

Monday, January 05, 2009 (file cac182)

To: Dan Breedon

Subj: Topics of concern for the general plan

Ref A: E. Tuchinsky, Ready or not, here it comes. California develops green-building code-new to builders? CN&R Dec 31, 09, pp19-23

Ref B: C.White, Revolution on the range: The rise of a new ranch in the American West, Island Press, Audubon Jan/Feb 08 pp62-64 reviewed by H.Rosner

Ref C: A. Rimas et al, Beef: The untold story of how milk, meat and muscle shaped the world

Ref D: M. Grunwald, Wasting our watts, Time Vol 173 #1, Jan 12, 09, pp32-36

Highlights:

Ref A lists the code changes for 2010 and 2011 with little detail. The 19% low moisture wood appears to be the most controversial. How you determine 20% less water usage or divert 50% of construction waste introduces questions of definition.

Ref B & C describes new governmental policies re to environmental stewardship associated with grazing.

Ref D picks up on Amory Lovin's (Rocky Mountain Institute) nudge for efficiency as opposed to the more conservative Jimmy Carter's suck up, turn down the thermostatic and put on a sweater approach.

Potential implications for the Butte County general plan:

1. Per Ref A the general problem of humidity control in stud, attic, subfloor and living spaces needs to be discussed broadly from the point of view of health and thermal isolation goals. We need more than "feel good" statements about general California policies over a wide range of environments. Log houses, slab/T foundations, fiberglass/foamed/straw insulation are examples of the wide variety of situations that require moisture control. How this fits with UBC/International codes needs to be defined. The use of on-site timber/stick construction or prefabricated structures pose unique problems. Cost is a major consideration. Post construction drying, use of anti-fungal agents and permeable house wrap are topics of interest. The use of mixed hard/soft wood, steel, composite structures are topics of interest. Modifications of Title 24 part II at the time of publication of the final Butte County general plan will need to be coordinated/flagged. Annotations of "to be determined (TBD)" or "to be resolved (TBR)" may be appropriate. The building standard revolving fund fee itself needs to be debated. Who will perform the studies? It can be argued that this is a normal function of government, their standard agencies and professional societies/research organizations. I am assuming that the legislature envisions the creation of an existing or to-be-created agency that will resolve the issues arising from the new "requirements". If the 19% enclosed space moisture level is backed up by solid evidence we may need to provide a formal "dry-down" procedure

before insulation and closure. Simple and or dynamic venting of enclosed spaces with potential conflicts with energy savings and wildland fire protection will be a topics of interest as we make claims for long lived structures that minimize life costs and sequester carbon.

2. Ref B & C offers hope for non-vegetarians and ecology oriented range managers. In remote areas of Butte County we need to be assured that the responsible governmental entities establish multiple goals and a monitoring system to assure adherence. Multiple uses are a topic of great interest. The work of federal and state research agencies on combined forest and range management practices needs to be evaluated and policies established.
3. Ref D on energy efficiency that does not necessarily impact quality of life is taking hold as one of the primary tools for handling the transition to a mastery of earth heat-balance and reduced dependence on foreign energy sources. In addition to many of the gimmicks and approaches with little or no cost/benefit backup I have described in previous memos, a key player that we need to monitor carefully is the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) energy-efficiency Lab in Knoxville Tenn. This is a well respected organization that electric utility industry funds and hopefully will receive additional governmental funding.
4. As we approach the final draft of the Butte County General Plan we need to encourage DCS and planning agency members to provide references/"because statements" in controversial areas. If the members of the citizen advisory committee want to make comments, it would be helpful to distribute machine readable text with a formal procedure for inserting flagged comments or encourage collaborative efforts by optimally sized teams to resolve issues.