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Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)

ACTION MINUTES		
Location:	<i>Ag Conference Center, 1428 Abbott Street, Salinas, CA. 93901</i>	
Date:	September 28, 2023	
Time:	2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	
	<i>Committee Members</i>	<i>Staff and Guests</i>
	Sherwood Darington Alex Eastman- <i>Vice Chair</i> ** Mike Ferguson CJ Miller Kevin Piearcy Scott Storm Scott Violini- <i>Acting Chair</i> *	Juan Hidalgo, Ag Commissioner, <i>ACO</i> Nadia Garcia, Ag Programs Manager, <i>ACO</i> Rich Ordonez, Deputy Ag Commissioner, <i>ACO</i> Mary Grace Perry, Deputy County Counsel Kayla Nelson, <i>HCD Planning</i> Taylor Price, <i>HCD Planning</i> Melanie Beretti, <i>HCD Planning</i> Norm Groot, <i>Monterey County Farm Bureau</i> Mike Novo, <i>Ag Land Trust</i> Taven Kinison-Brown, <i>City of Gonzales</i> Kathryn Avila, <i>Avila Construction</i> Mr. Alderete, <i>Alderete Ranch LLC</i>
Absent:	Kurt Gollnick, Erik Heacox, Nick Huntington, Matt Shea	

*Scott Violini acting Chair for this meeting

** Alex Eastman arrived at 2:39pm during Item No. V- Agricultural Commissioner's Update

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Scott Violini at 2:36 pm.

II. Additions and Corrections

- None

III. Consent- Committee Business

A. Approval of Minutes from August 24, 2023

MOTION: Approval of minutes were moved and seconded by Committee Members CJ Miller and Mike Ferguson and **failed** by the following vote:

AYES: Ferguson, Miller, Piearcy, Storm, Violini
NOES: None
ABSENT: Eastman, Gollnick, Heacox, Huntington, Shea
ABSTAIN: Darington

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IV. Public Comment- On items not on the agenda.

- *None*

V. Agricultural Commissioner’s Update

Juan Hidalgo, Agricultural Commissioner

- FIRA USA Event update – new technology in agriculture.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Norm Groot, *Monterey County Farm Bureau*- Comment on CAL-OSHA regulations prohibiting autonomous machines and this poses a problem for ag technological advancements.

VI. Monterey County Housing and Community Development - Planning Department

A. ALDERETE RANCH LLC

Project Planner: Christina Vu, Assistant Planner

Project Title: Alderete Ranch LLC

Planning File No.: PLN230032

APN(s): 145-072-008-000 & 145-072-009-000

Project Location: 29580 Chualar Canyon Road, Chualar

Zoning/Area Plan: Farmland, 40 acres, Design Control (F/40-D); Central Salinas Valley Area

Project Description: Design Approval to allow construction of a new 7,777 square foot two-story single-family dwelling with a 1,621 square foot attached garage, 1,972 square foot covered patio & entry and associated site improvements on Williamson Act contracted property (Ag Preserve Contract No. 68-094).

ACTION REQUESTED/CEQA ACTION: Recommend support approval to the Zoning Administrator to allow the construction of a new 7,777 square foot two-story single-family dwelling with an attached garage, 1,972 square foot covered patio & entry, and associated site improvements. Grading of approximately 3,900 cu. yds. of cut and 1,205 cu. yds. of fill on an existing Williamson Act property with an established grazing operation/ **CEQA Action:** Support finding that the project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Code of Civil Regulations (CCR) Section 15304- *Minor Alterations to Land* and there are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

MOTION: Item A was moved and seconded by Committee Members Kevin Pearcey and Alex Eastman and passed by the following vote to recommend support approval of the project:

AYES: Darington, Eastman, Ferguson, Miller, Pearcey, Storm, Violini
NOES: None
ABSENT: Gollnick, Heacox, Huntington, Shea
ABSTAIN: None

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B. COPPERHEAD CREEK LLC

Project Planner: Christina Vu, Assistant Planner

Project Title: Copperhead Creek LLC

Planning File No.: PLN230078

APN(s): 424-061-002-000, 424-061-040-000, & 424-061-041-000

Project Location: 73550, 73552, 73554 & 73556 Pleyto Cemetery Road, Bradley

Zoning/Area Plan: Permanent Grazing, 40 acres (PG/40); South County Area Plan

Project Description: Lot Line Adjustment between two (2) legal lots of record consisting of: Parcel 1 with 66.7 acres and Parcel 2 with 188.9 acres, resulting in two legal lots of record consisting of *reconfigured Parcel 1* with 183.1 acres and *reconfigured Parcel 2* with 72.5 acres. Properties is not under Williamson Act.

