

**Report of May 3, 2021 (Zoom) Meeting** with Mendocino County Climate Action Advisory Committee (MCCAAC) Members – Marie Jones, Michael Potts and Susan Sher – and Mendocino County Officials – Fourth District Supervisor Dan Gjerde, Steve Dunnicliff (Deputy CEO, Facilities and Fleet), Dan Mazzanti (Facility & Fleets Division Manager), Doug Anderson (Facility Project Specialist), and Tim Hallman (Analyst).

### **Background:**

At its March 22, 2021 meeting, the Board of Supervisors (BoS) and members of the MCCAAC presented an informational report regarding the MCCAAC's goals and accomplishments. They also asked the BoS, among other things, for guidance regarding how the MCCAAC could work with County Departments to implement its "First Policy Recommendations" (1stPR). The BoS voted unanimously "to provide direction to Steve Dunnicliff, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, to work with the MCCAAC regarding the issues referenced in the presentation."

While at the time, that direction made sense, Mr. Dunnicliff was understandably confused by the assignment. He is in charge of County facilities, one portion of the focus of the MCCAAC's First Priorities and has nothing to do with other portions of that list such as forestry, wildfire safety, and planning. However, since many of the 1stPR involve potential County infrastructure projects, a meeting with Mr. Dunnicliff seemed like a logical place to start.

### **May 3, 2021 Meeting:**

Mr. Dunnicliff and Supervisor Gjerde shared their belief that the BoS wants to support the goals of the MCCAAC. Michael Potts emphasized that the primary goal of MCCAAC is to explore ways to reduce the County's carbon footprint. Gjerde observed that the County will be receiving \$20 million from PG&E for wildfire damages and \$16 million in CARES Act funds. He suggested that the BoS could allocate \$2 million as a Climate Reduction Fund, money that potentially could fund implementation of some of MCCAAC's proposed measures. He was also hopeful that the Evergreen Program funded by Sonoma Clean Power could provide monies for solarizing some County buildings. Gjerde was also optimistic that Janet Orth, Deputy Director of the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) is prioritizing installation of Level 3 (fastest) EV charging stations, of which the County currently has none or few for non-Tesla EV's.

Mr. Dunnicliff suggested this conversation should include the County Building & Planning Department but reconsidered after most attendees noted that this department is too consumed by cannabis issues to be involved in climate priorities. He also noted that he is not "a strong advocate for grants."

Mr. Anderson expressed frustration that renovations of County buildings are dictated by budget constraints, i.e., work needs to be done "on the cheap" with no allowance for more expensive but ultimately cost saving alternative energy measures. The County is currently putting a new roof on the administrative building; Mr. Anderson expressed his dismay that electric air-sourced heat pumps (as were specified at the new County jail) could not be installed due to funding issues and existing infrastructure. Mr. Dunnicliff lamented that the County is in a "poverty mindset". The hope among all present was that infusion of new funding could change that.

[In a later communication, Mr. Dunnicliff clarified: "The County's Administration Center has had two phases of a roof replacement completed, both of which included the replacement of gas-fired heating units. There is a third phase that is not yet funded or designed. I believe the Board will be supportive of completing the third phase of this roof replacement without simply relying on the lowest

cost strategy of replacing existing systems with similar technology. No opportunity for a future project has been lost.” -mp]

Ms. Sher reminded the County officials that during the March 22, 2021 BoS meeting, Supervisor McGourty expressed his desire to see the County switch to an all-EV fleet since most cars would not need to be driven more than 100 miles per day. Mr. Dunicliff thought it was more realistic for the County to purchase all Hybrid vehicles that would bring a quicker return on investment. He also thought there would be a problem with insufficient electrical supply to needed charging stations. Mr. Mazzanti described the chicken-egg problem with that – we can’t have EV’s because of no charging stations and cannot justify charging stations because we have no EV’s.

Ms. Jones suggested the County get an energy audit done as a start to prioritizing energy needs. Mr. Mazzanti mentioned that the County hired a design consultant paid for by PG&E a few years ago. Supervisor Gjerde explained his experience that some energy auditors suggest hiring themselves for cheap retrofit projects but leave the more expensive, long-term projects for the County to fund. He offered to research a better set of auditors.

Ms. Sher suggested a few low or no-cost measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the County such as a policy that drivers of County vehicles (employees) not idle when parked and not driving; education of County employees regarding the harm and senselessness of idling vehicles; a moratorium on approving any more drive-thru businesses (more a planning issue); and no more approval of fossil fuel gas stations that will likely soon be obsolete (also a planning issue). There was no response to these suggestions.

Mr. Potts reminded everyone that the MCCAAC was seeking a few practical solutions to the County’s energy problems; we are realistic and understand we will not be able in our lifetimes to enact all of the First Priorities. He asked the County officials if they had any measures they would like to see added to the MCCAAC First Policy Recommendations (1stPR).

Toward the end of the meeting, it appeared that while the BoS punted plans for enactment of many of the 1stPR to the Facilities and Fleet Department, Mr. Dunicliff seeks further guidance from the BoS as to priorities, and means of accomplishing the proposed measures. The prevalent mood at this meeting was largely one of caution and overwhelm, but it was a cautious first step. The MCCAAC intends to follow through with staff and the BoS.

[ prepared by Susan Sher with minor input from Michael Potts (mp) ]