

Thursday, February 3, 2022

1-22-22 GrassRoots Institute - Climate Crisis Workgroup (GRI-CCW) Meeting Notes

Attending: Sandy Turner, Carrie Durkee, Peter McNamee, Marcy Snyder, George Reinhardt, Jim Schoonover, Susan Nutter, and Genevieve Mullins

- I. Sandy provided a brief history and overview of the “Transition Town” movement. It is a global effort to create just, peaceful and environmentally sustainable communities. Sandy sees applicability of the Transition Town movement to the work GRI and other organizations on the coast are doing in regard to social justice and climate action.
- II. Peter summarized recent actions by Supervisor Gjerde via the BoS and the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) on climate action. In particular, MCOG has a committee composed of Supervisors Gjerde and Haschak and Fort Bragg City Council-member Tess Albion-Smith, which has made arrangements for MCOG to be part of a Rural Regional Energy Network (REN). The REN will increase countywide access to state funding for climate action initiatives. MCOG’s participation in the REN will allow it to access state funds to hire full-time staff to work on climate mitigation activities and to access funding for direct subsidies to climate action projects such as Solar Generation and Energy Efficient appliances for consumers. The REN’s several rural counties including Humboldt, Lake, Napa and Mendocino. Peter also noted a number of leadership changes happening in the county government - Supervisor Williams has become chair of the BoS as of January 2022 and CEO Carmel Angelo is retiring effective March 2022. The county is now recruiting for a new CEO and is also debating rewriting the duties of the CEO/CAO. There was a brief discussion about the CCW meeting earlier in January with Supervisor Williams and how GRI can work with him on issues such as Climate Change, Modernization of County Gov, Housing, etc..
- III. Jim presented a report on the task-force that volunteered at the January 8th CCW meeting to work with Marie Jones the Chair of the Mendocino Climate Change Action Advisory Committee (MCCAAC) to recommend changes to the proposed Mendocino County Strategic Plan priorities. A letter focusing on Climate Change priorities was drafted by Marie Jones and edited by Jim Schoonover & Eileen Mitro

clarifying language regarding climate change mitigation strategies. Jim noted further work on a broader list of initiatives the county should be pursuing needs to be developed as requested by Supervisor Williams. There are numerous problems with the process the county has taken in developing the proposed strategic plan priorities and that has resulted in a flawed product to date. More attention needs to be focused on developing “change management” skills in county government otherwise the plan will always be just a concept and very little beneficial action will result.

- IV. Carrie reported on a recent MCCAAC meeting where the letter re county strategic plan priorities was reviewed and adopted. More work is needed to raise public awareness of what climate action the county is taking and what it needs to do - Cathy Monroe is taking the lead to develop a public outreach campaign with a focus on making youth more aware of the need for their involvement. Marcy suggested, focusing on electrification of school buses be a high priority for such a outreach campaign.
- V. Genevieve reported briefly on the work being done to save Mendocino forests by the Trail Stewards organization and in particular stopping logging of Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF). Trail Stewards in conjunction with several community groups and individuals conducted a number of demonstrations, which have resulted in stopping several logging activities in JDSF. They have recently prepared a book titled “This Gem of a Forest” that they are using as a fundraiser asking for a \$50 donation. They are also working to facilitate efforts to increase the involvement of youth in appreciating and preserving county forests.
- VI. Jim reported on recent actions taken at the statewide level to stop the Cal. Public Utility Commission (CPUC) from adopting and implementing new Net Metering regulations and rates that would discourage solar power generation. Tens of thousands of letters, emails and phone calls have flooded Governor Newsom’s Office and the CPUC in opposition to the proposed changes. The public’s actions have resulted in the state reconsidering the rule/rate proposals, but more public pressure is needed to force the CPUC to abandon weakening solar subsidies. GRI is working with the Solar Alliance at the state level to facilitate more public awareness and action on Net Metering.
- VII. The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 5th at 10 am.