

**MINUTES**  
**Inverness Ridge Association General Meeting**  
**January 22, 2022**  
**Via Zoom**

Introduction: Tim Stanton

Tim Stanton welcomed the approximately 75 people (54 logons with many representing two community members) who joined the 39<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting of the Inverness Ridge Association via Zoom, extending a special welcome to new residents who had joined our hillside community in 2021. New residents were invited to wave to us on screen and to send messages via chat with their names and local addresses. Tim also introduced Brandon Barragan who is Education and Diversity Outreach Coordinator at PRNSA and who ably assisted us with the technical details involved in taking the general meeting online. Tim then referred participants to the IRA website <http://invernessridge.info/>. There is information available there about IRA board and PRERAB membership, the road paving project, and fire safety.

Treasurer's Report: Patty Wimpfheimer

As of November 9, 2021, our balance was \$8,217.51. Total income through January 9 was \$643.27 (\$350.00 in checks, comprising \$100 in dues and \$250 in chipping fees; \$193.23 via PayPal, comprising \$48.06 in dues and \$145.17 in chipping fees; \$100 via Venmo for dues; \$0.04 in interest earned). Expenses were Square Space (\$72.00) plus \$6.77 Venmo fees. The current balance as of January 9 was \$8,788.84.

Nominations and election of IRA Board members: Leah Light

Our By-Laws specify that we should have a minimum of 9 board members and a maximum of 16. At present we have six continuing board members who were elected in 2021 for two-year terms and who will continue to serve on the board this year: Ron Bennett, Sydne Bortel, Leah Light, Julie Merk, Tim Stanton, and Patty Wimpfheimer. Five board members were elected in 2020 and their terms are ending: Chris Eckert, Jennifer Howard, Michael Ongerth, Marcus Thygesen, David Wilson. Marcus Thygesen will be retiring from the board; we are very grateful for his board service and for the fact that he will continue on PRERAB. The remaining four board members have all generously agreed to be nominated for additional two-year terms. In addition, three people have also agreed to be nominated for new terms: Joe Burgess, Julie Liss, and Jim Wagner. These seven community members were nominated, seconded, and elected for two-year terms.

Paradise Ranch Estates Road Advisory Board (PRERAB): Randy Merk and Michael Ongerth

We have somewhat over six miles of paved and dirt roads. We are responsible for repairing these roads and for managing vegetation at easements. Drake's View Drive has 50-foot easements, 25 feet each side of the center of the road; other roads have 20-foot easements.

Mike reminded us that PRERAB is an all-volunteer group watching, planning and working on our 6-mile network of private roads. The county doesn't maintain the road system. A small portion of our property tax dollars are recycled into money that can be used to maintain our private roads. PRERAB oversees and recommends to the county all work projects.

Mike has driven all the roads during and after recent storms and reports that we're in pretty good shape, especially for this time of year and the wetter than usual winter we've had so far. The dirt roads have their normal winter potholes and gulying. We've also had some gulying, a few small slides, and erosion that have spilled dirt on the roadways (e.g., E. Robert and DVD). Flat sections can have ponds that accumulate roadbase that splashes out and causes further erosion when driven through. Thanks to those residents who have cleared tree debris from the roads and around drainage ditches and culverts; this really helps keep roads passable and water from backing up and flooding certain spots. Drainage issues are the chief cause of dirt road damage. A few trees on Drake's View Drive and Bayview Place will be cleared as well.

Work performed in early January includes ditch and culvert cleaning; roadside edge cleaning (dirt and tree debris); small slide repair; and removal of two trees near the roadway. The next project will be in the spring: grading dirt roads, repairing potholes, and minor repairs once the rainy season is over. PRERAB has been trying to minimize spending money on repairs which will be addressed more fully by the repaving project.

Randy summarized the PRERAB budget and finances. Annually we receive a small portion of the total property taxes paid by property owners of PRE. This past year that amounted to \$60,845 which subsidized the projects described above. Each year, we could easily spend every dollar we receive on maintenance projects. There's always more to do than money to pay for it: scraping dirt roads, fixing potholes, drainage repairs, cutting back roadside vegetation, re-establishing driver sight lines, and an endless list of roadside trees to trim or remove. This past year we spent \$58,544. That leaves us, currently, with a reserve of just over \$110,000. This is probably not enough to cover the cost of a major road washout, which could cut off homeowners from their property. This level of rainy-day fund certainly isn't enough to cover the cost of repaving Drake's View Drive.... that's a once-in-a-generation project that requires special separate funding, as will hopefully be provided by the April vote on Measure R (see next item).

