



Local Agency Formation Commission of Napa County
Subdivision of the State of California

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Agenda Item No. 8a (Discussion)

January 30, 2012

TO: Local Agency Formation Commission

FROM: Keene Simonds, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Report on the Strategic Planning Workshop

The Commission will receive a report from staff summarizing central discussion points from the recent strategic planning workshop. This includes participant comments on the Commission's (a) core objectives, (b) key challenges, and (c) near-term goals. The report is being presented for discussion and feedback. The Committee on Policies and Procedures will utilize the report with any identified changes in preparing a two-year strategic plan for future consideration by Commission.

Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs) are political subdivisions of the State of California responsible for regulating the formation and development of local governmental agencies under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. Commonly exercised regulatory powers include creating and expanding cities and special districts for purposes of facilitating orderly urban growth. LAFCOs are required to inform their regulatory actions through various planning activities, namely preparing municipal service reviews and sphere of influence updates every five years. All regulatory actions undertaken by LAFCOs may be conditioned and must be consistent with their written policies and procedures.

A. Background

On November 21, 2011, LAFCO of Napa County ("Commission") held a special meeting to conduct its biennial workshop at the Yountville Town Hall. The workshop's single agenda item was to discuss the current and future role of the Commission for purposes of informing the subsequent development of the agency's first strategic plan. An outside consultant – Alta Mesa Group – facilitated the discussion. All Commissioners and staff were present with the exception of Commissioner Chilton due to an excused absence.

Lewis Chilton, Chair
Councilmember, Town of Yountville

Joan Bennett, Commissioner
Councilmember, City of American Canyon

Juliana Inman, Alternate Commissioner
Councilmember, City of Napa

Brad Wagenknecht, Vice Chair
County of Napa Supervisor, 1st District

Bill Dodd, Commissioner
County of Napa Supervisor, 4th District

Mark Luce, Alternate Commissioner
County of Napa Supervisor, 2nd District

Brian J. Kelly, Commissioner
Representative of the General Public

Gregory Rodeno, Alternate Commissioner
Representative of the General Public

Keene Simonds
Executive Officer

B. Discussion

The workshop was divided into five overlapping exercises. The first two exercises served as orientation activities with participants sharing personal lessons on leadership followed by identifying expectations for the workshop. Significantly, with regards to the latter activity, there appeared to be general consensus among participants to begin using the biennial workshops to “map” or “vision” agency objectives as part of reoccurring two-year strategic plans. The last three exercises consumed the majority of the workshop and involved participants identifying what they believe the Commission’s (a) core objectives, (b) key challenges, and (c) near-term goals to be over the next two years. A summary of the comments provided during these three latter exercises follows.

Core Objectives

Participants were asked to identify what they believe should be the Commission’s core objectives in administering LAFCO law in Napa County. The following responses (paraphrased) were recorded sequentially.

- Role should be similar to a credit rating agency; identify what works; identify what does not work; and identify what could work better.
- Continue to provide independent oversight; value/strengthen independent role.
- Think “big picture.”
- Focus on service efficiencies in studies.
- Emphasize service sustainability/resiliency in studies; ask “what if” questions.
- Particular attention is needed in overseeing small unincorporated communities in Napa County given the lack of community resources.
- Studies should explore more reorganization (structural and functional) opportunities to make governmental services more efficient and resilient.
- Facilitate cooperation and mediate conflict among local agencies.
- Resolve local conflicts with a set of higher standards and priorities.

Key Challenges

Participants were asked to identify what they believe are the key challenges in the Commission fulfilling its core objectives in Napa County. The following responses (paraphrased) were recorded sequentially.

- Wearing a “LAFCO” hat; considering actions before the Commission involving members’ appointing authorities.
- Navigating through local conflicts.
- Balancing “processes” with “outcomes.”
- Scaling problem solving efforts to address fixable issues; avoid “black-holes.”
- Staying flexible; knowing when to defer to local conditions.
- Avoid breaking in bending to local conditions; precedents matter.
- Staying on course; need a consistent vision for the agency; ground rules need to be set and maintained to guide local agencies and general public.

Near-Term Goals

Participants were asked to identify near-term goals for the Commission consistent with its core objectives and perceived challenges as discussed earlier in the workshop. The following responses (paraphrased) were recorded sequentially.

- Expand the use and relevance of municipal service reviews by focusing how local governmental services can be more efficient and resilient.
- Proactively explore opportunities for governmental organizational changes (structural and functional) under LAFCOs authority; law enforcement cited.
- Establish more “anticipatory” discussions between Commissioners and staff in preparing studies with respect to key policy, service, and governance issues; utilize Commissioners in preparing determinations.
- Prioritize water and transportation issues; serve as a leader in these areas.
- Schedule study/informational sessions with local agencies; invite land use authorities to give presentations on key planning activities.
- Consider orienting spheres of influence to time-horizons (i.e., 5, 10, 20 years).
- Improve coordination with school districts.

C. Commission Review

Commissioners are encouraged to discuss and provide feedback on the report and its summary of core objectives, key challenges, and near-term goals. In particular, staff is seeking feedback in terms of identifying any additions, subtractions, or edits within any of the referenced sections. As discussed at the workshop, the Committee on Policies and Procedures (Luce, Rodeno, and Simonds) will utilize this report in preparing the agency’s first strategic plan with two-year objectives for consideration at a future meeting.

Attachments: none