



**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Santa Barbara County Planning Commission

FROM: Nathan Eady, Planner III
Development Review Division

HEARING DATE: February 11, 2009

RE: General Plan Amendment Initiation of the Hunter/La Purisima Resort
08GPA-00000-00002
APNs 099-131-008, 099-131-009, 099-131-010
East of Lompoc and Mission Hills on State Route 246
Fourth Supervisorial District

On December 10, 2008 the Planning Commission considered initiation of a General Plan Amendment (GPA) which would allow the development of a resort facility on the La Purisima Golf Course Property. During this hearing the Commissioners reviewed and discussed possible GPA options which were presented by staff. Although individual Commissioners expressed their preference regarding these various options, the Commission did not reach a consensus regarding project initiation. Instead the Commission continued the initiation request to the February 11, 2009 hearing and requested that the project be reviewed by the County's Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC). The AAC reviewed the Hunter/La Purisima Resort project at its hearing on January 7, 2009. The AAC's unapproved minutes and corresponding motion regarding the Hunter/ La Purisima project have been attached to this memo.

Attachments:

Attachment A- Unapproved AAC Minutes from January 7, 2009

Attachment A: Unapproved AAC Minutes from January 7, 2009

I. Hunter/La Purisima Project – Nathan Eady, Planning and Development

On December 10th, the Planning Commission (PC) requested that the AAC review the application for potential impacts on agriculture. Nathan Eady, planner for the project, briefly summarized the project. Comments from the applicant's representative, members of the public, and AAC followed. The AAC received a pre-meeting packet consisting of a project summary, maps, and basic questions to consider when reviewing the project. The project is located on Highway 246 near Lompoc and includes a proposal to change the land use designation of three parcels from Agriculture to Resort/Visitor Serving Commercial. The General Plan Amendment would subsequently allow the development of an 80 room resort, restaurant, spa, banquet facility, and 85 clustered casitas. The project site contains a 100-acre golf course and no agriculture. Surrounding agricultural uses include row crops, dry farming, and cattle grazing. Staff does not support the project and has recommended denial. Public comments included concerns about impacts to adjacent farmland, issues with stormwater runoff, impacts on County agricultural land, and support for the project due to the lack of impacts to agricultural land. AAC comments regarding the project and impacts to agriculture included:

- The original CUP conditions for the golf course protected agriculture, yet there is no agriculture on the parcel.
- Potentially productive agricultural land is onsite and the project would convert it to non-agricultural uses.
- The site is not farmed and is close to existing development. Impacts are minimal to agriculture. If the project is ultimately denied, a similar proposal may be on more productive farmland.
- The project may prohibit intensifying farming practices of adjacent agricultural land. For example converting grazing land and dry farmland to irrigated agriculture.
- The project could create land use conflicts with nearby agriculture and force them out of farming.
- The casitas may create land use conflicts with adjacent agriculture and buffers should be considered.
- Water runoff may become an issue for adjacent agricultural operations.
- Support services proposed by the project may benefit the agricultural industry.
- Rezoning land from Agriculture to Visitor/Serving Commercial could set a bad precedent on rural land countywide.

The AAC thanked the PC and P&D staff for referring the project to the AAC. Most members were very concerned about the precedent the project may set and strongly advised the Planning Commission to address a development project of this magnitude comprehensively and not on a case by case basis.

Motion:

The Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends the Planning Commission not initiate this project or any other rezone from Agriculture to Resort/Visitor Serving Commercial until such time as the County undertakes a comprehensive review of Visitor Serving uses and compatibility with agricultural land. Richard Quandt moved, seconded by Brian Caird and the motion passed by a 7-1-0 vote. June Van Wingerden opposed.