### Paving Task Force: Ken Drexler and Julie Merk

The Marin County Board of Supervisors has approved an election in Paradise Ranch Estates on April 12<sup>th</sup> to vote on Measure R, the road paving project for our private roads. This election is the result of work done by the IRA - PRERAB Task Force since 2018. The Petition requesting the election was presented to the Board of Supervisors at the start of January 2022 and was signed by more than 70% of property owners, as required by state law.

The central part of the paving project is repaving Drake's View Drive – the one road all of us depend on to get to or from our properties. It is about two miles long and was last

paved in 1993, 29 years ago. As you may have noticed, despite PRERAB's maintenance work since 1993, Drake's View has deteriorated, particularly at its lower end. The paving project will resurface all of Drake's View and should ensure that it remains usable for another two decades or so. The work on Drake's View alone accounts for 70 percent of the paving project cost.

In addition, the Task Force has identified five other small projects on the side roads. In order of their priority, these projects are on Lower Dover, Baywood, the Sunnyside-Dover-Lower Dover intersection, East Robert and West Robert. This work has two objectives

- To upgrade key portions of the routes we all would need to use in case of an emergency in PRE which made leaving PRE essential for going either up or down.
- To upgrade portions of the roads in PRE which are chronic maintenance problems. We have about six miles of roads in PRE, a bit over two miles of which are paved. The remainder, about three and a half miles, are dirt roads which require constant maintenance. Although each year the PRE Permanent Road Division (PREPRD) receives property tax funds to maintain the roads in PRE, these funds are barely sufficient to pay for the annual maintenance of the dirt roads. By upgrading a few troublesome portions of these dirt roads, the Task Force hopes to reduce the cost of the needed annual maintenance.

The final part of the project will be to provide for vegetation management work that has been done in PRE since before 2006. That work keeps the edges of Drake's View and other roads clear and cuts trees that endanger our roads and traffic on them. This portion of the funding will also rebuild the financial reserve maintained by the Permanent Road Division to address unexpected road problems.

The next step is the vote on Measure R on April 12<sup>th</sup>. If two-thirds of the persons who vote in the election approve it, the project will move forward. Note: All (and only) persons who have registered as voters in PRE can vote. You do not need to own property. If you are either an owner or a tenant registered to vote in PRE, the Task Forces urges you to vote "Yes."

Then, if the project is approved, ILS Associates, the Task Force's consulting engineers, will prepare formal specifications for the work. These specifications will be used by the Public Works Department to solicit written bids from paving firms to do the work.

After the bids are received and a winner announced, we will, for the first time, see how much the work will cost. (Until then all figures are estimates.) It is likely that the work to be done will need to be adjusted so that the funds raised by the election are sufficient to pay for it. In making adjustments, the Task Force will look to priority of the different

parts of the project, which are listed in the Petition, in making these adjustments. The 23-page Petition is available on the IRA website.

Once any preparatory work not included in the bid has been completed, the paving and other road work will start. Based on the paving done in 1993, this work is likely to extend over six or seven days.

The Paving Task Force thanks community members for their support for its work to date.

#### Voting Procedures for Measure R: Julie Merk

Julie reminded us that Measure R needs approval from 2/3 of the registered owners and tenants (residents) who cast votes in the April election. The election will be held via mail ballot with a postage-paid return envelope included with the ballot; the envelope must be postmarked by April 12 to be valid, so it is important to mail it back in a timely way. People may register to vote at their PRE address until March 29. People who have not received a ballot by March 20 should call the county to check the status of their registration and ballot mailing. See [marincounty.org/depts.rv](http://marincounty.org/depts.rv) for information on registration, deadlines for registration and voting, a video on how to vote by mail, etc.

#### Firewise: David Wilson

David reminded us that we live in an area where fire danger is ever-present, citing the Vision Fire which claimed more than 40 homes and the more recent Woodward Fire that led to evacuation warnings. Thus, mitigation measures at both the individual and community levels are important. At the individual level, we are required by law to have defensible space around all structures on our properties and to clear roadside vegetation that might impede passage on the road for vehicles. Information about defensible space is available at the IRA website <http://invernessridge.info>, <https://firesafemarin.org/>, and <https://www.marinwildfire.org>. Grant money is now available from Measure C funds (the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority) for individuals who want to improve defensible space, with availability dependent on annual inspections. Compliance with recommendations based on annual inspections by the Marin Fire Department for defensible space management is necessary for obtaining grant funds. Among measures that should be taken are covering woodpiles with nonflammable materials and removing trees that are less than 10 feet from propane tanks. At the community level, PRERAB monitors vegetation regularly and organizes chipping days sponsored by IRA to augment those funded by Measure C. We have also maintained our Firewise Community certification, essential for obtaining Measure C, county, and state funds. Measure C funds have already provided for tree work done by the county fire department on roads adjacent to the park and on private parcels. In particular clearance along Sunnyside and lower Dover, has been carried out. Further work on private parcels will continue this spring.

