



Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory Council

Minutes

Regular Meeting

August 14, 2025 05:30 PM

West County Services Center, 16390 Main Street, Guerneville

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/lrrmac>

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:36 pm by Vice Chair & Hacienda Representative: Vicki Clewes.

Recording available: <https://www.youtube.com/@sonomacounty5thdistrict>

A. Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair & Hacienda Representative: Vicki Clewes, Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff, Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke, Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton, Non-Voting Student Representative: Faye Zamora, Forestville Alternate: Cari Hernandez

Absent: Chair & Rio Nido Representative: Pip Marquez de la Plata, Cazadero / Duncan Mills Representative: Tony Goodwin, Guerneville Representative: Spencer R. Scott, Monte Rio / Villa Grande Representative: Patty Thayer, Forestville Representative: Lonnie Lazar

Staff Present: Debbie Ramirez, MAC Clerk and 5th District Field Representative Similia Lander, Intern Aziza Greer, Intern Tracy Lyons, 5th District Chief of Staff (remote)

2. **Approval of the Agenda** Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton motioned to approve. Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke seconded the motion.

The motion passed with the following vote:

5 In Favor 0 Opposed

 Abstained Absent Recused

3. **Statement of Conflict of Interest**

There were no statements of conflict of interest

4. **Consent Agenda**

A. Approval of June 12, 2025 Minutes

Thai Hilton abstained from voting as he was not present at the July meeting.

Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke motioned to approve. Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff seconded the motion.

The roll call vote:

Aye Vice Chair & Hacienda Representative: Vicki Clewes Aye Guerneville Representative: Joe Rogoff Aye Guerneville South / Pocket Canyon Representative: Betsy Van Dyke
Aye Forestville Alternate: Cari Hernandez Abstained Forestville Representative: Thai Hilton

5. Councilmember Comment

Cari Hernandez reported a follow-up from last month's meeting with Ken Tam, Park Planner, Sonoma County Regional Parks. She shared that a traffic calming analysis will be done. She also noted that Sonoma County Transit had conducted a study of River Road but was unable to make changes to the bus stop location due to pullout limitations.


Vicki Clewes announced that Forestville's Pie in the Park event will take place on August 30, 2–5 p.m. at Forestville Oaks Park. The event will include a pie contest, pie share, pie walk, and a dunk tank (with Supervisor Hopkins as a possible participant).

6. Public Comment on Matters not listed on the Agenda

Community members spoke against the proposed rainbow crosswalks in downtown Guerneville, citing pedestrian safety, compliance with traffic standards, and concerns about lack of communication. Speakers requested more transparency on project origins, funding, and opportunities for public input, and asked that the topic be placed on a future MAC agenda for full discussion.

7. County Update

Supervisor Hopkins provided an update covering several key issues. She addressed the recent hunger strike and calls for a sanctuary ordinance, explaining that while she supports stronger protections for immigrant communities, the Board cannot legally prevent ICE actions or direct the Sheriff, and adopting a symbolic ordinance would create false hope. She noted the Sheriff's policy is already among the most restrictive in the state and announced she and Vice Chair Hermosillo have formed an ad hoc to work with immigrant advocates on actionable measures. On infrastructure, she reported that the Russian River Recreation and Park District is still working through state regulatory hurdles to repair the Vacation Beach Dam, with county support offered. She also shared that the Board of Supervisors adopted overdue General Plan updates to the Safety Element and a new Environmental Justice Element, emphasizing the need for better community engagement in upcoming phases. Hopkins highlighted continuing drownings despite safety outreach and bilingual programs, encouraging new ideas such as improved signage and school or rental-based education. Finally, she clarified that the rainbow crosswalk proposal originated from community requests, assured that safety standards will be met, and described it as an opportunity to add art and character to downtown Guerneville while maintaining pedestrian safety.

Clerk Debbie Ramirez added two staff updates following Supervisor Hopkins' report. She noted that Supervisor Hopkins' next newsletter will include information on how to access the county's mobile support teams, which are available 24/7 to respond to individuals experiencing mental health crises when law enforcement may not be the most appropriate responder. She also relayed that the Department of Emergency Management is seeking neighborhoods interested in hosting evacuation drills. The department is looking for community "champions" or local groups to help organize such drills, and she encouraged anyone with contacts in their communities to reach out so they can be connected with county staff. She suggested that potential organizers may benefit from attending the upcoming August 27 Safer West County "train-the-trainer" event to learn more about leading evacuation preparedness efforts 

8. Presentation from Sonoma Clean Power

Claudia Sisomphou, Public Affairs and Advocacy Manager at Sonoma Clean Power, provided an overview of

the agency's role and programs.

She explained that Sonoma Clean Power (SCP) is the default electricity provider for Sonoma and Mendocino counties, formed as a community choice aggregator to supply cleaner, cost-competitive energy. SCP manages electric generation while PG&E continues to handle transmission and distribution. Two service options are available: Clean Start, with about 50% renewable power and 91% carbon-free, and Evergreen, a 100% local renewable option powered primarily by geothermal energy and local solar projects.

Claudia described SCP's governance structure, reinvestment of revenues into local programs, and major initiatives such as the Geothermal Opportunity Zone, which aims to expand next-generation geothermal capacity. She also walked through how SCP charges appear on PG&E bills, explained common line items, and noted the importance of time-of-use rates. Customer support includes a bilingual in-house service center in Santa Rosa.

SCP offers free energy savings boxes, DIY toolkits through local libraries, participation incentives through the GridSavvy Rewards program, and rebates for efficient appliances. The presentation emphasized SCP's mission to provide cleaner energy, improve local resiliency, and reinvest in community benefits.

9. Ad Hoc Committee Report I Community Engagement for District Formation

The Community Engagement for District Formation Ad Hoc Committee (Carrie, Betsy, Patty -attending remotely as a member of the public - and Vicki) reported on their recent work with consultants. MAC discussion emphasized that any future governance or district formation efforts must recognize the distinct identities and needs of each Lower Russian River community rather than relying on a single overarching approach.

The committee noted that the consultant's written report did not fully reflect this perspective and stressed the importance of ensuring broader community voices are included, beyond business interests such as the chamber. There was discussion regarding uncertainty about what role the MAC itself should play in district formation efforts —whether to actively lead efforts or simply provide a forum for discussion and outreach.

Concerns about potential conflicts of interest were raised if the MAC itself were to seek greater budgetary or governance authority. Members agreed that more targeted community outreach is needed, recommending smaller, focused meetings rather than large town halls, and requested that consultants meet directly with districts or communities already expressing interest, such as Monte Rio Park & Rec.

It was also suggested that a simplified "one-pager" / other materials be produced to assist in making the governance study and its options more accessible to residents.

10. River MAC Representative Expiring Terms & Fall Appointment Timeline

Clerk Debbie Ramirez reported that the MAC is entering the appointment season for the 2026–2027 term cycle. Four areas will have open seats: Forestville, Guerneville, Guerneville South/Pocket Canyon, and Rio Nido. The application deadline is September 24, 2025, with an applicant forum to be held in October. Appointments are anticipated to go before the Board of Supervisors in December, with new representatives beginning service in January 2026. Ramirez noted that a recruitment flyer is being prepared and encouraged members to help promote the openings in their communities.

***Note:** Subsequent to the meeting, a resignation created an additional vacancy for an alternate representative in the Monte Rio/Villa Grande area.*

11. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by the Vice Chair at 7:34 PM

DRAFT