



Agenda Date: 7/17/2007
Agenda Placement: 9A

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: David Whitmer - Agricultural Commissioner
Agricultural Commissioner
REPORT BY: David Whitmer, Agricultural Commissioner / Sealer, 253-4357
SUBJECT: Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer requests the Board discuss Great Wine Capital Policy

RECOMMENDATION

Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures requests discussion and possible action regarding the draft Great Wine Capital policy and selection of a Board representative to serve at the pleasure of the Board.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Napa County Board of Supervisors have been supportive of continued participation by officials of the County of Napa in the Great Wine Capitals. In previous discussions with the Board, direction was given to include resources in the budget for expenditures related to the County's participation. The FY 2007/2008 Budget for the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer includes \$12,500 for this purpose. In addition, the Board suggested a policy be drafted to set parameters for County participation. The attached draft policy is intended to provide a simple yet flexible guideline for County participation in the Great Wine Capitals.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Great Wine Capitals Global Network (GWC) is an organization representing the most distinguished wine regions of the world. Currently, the Great Wine Capitals Global Network includes representatives from Melbourne, Australia; Bordeaux, France; Napa Valley-San Francisco; Porto, Portugal; Cape Town, South Africa; Bilbao-Rioja, Spain; Florence, Italy and Mendoza, Argentina. Only one region is selected to represent a specific country and in our case, the Napa Valley has been designated the "Great Wine Capital" for the United States of America. Napa County participation in the Great Wine Capitals has been led locally by the Napa Valley Vintners and the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce. The Great Wine Capitals work to encourage international winery tourism, as well as economic, academic and cultural exchanges between the regions that are members. The Napa Valley Vintners and the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce, have requested the involvement of Napa County governmental representatives in the Great Wine Capitals Global Network (GWC).

Since the hosting of the GWC General Assembly in 2005, the Board has been supportive of County involvement with Supervisor Dodd and Agricultural Commissioner Whitmer the official delegates to Mendoza, Argentina in November, 2006. (The 2007 General Meeting will be held in November in Porto, Portugal. The 2009 location for the General Meeting has not been decided yet.) During a report back on Supervisor Dodd and Commissioner Whitmer's involvement in Mendoza, the Board heard some of the reasons for the County to be involved: After attending the GWC General Assembly in Mendoza, it is clear how involved most governments are in the economics and promotion of the wine industry around the world and why it is important for Napa County government to be involved. As one example, Mendoza's Governor and Ministries of Economics and Tourism actively support the wine industry and they are trying to use the GWC to serve as the policy-making forum for that involvement and support. Most governments are providing significant monetary resources for their regions involvement and participation in GWC and see it as a natural way to promote the economic strength of their regions wine industry. With a reported \$9.5+ Billion local wine economy, the modest expenditure for the County is put in clearer perspective. It is important for Napa County government officials to be involved with and supportive of the global initiatives promoted by the NVV and/or GWC: Declaration of place protection (www.protectplace.com); Business services network: enrolling businesses in a network so they can access and be accessed in a global economy; Communications: an improved web-site for GWC with better linkages to the regions; and Tourism development (There will be a good nexus to the Destination Brand Strategy project); Development of a statistical survey to bring together common data for each region for value, size and economic comparisons.

It is equally important for Napa County officials to participate to prevent untenable policy develop by other governmental regions that might have negative implications for Napa County. (The old adage: "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.") An attempt was made in Mendoza for all governments to unify the laws and regulations impacting the wine industry. As good as this may sound, it is unlikely, given the regulatory environment in the U.S. that we would be able to accomplish this. Being present to speak against this initiative prevents unnecessary work and impractical decisions. A case can be made that with a few additional international regions and some California producers, the wine regions represented by the GWC are Napa Valley's competition now and into the future.

After the discussion, the Board indicated a desire to allocate funding for continued participation of County representatives and to develop a policy to articulate future involvement of local County officials. In adopting the FY 2007/2008 County budget, the Board has allocated \$12,500 in the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer section of the budget to cover expenditures related to the County's involvement in the GWC. The purpose of this item is to provide a simple, yet flexible policy guideline articulating how the County of Napa will participate in the GWC in future years. It is anticipated that if the policy is adopted by the Board, representatives of the County would utilize existing protocols for permission to travel outside of the country, including CEO authorization or a more formal Board approval process.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A . Draft GWC Policy

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi