



## Government Affairs (December 2017)

In January of 2017, the MCHA Executive Committee submitted some organizational changes to the Government Affairs Committee (GAC) and MCHA board. These changes included revamping the GAC meeting agenda, and the voting approval process on Member, Agency, and Governmental requests for support. The board approved the requests, and the changes have been positive.

Soon after the Big Sur floods and bridge closures, our 5th District Supervisor Mary Adams, formed the Big Sur Task Force to act as a clearing house for all agencies and stake holders working together to get Big Sur up and running as soon as possible. MCHA/GAC was asked to be a part of the Task Force, and was instrumental along with others to get a shuttle service funded and up and running for use by both hospitality workers and visitors. Big Sur is now well on the road to full recovery.

Approval and implementation of a long term sustainable water source remains Hospitality's number one priority. The GAC continues to work closely with the Coalition of Peninsula Businesses in supporting their efforts to achieve this goal. (See Coalition article for full details). MCHA continues to support the "Water Supply Project" to include at a minimum a 6.4 desal plant.

In 2017, the County of Monterey retained SCRAMP to manage the operation of Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and all ancillary facilities on the site which is owned by the County. County staff was also considering other options. After review of all options, MCHA/GAC decided that SCRAMP had the better business plan, and supported them as the process moved through the Board of Supervisors.

After numerous meetings with our members and industry professionals, the GAC recommended that MCHA take a position against Short Term Rentals. A policy statement reflecting this position was approved by both the Executive Committee and Board. Currently Pacific Grove is allowing STR's and their city council adopted and passed an STR ordinance. An STR draft ordinance is currently working through the County Planning Commission and will ultimately be decided by the Board of Supervisors. GAC is following this process closely and will continue to represent MCHA's position at critical meetings.

It's been a busy year for The Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC), and GAC continues to follow all agency activity. With the passage of Measure X, a sales tax initiative supported by MCHA, the County has become a "self help" county which allows TAMC to apply for matching Federal funds for road and highway improvement projects. The two projects of most interest to Hospitality are the Highway 68 corridor traffic improvement plan, which advocates building a series of Roundabouts from Jocelyn Canyon Road in Monterey to Blanco Road in Salinas, and the building of a new state Highway 156 to the south of the existing highway, to be paid for by charging a toll. Both proposals are currently in the feasibility stage.

MCHA has not taken a position on the Highway 68 proposal, but has serious concerns on the practicality of 10 Roundabouts in a 10 mile stretch. GAC will make a

recommendation after receiving additional information that TAMC is currently gathering. MCHA solidly supports the Highway 156 improvements, and is waiting for the feasibility report before taking a formal position.

GAC is following the activity at the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA) closely. The current FORA agreement expires in 2020. The FORA board of directors has conducted a series of Transition Planning Workshops, the results of which will be passed on to the CA legislature and the outcome will



decide the future governance for the completion of the Fort Ord reuse plan. There are two schools of thought on how future governance should move forward.

The first known as FORA Light, would employ a regional approach similar to what is currently in place but on a smaller scale. This is the preferred method of the majority of the FORA board and MCHA. The second option, favored by the city of Marina, Land Watch and Keep Fort Ord Wild is to let each jurisdiction self-govern. GAC will continue to monitor.

Fred Meurer past city manager of Monterey was the guest speaker at a recent GAC monthly meeting. The topic was Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Monterey County has been through the base closure process in the past with mixed results. Fred emphasized the importance of staying engaged on a full-time basis, if and when closures are announced. Local and Pentagon commanders have one primary focus, "The Mission" and what it takes to accomplish it.

When deciding where bases will be located, they have three main concerns; water, affordable housing, and quality of education. The Monterey Bay Defense Alliance has been formed to help retain the military facilities in Monterey County. MCHA/GAC will stay engaged with this process and report back to our membership as needed.

The County Special Event Task Force meets monthly and GAC is in attendance. This group is made up of County staff, Department heads, Fire, Sheriff, Highway Patrol, Health and Building. Event managers and coordinators, mostly from hospitality attend as well. The meetings are open to the public, and well attended. County staff is crafting a Special Events ordinance that has been in the works for years. It is due to be presented to the planning commission in mid 2018. GAC will monitor closely. MCHA currently opposes any formal Special Events ordinance.

As you can see, the GAC agenda is very busy and cannot be covered effectively by just the Government Affairs Director and GAC co-chairs. It is imperative that more of our members get involved. The topics above don't cover all our work in progress but are a good representation. Pick one or two topics that interest you and join in. Believe it or not, it can even be fun. It sure is for me!

Gary Cursio,  
Director of Government Affairs