

## Viticulture Advisory Committee Meeting

**Tuesday April 28, 2026  
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM  
Gail Ann's Vineyard - Meeting Room  
3970 Laughlin Road, Windsor**

### Meeting Minutes

- I. Welcome and Introductions Steve Dutton
- Meeting called to order by Steve Dutton
  - **Present:** Steve Dutton, Mark Sanchietti, Bob Demple, Jim Young, Nicole Hayden, Joan Patrick, Ryan Stapleton, Nick Frey, Karissa Kruse (**Quorum Met**)
  - **Staff:** Merilark Padgett, Connor Murphy, Doshia Dodd
  - **Absent:** John Balletto, Chris Bowland, Michael Sangiacomo, Brent Young, Mel Sanchietti, Joe Dutton, John Azevedo
- II. Approval of Minutes (11.18.25) Steve Dutton
- Motion to approve by Nick, second by Ryan. Approved unanimously
- III. SRJC Update Victor Tam, Dean
- Victor and Joel were unable to attend. Merilark summarized the SRJC update. The district is facing an approximately \$10 million budget deficit due to lower enrollment. Possible responses include reorganization, fewer class offerings, and salary reductions.
- IV. Ag/NR Department Update Joel Grogan, Department Chair
- Despite a hiring freeze, the department received approval to hire a full-time Natural Resource Management faculty member starting in fall. The position will support watershed ecology, forestry, and related classes. The program has been operating without a full-time lead for several years.
- V. Viticulture Program Update Merilark Padgett
- Discussion covered class costs, enrollment pressures, associate faculty numbers, and program staffing. Merilark noted there are roughly 35–40 associate faculty across programs. A list of associate faculty and classes will be provided at the next meeting.
- VI. Report on meeting with SRJC President Dr. Garcia Steve Dutton / Mark Sanchietti
- Steve, Mark, and Connor gave Dr. Garcia a tour of Shone Farm. She was highly engaged, asked detailed questions, and expressed support for the farm. The group emphasized Shone Farm's importance to SRJC, agriculture, and the broader community.
- VII. Winery Contracts Update Mark Sanchietti
- Mark reviewed vineyard block contracts. Key points included renewed or ongoing contracts with Rombauer, Gallo, Duckhorn, Jackson Family Wines, Delicato, and smaller fruit sales. Overall, Shone Farm is in a comparatively strong position despite market challenges.
- VIII. Vineyard Replant Update Mark Sanchietti

- Block 8 is fallow and not being replanted immediately due to market and budget concerns. The group discussed future redevelopment timing, VESCO permitting, and possible concerns with older blocks, especially Block 9.

IX. Well Project Shone Farm Update

Mark Sanchietti

- A flow meter was installed on the well to meet reporting requirements. Discussion included county reporting, well monitoring, potential future fees, and broader groundwater management requirements.

X. Report on Potential Reservoir / Collaboration with Goldridge RCD

Connor Murphy

- Connor reported that a grant application through North Coast Resource Partners was not funded. The college is still seeking grants to move the reservoir project toward shovel-ready status. Discussion also included Reservoir Farms, CDFA grant possibilities, USDA collaboration, and ag-tech trials involving startups and students.

XI. New Business

Steve Dutton

- Karissa announced she has been invited to be the SRJC commencement speaker. Additional discussion covered local wine support, Stark restaurants carrying Sonoma County wines, Shone Farm plant sale, tasting room availability, and Leadership Santa Rosa visiting Shone Farm.

XII. Set date/venue for Fall 2026 meeting

Steve Dutton

- **Next meeting set for Tuesday, November 3, 2026, at 3:00 PM at the same venue.**

XIII. Adjournment

Steve Dutton

- Meeting adjourned 4.07pm

Many thanks to Mark Sanchietti, Steve Dutton and the Dutton Family for providing the venue and wines.