#### Question and Answer Period for Committee Reports

During a question and answer period for committee reports, several issues were considered. These include the following:

- A dangerous hairpin turn above 100 Drake's View Drive where a cement truck overturned was noted. Visibility concerns are currently being addressed. The underlying road surface is in stable condition and is unlikely to erode. However, easing the curve would be prohibitively expensive.
- Concerns were raised about communicating with PG&E about work on tree limbs and powerlines along evacuation routes. Mike Ongerth noted that PG&E works with multiple contractors which change and whose crews change, so continuity is problematic. PG&E does do some trimming, but it was felt that more could be done as large hazard trees are not dealt with; PG&E claims that it lacks appropriate equipment to carry out the work the community believes necessary.
- A question was asked about what would happen if we failed to get the necessary 2/3 of votes on Measure R in April. Would it be possible to do a graduated tax based on the locations of parcels that determine proportional road use? Ken Drexler explained that state codes allow for such an approach IF all property owners agree. However, we opted early on for a permanent road division and that requires a fixed tax for all parcels. If we were to opt out of a permanent road division, we would lose about \$60,000 a year in tax contributions we receive for road upkeep. It was also noted that all residents of PRE need the entirety of Drake's View Drive for evacuation purposes and that location on the hill is not a predictor of actual use.

Guest: Jerry Meral

Tim Stanton introduced our guest speaker Jerry Meral. Jerry has been active in water conservation programs at local and statewide levels. He lives in Seahaven and has been active as a volunteer with the Point Reyes Seashore invasive plant group. His talk dealt with plants that pose a severe fire hazard. He recommended that the following plants not be planted and, if present, should be removed: pampas grass, echium (Pride of Madeira), French broom, bamboo, rosemary (except for small plants used for culinary purposes), cypress, acacia, eucalyptus. The Firesafe Marin website provides information about these species.

Guest: Dennis Rodoni (Marin County Board of Supervisors)

Dennis congratulated us on our successful petition to the Marin County Board of Supervisors for getting Measure R on the ballot. He noted that there were no major changes to District 4 during the redistricting process but that his district now includes more Spanish-speaking residents in the San Rafael area.

With respect to fire safety, Measure C (passed in March 2020) has a \$19,000,000 budget this year. Home hardening is a priority as are evacuation routes and clearance of dangerous vegetation. A citizens' oversight committee has been formed to oversee dispersal of Measure C

funds; Jennifer Howard is a member of this group. Dennis indicated that Palo Alto and other communities have recognized Marin County as a model for fire prevention planning.

The county budget is balanced for the next four to five years. Homelessness, affordable housing, emergency preparedness, climate change, infrastructure, and equity matters are priorities. We will need to create 14,000 housing units over the next few years—10,000 in cities and 4,000 in unincorporated Marin. Failure to meet this goal will lead to a shift in rules for development with less local control. The pressure will be on utilization of open space near cities.

A food ordinance program will be brought forward with the goal of eliminating noncompostable plastic food containers and focusing on reusable containers. A further education effort is to reduce solid waste disposal around recreation areas.

Short-term rental regulations are needed, especially for coastal areas where the supply of permanent housing has decreased. This demographic shift has consequences for communities because the population of service workers, teachers, and fireman has been impacted. For instance, Inverness has not been able to recruit volunteer firemen.

Concerns have been raised about PG&E's treework. Dennis recommended that Mike Ongert contact him about tree-work projects such as the one underway on Lucas Valley Road.

#### Question and Answer Session for Dennis Rodoni

Issues discussed included codes for ignition-resistant homes, home hardening, and improvement of broadband access and quality.

#### Evacuation Routes: Jennifer Howard

A map of the evacuation routes can be found on the IRA website. The principal route uphill involves Drake's View Drive to Behr Lane to Sunnyside to the fire road towards Limantour. The fire road can also be accessed by turning off Drake's View Drive at Sunnyside. The code for locks on the gates at the two ends of the fire road from the Sunnyside to Limantour Road is 0911. After entering the code, push the lock upward and then downward to open. An additional route is via the Dover/Douglas intersection, following Dover to Douglas and then out to Laurel over private property and down to Sir Francis Drake.