ACTION REQUESTED/CEQA ACTION: Recommend support approval of the Lot Line Adjustment between two legal lots of record by the HCD Chief of Planning/ **CEQA Action:** Support finding that the project is Categorically Exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Code of Civil Regulations (CCR) Section 15305- *Minor Alterations to Land Use Limitations* and there are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- None

MOTION: Item B was moved and seconded by Committee Members Alex Eastman and Mike Ferguson and passed by the following vote to recommend support approval of the project:

- AYES:** Darington, Eastman, Ferguson, Miller, Piearcy, Storm, Violini
- NOES:** None
- ABSENT:** Gollnick, Heacox, Huntington, Shea
- ABSTAIN:** None

C. AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION MITIGATION PROGRAM – FARMLAND MITIGATION ORDINANCE

Project Planner: Taylor Price, Associate Planner

Project Title: Agricultural Land Conservation Mitigation Program – Farmland Mitigation Ordinance

Planning File No.: REF220044

APN(s): Not Applicable

Project Location: Inland areas of the unincorporated Monterey County

Project Description: Draft ordinance adding Chapter 21.92 to the Monterey County Code related to mitigation requirements for development on farmland.

ACTION REQUESTED/CEQA ACTION: Consider the draft ordinance adding Chapter 21.92 to the Monterey County Code related to mitigation requirements for development on farmland. Consider making a motion to recommend that staff bring the revised draft ordinance to the Planning Commission (Commission), including the Agricultural Advisory Committee’s (AAC) recommendation on the proposed Chapter 21.92 and provide input to staff/ **CEQA Action:** The proposed program and draft ordinance are exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308, which exempts actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or

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local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for the protection of the environment. In addition, as the proposed program and draft ordinance implement the 2010 Monterey County General Plan, pursuant to Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines, no subsequent environmental review is required for this ordinance because the effects of establishing the Farmland Conservation Mitigation Program were analyzed in the General Plan EIR and no substantial changes in project description, substantial changes in circumstances, or new information of substantial importance leading to new significant effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified effects has been identified.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Taven Kinison-Brown, *City of Gonzales*
 - Supports the Agricultural and Winery Corridor Plan (AWCP) exemption.
- Mike Novo, *Ag Land Trust*
 - Supports the Agricultural and Winery Corridor Plan (AWCP) exemption.
 - Supports requiring the receiver site have water supply availability.
 - Supports adding the County as a “qualifying entity” for administering of mitigation bank monies/sites in the event no “Qualifying Conservation Entity” is secured.
- Norm Groot, *Monterey County Farm Bureau*
 - Supports the Agricultural and Winery Corridor Plan (AWCP) exemption.
 - Attend Planning Commission hearing to educate the Planning Commissioners on the work that went into the Ag Land Mitigation Draft Ordinance.

MOTION 1: Add the Monterey County General Plan *Agricultural and Winery Corridor Plan (AWCP)* and those uses allowed and permitted under the AWCP to the list of exemptions in the Farmland Mitigation Ordinance (proposed Chapter 21.92 of the County’s Zoning Code); this motion was moved and seconded by Committee Members Scott Storm and Alex Eastman and passed by the following vote:

AYES: Darington, Eastman, Ferguson, Miller, Pearcy, Storm, Violini
NOES: None
ABSENT: Gollnick, Heacox, Huntington, Shea
ABSTAIN: None

MOTION 2: Recommend approval of the draft Farmland Mitigation Ordinance as presented by HCD staff, subject to incorporating the added AWCP exemption Motion 1 above, and adding wording for the appraisal of land to have a timed term and also adding the County as a “qualifying entity” for administering of mitigation bank monies/sites in the event no “Qualifying Conservation Entity” is secured; this motion was moved and seconded by Committee Members Alex Eastman and Scott Storm and passed by the following vote:

AYES: Darington, Eastman, Ferguson, Miller, Pearcy, Storm, Violini
NOES: None
ABSENT: Gollnick, Heacox, Huntington, Shea
ABSTAIN: None

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VII. Administrative Matters

- Nadia Garcia reminded the AAC of the 2023 AAC dates: October 26 and November 16; no meeting in December.
 - At the October 26 meeting, the AAC will consider the 2024 Williamson Act Applications- very important meeting and a quorum would be much appreciated.

VIII. Agricultural Advisory Committee Comments

None

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

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