

Date: March 20, 2024

From: Volunteer Representative, Santa Cruz County Fire Department Advisory Commission

RE: Attachment to the minutes of the March 20, 2024 FDAC meeting

**Subject:** These comments are with respect to the following agenda item (included as an image from the published agenda and also as text) in which the FDAC was characterized as “ineffective”. These comments are based on my experiences and opinions as the Volunteer Rep. to the FDAC over 10 years.

**E. Future of FDAC – This Commission is being reviewed by the BoS. In the Jan BoS meeting, the following was on the agenda – “In the 2023 Long-Range Master Plan, the Santa Cruz County Fire Department identified the role of the [Fire Department Advisory Commission \(FDAC\)](#) as not fully utilized and/or understood and **the work of the commission as ineffective**. Commission members acknowledge the FDAC needs to change. Staff will work on what this looks like and return with a recommendation.”**

E. Future of FDAC – This Commission is being reviewed by the BoS. In the Jan BoS meeting, the following was on the agenda – “In the 2023 Long-Range Master Plan, the Santa Cruz County Fire Department identified the role of the Fire Department Advisory Commission (FDAC) as not fully utilized and/or understood and the work of the commission as ineffective. Commission members acknowledge the FDAC needs to change. Staff will work on what this looks like and return with a recommendation.”

Note: The above agenda item was not authored by an FDAC member. It was included in the Board of Supervisors Agenda Packet materials for their Jan. 30, 2024, meeting.

**Summary:** The characterization of the FDAC as “ineffective” implies that it is the FDAC that is solely responsible for this blunt characterization. The Triton Master Plan report accurately captured many of the frustrations experienced by the FDAC. However, the underlying reasons for being ineffective are not summarized as specific findings in the Triton Master Plan report, nor are any specific solutions or recommendations offered to remediate this particular situation. If the FDAC is ineffective, it is because it has not been consulted constructively by County Fire and Cal Fire.

**Conclusion:** View “inclusion” as the vehicle to effectively engage the FDAC via meaningful open dialogue with the clear expectation of EFFECTIVE dealings to fulfill their responsibilities in exercising their Powers and Duties given in Section 2.120.050 of the Santa Cruz County Code.

**Recommendation:**

1. Digest the entire Triton Master Plan report
2. Itemize and prioritize issues and understand the gravity of those collected
3. Transition Santa Cruz County Fire to run as an open transparent public entity
4. Support and share all Santa Cruz County Fire Department plans, modifications, and process (operations) implementations with MEASUREMENTS and JUSTIFICATIONS

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglass Aumack,

Volunteer Representative to the Santa Cruz County Fire Department Advisory Commission