rio – not enough discharge land, not enough land to build central system. Not all systems are failing, so it's a problem to say that we have to take everyone's system and put on new system. Spots need to be repaired and need attention, but there are also spots that don't need immediate attention.

Most important concept to get across is the difference between part of septic system that treats wastewater and part that disposes of it, and it's the disposal part that's the problem. So get that concept across at beginning and build on it. Treatment is scalable.

Where's the proof that there's a problem?

Non compliance with Basin Plan is by definition a problem.

Don't need to prove damage – noncompliance is a fact.

People think that's a bureaucratic issue that needs to be fixed and not a real issue.

RRROC Project Analysis Survey

Discussion of possible project submittal. Kathleen will complete a survey form to submit to RSG, using the following information:

Monte Rio Community Wastewater Management Project
For Waiver Prohibition Area (3 x size last project boundaries)
Establish governance (and project proponent)
Feasibility and engineering
Construction

Concept stage at present

\$22M was prior estimate for small portion of community

Guestimate at least \$50M - \$80M total (1000 parcels x \$50K/parcel)

Don't know what other funding sources will be, but might assume 25-50% from other sources.

(Los Oso was \$165M – conventional treatment plant – community 2 x size of Monte Rio)

Operation and maintenance paid by property owners through rates

Inability to develop parcels is blighting impact; public health; economic development; infrastructure development/repair. Inability to maintain decent housing stock.

High County BOS board policy objective.

Timeline – 0-5 years for predevelopment, selecting alternatives, governance, engineering

5-10 years for construction

One or more solutions to the wastewater disposal needs of Monte Rio.

Dan Fein is contact.

Plan for next meetings and closing

Topic: Planning for Community Meeting
7/19/10, 6:30 pm, Monte Rio Community Center

All groups should be ready to discussed fleshed out presentation plans.

Topic:
8/16/10, 6:30 pm, Monte Rio Community Center

Topic:
9/20/10, 6:30 pm, Monte Rio Community Center

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.