

# Brown Act Compliance and Website Accessibility

Created on Feb 06, 2026 11:30:00

## Short Summary

You addressed Brown Act compliance and pushed for better public commenting features on the county's integrated plan website.

## Long Summary

You spoke with a colleague about compliance concerns and public engagement regarding the county's integrated plan. You raised a Brown Act concern regarding meeting notices and committee quorums, which was acknowledged. The discussion then shifted to the plan's online accessibility; while the county prefers using its official website, you expressed skepticism about its functionality for public comments. You agreed to wait and see if the county's IT can implement a robust feedback system before proceeding with your independent website, HEPA.

## Brown Act Compliance and Meeting Quorum

- **Executive Committee Meeting Concerns**
  - Gregory raised a potential Brown Act violation regarding an unannounced meeting with two out of three executive committee members (a quorum).
  - It was agreed that Peterson (the chair) should be included, but only through a properly noticed public meeting to remain in compliance.
- **Board Retreat Protocols**
  - Previous plans to limit the retreat to a Zoom-only "listen-in" session were identified as a violation of the Brown Act.
  - The retreat must be open for physical attendance by the public, even if Zoom is provided as an additional option.
  - Staff (Sabta) will be instructed to update the agenda to reflect that the meeting is open to the public.

## Integrated Plan Website Posting

- **Platform Preferences**
  - The County prefers that the integrated plan be hosted on the official Sonoma County website rather than Gregory's HEPA website.
  - Gregory expressed skepticism about the county website's functionality, noting past difficulties with IT and public accessibility.
- **Public Comment Functionality**
  - Gregory advocated for a system where the public can comment directly on the PDF/document, citing successful models used by the City of Santa Rosa.
  - The County (Jan) believes IT improvements now allow for better public interaction and will verify if the draft plan is currently commentable.
- **Agreement to Wait**
  - Gregory agreed to hold off on posting to his external site to give the County a chance to demonstrate their website's capabilities.

## Administrative Updates

- **IT and Web Management**
  - Health Services IT has undergone changes intended to streamline the process of posting documents like the MHSA and BHSA plans.
- **Meeting Follow-up**
  - Jan will contact Sabta to clarify the Brown Act requirements for the retreat and to discuss the website comment features.

## Transcriptions

Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:34:28

Oh good morning, Gregory. