

## Second Camino Community Meeting

April 13, 2015 – Camino School Gym

Sponsored by the Camino Community Action Committee (CCAC)

The meeting began at 6:04 with Mark Stanley facilitating and Judy Morris capturing flip-chart comments. Approximately 25 – 30 people attended the meeting. *The moderator's comments are in blue italics.*

### *Upcoming CCAC events:*

*Annual Clean Up – Saturday, April 25, 8:00 until noon, SPI area off Snows Road*

*Annual Craft Fair and Flea Market – Saturday, May 2, 8:00 until 1:00, Apple Mill Storage*

*National Night Out – Tuesday, August 4, 5:30 until 8:30, Camino Church Park*

*CCAC Barn Dance – Saturday, August 22, 5:30 until 8:30, Rainbow Orchards*

Later, people were also reminded about the mini grant program CCAC is funding and reminded that the deadline is May 1 at noon.

*Mark introduced Matt Smith, Camino School Superintendent and Principal, and thanked him for allowing the group to use the facilities again. He later introduced our Supervisor Brian Veerkamp, and thanked him for coming.*

*The 21 summary flip-chart pages from the first meeting were posted on the walls so people could refresh their memory of comments made.*

*Mark also gave a short summary of the feedback shared at the first meeting. The CCAC website has the complete summary of the first meeting. [www.caminocac.com](http://www.caminocac.com). The meeting tonight is to provide an opportunity for people to share new concerns that hadn't already been addressed, or give a different perspective.*

- ✓ Residents approve of the focus on Camino School.*
- ✓ The business district needs revitalization while keeping the "village feel".*
- ✓ Infrastructure improvements should probably include only upgrades on walking and biking safety; with a hope to connect to the El Dorado Trail*
- ✓ Residents approve of the current mix of residential, agriculture and forestry*

### *Ground rules for the discussion:*

- ✓ It is guaranteed that everyone will not agree on everything.*
- ✓ Opinions must be heard and not judged. Arguing or trying to convince others to agree is not productive.*

*The county planner who attended last time was unable to come to this meeting, but agreed with the summary the CCAC developed from the first meeting.*

### Comments

- Matt Smith spoke of the need for technical infrastructure for the school, downtown and the entire community. High speed internet is needed and could also encourage cottage industries to start and flourish.
- The town has declined in the past decade or more with many fewer businesses. A "Main Street" feel should be a goal. We need to set a growth pattern for businesses and encourage them.
- The lack of parking in downtown is a major drawback and we need to create legal parking.
- There was concern over "private roads" and a feeling that the county should take on responsibility for some of them to improve them to help with traffic problems.
- A "historic overlay" should be developed for the town, but the community first needs to determine what the town should look like. Any future "overlay" also needs to be implemented.

- There was some mention of a town like Los Gatos but also feedback that Camino doesn't want that.
- We need to develop standards to protect Camino's plan.
- *Mark said that this meeting was a first step.*
- *Mark explained that the county Long Range Planning can help with this. The process will not be rapid, but must begin.*
- Previous meeting ideas about walking/biking trails should not interact with current traffic. It would ruin the ambience of the area and the Apple Hill Growers. All roads should stay "country roads". Don't allow the area to look urban.
- *Mark commented that safety for walker and bikers also needs to be considered.*

#### Apple Hill Grower seasonal traffic comments

- The one month of Apple Hill Grower traffic should be accepted for the economic benefit it brings to the members and the county as a whole.
- We have to be aware of where we came from – agriculture and logging
- We will have to fight to convince the Board of Supervisors that we should bring a mill here.
- The highway closures during the harvest season are a problem. The traffic flow must be improved or the ranches can't be reached and the farmers will go out of business. Could Carson Road be turned into a one-way road during the high traffic weekends?
- Residents in the heart of Apple Hill cannot be inconvenienced for the entire season with changing a road to one-way.
- County transportation must be able to find a solution.
- Residents can "have fun" with the traffic and it shows how different we are; people are usually friendly
- According to Matt Smith, the traffic has become difficult for school buses for a longer period and for both Thursdays and Fridays. We need to improve "chokepoints" that cause the most delays.
- When seasonal traffic is funneled off Highway 50 at Cedar Grove, downtown Camino is put in gridlock. Too many visitors have one or two ranches as their destination.
- The shuttle bus helped and not now being in service makes traffic even worse.
- Could the SPI site be used for parking and a future shuttle? (It was the season when the USFS site was closed on Eight Mile Road.)
- The shuttle was paid for by grants and Apple Hill Growers contributions. The shuttle bus stopped at *all* businesses along the routes, not just member ranches.
- The grant was on a two-year cycle so there may be hope for the future?
- An Apple Hill grower said that most (if not all) of our comments had been previously discussed by the Apple Hill growers.
- We/they need to let the residents know that they are aware of and working on traffic issues.
- Some people are not concerned by Apple Hill traffic and don't find it a problem.
- How can traffic information be accessible for visitors? CCAC website and Apple Hill Growers website?

#### The SPI Mill Site Comments

- The Supervisors need to fight for the mill. "We want it back." Most of the businesses that depended on the mill are gone. SPI won't help with the solution.
- Camino and the county need to talk to the Emmerson (SPI) family about what their plans are for the property. Earlier local plans were determined to be for "future generations".
- How much dialogue have we had with SPI? They had a plan for the south side of Carson Road but do we know what SPI has planned?
- *Camino is not the only SPI mill that has been closed. Many small communities have been affected. There are some examples of towns still flourishing after a mill has gone.*

- There was a discussion about other mill towns, such as Martel and Arcata, and how they had coped
- SPI “got what they wanted 6 years ago” and now they’re gone. We can’t change that, but need to know what our options are. They bought the operation for the timberland.
- *Mark offered to meet with SPI representatives and has decades of working with the company and USFS throughout the state. He could ask what their long-term goals are for the Camino property. Without knowing their future plans, deciding how Camino can plan for the future will be more difficult, if not impossible.*
- Tearing down historic buildings at SPI without any notice has caused much distrust.
- One tactic mentioned: tell them what we want. Put our foot down to the BOS and SPI. Draw a line in the sand about how we can determine our future. And come up with a plan as a community.
- Supervisor Veerkamp said the Board cannot read Camino’s mind.
- The SPI site is the largest piece of heavy industrially zoned land in the county.
- Is it a “Superfund site” and toxic?
- Judy reported that she spoke with the head of Environmental Management today and was told the department visited the site again and had determined it is safe. The first visit was 5 weeks ago and again today. It might be best if the report could be presented in writing. She reported it was not a Superfund site and was not toxic.
- One resident spoke of what she was told by a SPI representative when they arrived in Camino. “We can do anything we want and have dealt with counties before.”
- Someone said “they” (SPI) are willing to wait for generations.
- SPI is the largest private landowner in the western US.
- Any future meeting with SPI must be in collaboration with the county and Mark as the Camino representative because of his extensive experience. SPI should be told Camino is going through the planning process for determining what it wants for the future and information from SPI is critical for the effort.

#### Additional comments

- What about making Camino into an artists’ colony?
- What about having a regional wine tasting room where all the wineries could sell their products? An example: Clarksburg and their Sugar Mill. It is a bit crowded, but retains some rural character.
- Does Camino have any ordinances that would preclude a store coming to town like the Dollar General store in Georgetown? We need standards to keep this from happening.
- Georgetown has a historic overlay, which is giving them some protection.
- With both Placerville and Pollock Pines businesses so close, a business as mentioned wouldn’t consider Camino an economically viable site for a store.
- What we have and don’t have: the mill is gone, agriculture is thriving, and tourism is also successful because of the agriculture. We have to make sure both continue to thrive. Water is a concern.
- The tourism season has to be extended with different crops. Apple Hill Growers have been working at that for decades. Did people know some Apple Hill members grow and sell blueberries?
- If you extend the ranch marketing season, would there be pushback from residents?
- How could we market downtown Camino? Make it a destination village. Blueberry Hill?
- This is a marketing issue. Roads and marketing go hand in hand.
- What about a RV park like the one in Plymouth which is always full?
- The KOA in Shingle Springs is very successful and is NOT on a sewer system.
- Could Camino be the Gateway to the Crystal Basin which has between 300,000 and 400,000 visitors a year?
- We need economic consideration for future businesses.

- Camino should serve its residents, not tourists.
- *Mark questioned that if the residents are not bringing in enough business for them to survive, how can tourism be ignored.*
- A concern about coyotes living at the mill was expressed.
- There may be new thinking on how the forests are being managed after the devastating King Fire. Could alternative forest businesses take over the mill site?
- What about a biomass industry. The speaker said the county is behind that. Can we get grants and loans to help?
- We would get challenges from environmental groups.
- *Mark said there must be a market for the product **before** a biomass plant or other facility could ever be considered successful. Any chance of loans would be contingent upon a guaranteed 20 year supply of forest products. and they cannot do that (Mark says to delete this) Most think that the that the supply is from USFS but they cannot guarantee a 20 year supply. There are endless environmental challenges to all attempts at ideas such as this. And this is and has been a challenge all along the Sierras. At a regional level, the USFS does not have the resources to treat all lands, let alone pay for NEPA documents in order to do treatments.*

#### Next step ideas

- What are our next steps?
- You have to be willing to participate.
- Create a Camino vision on the points of agreement. We need to put the ideas out to the community. If people don't respond, the involved people will do their best.
- How can we best get consensus?
- We need to factor in funding.
- We need a historic overlay.
- Planning Department can help, but we have to do it.
- We will work with BOS and keep everything public.
- "The world is run by those who show up!"
- Kids can't stay in Camino and earn a living.
- Historic buildings are over 50 years old, such as the Camino Mill site, mill houses, Sugar Pine building, and pretty much all of downtown.
- What tools do we have and what options?
- Benchmarks must be determined.
- Next meeting? It is impossible to say two months or any specific time without the meeting with SPI taking place first.
- We also have to interact with Planning.
- The outcome of Camino's planning must be shared with the Supervisors.
- In November, Camino and Pollock Pines voted that they want progress (based on votes on local EDC measures).