

## **Gill appointed to county Planning Commission**



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Sustainable Napa County CEO Jeri Gill has joined the Napa County Planning Commission just as it embarks on a detailed look at winery growth policies.

The county Board of Supervisors made the appointment on Tuesday. Supervisor Keith Caldwell nominated her from among 15 applicants.

“Work starts tomorrow morning,” Caldwell told Gill. He wasn’t joking. The Planning Commission met at 9 a.m. Wednesday to consider two winery expansion applications, winery visitation policies and the 2014 winery audit. It returned at 1:30 p.m. to begin considering recommendations made by the Agricultural Protection Advisory Committee (APAC).

Just business as usual for the Planning Commission. The group often holds long meetings and faces thorny issues that by their very nature ensure that some segment of the county will be unhappy with the outcome.

All of that didn’t stop Gill from applying. She had a succinct answer as to why she wants to be on the

commission.

“Because it matters,” Gill said.

Gill has been with Sustainable Napa County since 2008. Founded by the Gasser Foundation, the nonprofit group’s self-described goal is to bring together business, agriculture, nonprofit and government groups to work for environmental, economic and social sustainability.

She was the Napa Valley Vintners public affairs manager from 2000 to 2008 and executive director of the Lodi Conference and Visitors Bureau from 1998 to 2000. She is on the Napa Chamber of Commerce executive committee, the Napa-Lake Workforce Investment Board and the Napa Valley Exposition board.

Certainly, Gill will have no trouble readying herself for the Planning Commission’s upcoming work on the APAC’s winery growth recommendations. She served on the APAC, which met 10 times over four months before recently disbanding.

A couple of audience members questioned whether Gill should be on the Planning Commission deliberating winery growth recommendations that she helped formulate on APAC. But County Counsel Minh Tran said there is nothing illegal or incompatible about this, since Gill won’t be on both bodies at the same time.

Gill said that APAC was a good place for her to listen to people and hear different perspectives. She also

said that her interests go beyond winery issues, to such areas as the county climate action plan that the county will tackle next year.

She takes the seat vacated by Matt Pope, who resigned due to time constraints after becoming executive director of the Napa Earthquake Recovery Group. The term lasts through December 2016.