



MERCED COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Minutes

The fourth One Voice meeting for 2006-07 was held Thursday, December 14, 2006 from 9:00-10:00 a.m. at the Multicultural Arts Center, 645 Main Street, Merced.

In Attendance

Jim Abbate, Alia Corporation	Tom Kaljian, Real Estate Broker
Katie Albertson, Merced County CEO Office	Jim Kanabay, MCEDCO
Paul Alderete, Los Banos Unified School District	Marjie Kirn, MCAG
Lee Anderson, Merced County Office of Education	Gene Lieb, Los Banos Enterprise
Susan Armstrong, MCAG CAC Committee	Jim Marshall, City of Merced
Jesse Arthur, MCAG Citizens Advisory Committee	Mike McAdam, KUBB/KHTN Radio
George Azevedo, PMZ Realty	Scott McBride, City of Atwater
Aaron Barcelas, Los Banos School Board	Stan Mollart, McSwain School District
Jessica Beddow, Ranchwood Homes	Steve Newvine, Merced Chamber
Don Bergman, Courtesy Automotive	Joe Oliveira, City of Merced
Terry Brace, Merced City School District	Elaine Post, City of Los Banos
Jesse Brown, MCAG	Steve Rath, City of Los Banos
Stacie Dabbs, Office of Congressman Cardoza	Robert Rodarte, Citigroup
Patti Dosetti, Merced Union High School District	Larry Salinas, UC Merced
Hicham Eltal, Merced Irrigation District	Andree Soares, Los Banos School District
Lori Flanders, MCAG	Ernest Sopp, Buhach Colony High School
Robert Fore, Merced Union High School District	Larry Pitts, Unilever
Anna Fuentes, MCAG	Candice Steelman, MCAG
Isaias Franco, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	John Thompson, Edward Jones
Scott Galbraith, MCEDCO	Mike Villalta, City of Los Banos
Dick Gerbi, Los Banos	Mary Ward, Assembly Member Galgiani
Rich Green, MCAG	Charles White, Realtor
Justin Hendrix, City of Atwater	Janet Young, UC Merced
Connie Hunter, Atwater Chamber of Commerce	

1. **Introductions**

2. **Public comment period.**

No comments.

3. **Priority Projects Process – Jesse Brown, Executive Director, MCAG**

Mr. Brown gave a brief summary of the past three One Voice meetings for 2006. He explained the brainstorming activities that created the list of projects to be considered. Projects were broken into four categories - Transportation, Economic Development, Water and Education. Mr. Brown explained that the group would need to recommend a top priority in each category and an overall top priority. Mr. Brown explained that the group's recommendations would be presented to the MCAG Governing Board for approval.

Attendees were given priority ranking cards and asked to pick their top three priorities. The following projects were listed:

Economic Development – Federal

- Economic Development Strategic Planning
- Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs
- Manufacturing Outreach
- Infrastructure and Technology Business Park
- Technical Capacity and Training Assessment

Economic Development – State

- Merced County Enterprise Zone
- Industrial Infrastructure
- Relief from the economic penalties imposed by SB975
- Expand CDBG Eligibility for Small Businesses
- Renewable Energy Projects
- Regional Wastewater Plan

Transportation – State/Federal

- Request Interstate Status for Hwy 99
- Los Banos Bypass
- Campus Parkway
- Atwater-Merced Expressway
- Connecting Hilmar and Turlock with new Hwy 99 Interchange

Water – State/Federal

- Oppose Lowering Arsenic Levels in Drinking Water
- Temperance Flat Dam
- Westside Regional Drainage Plant
- San Joaquin River Restoration Act
- Flood Control District
- Merced Ground Water Basin

Once the audience reviewed the cards, they were given the opportunity to ask questions or provide feedback.

Steve Rath, City of Los Banos, wanted the group to know that the project “Oppose Lowering Arsenic Levels in Drinking Water” does not mean they necessarily oppose the cause, just the cost involved with the filtration of the water.

On this issue, Paul Alderete, Los Banos Unified School District, wanted the group to understand that many schools in Los Banos utilize water wells to supply their drinking water. The cost to filter these water wells would be \$150,000-\$200,000. He also mentioned that the Central Valley Education Coalition is expressing opposition of lowering arsenic levels in drinking water due to the cost involved.

Mike McAdam, KUBB/KHTN radio, wanted to know if the Enterprise Zone passed for Merced County.

Scott Galbraith, Merced County Economic Development, responded that results are not official at this point, but there are high hopes that it will pass.

Hicham Eltal, Merced Irrigation District, suggested splitting the Water Projects between State and Federal. He feels One Voice was more successful with the State Projects during the last trip to Sacramento and believes it is time for the Federal Government to help with their fair share. He also suggested not taking the Groundwater Basin back to the State, due to funding already provided.

Candice Steelman, MCAG, wanted the group to know that the Education members of One Voice already decided on their top project priorities and that is why the One Voice group did not receive a priority ranking card for those projects.

Lee Andersen, Superintendent of Merced County Office of Education, explained that the Engineering Academy project was recommended by Cardoza’s office as being more likely to receive funding than any of the other projects listed. This project is more likely to

be funded due to the lack of education in this field to help solve "real world problems". The Engineering Academy will allow the community to work more closely with UC Merced. He expressed that this does not mean that the projects involving reading, transportation, and school facilities would not be presented.

Voting Results

The top priorities chosen in each category are as follows:

Economic Development – Federal: Infrastructure and Technology Business Park

Economic Development – State: Industrial Infrastructure

Transportation: Los Banos Bypass

Water: Oppose Lowering Arsenic Levels in Drinking Water

Top Priority

Attendees were next asked to choose one overall priority.

Larry Salinas, UC Merced, informed the group that Congress zeroed out all earmarks, including one for Campus Parkway. He suggested that Campus Parkway be moved to the top priority due to the loss of these funds.

Mike McAdam, KUBB/KHTN Radio, reminded everyone that the Los Banos Bypass also had earmarks that were zeroed out two years prior.

Jesse Brown reiterated that, although a project is not a "top priority", other projects in each category would be included for the One Voice trips.

The Los Banos Bypass was chosen as the top One Voice priority

4. Fact Sheets

Candice Steelman explained that One Voice creates a handout for legislatures and their staff called a fact sheet. A fact sheet is a one page double-sided document that has a summary of facts regarding a specific project on the front page and facts about Merced County on the back of the page. Mrs. Steelman informed the group that she will need members of One Voice to create the summaries and MCAG staff will format accordingly.

Jesse Brown, MCAG Staff, wanted the group to know that MCAG relies on their expertise to ensure the summaries are accurate.

5. One Voice Trips

Candice Steelman advised the group to contact MCAG for final confirmation of hotel needs in Sacramento, January 30-February 1. One Voice has contracted with the Hyatt Regency at \$166 a night. She also explained that there is an obligation with the number of rooms blocked, so if the hotel can not sell the rooms due to last-minute cancellations, the rooms still need to be paid for. A hotel has not yet been chosen for the Mar. 25-29, 2007 Washington D.C. trip. A date will be set for a briefing meeting for those going on the Sacramento trip.

6. Other comments

None.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10am.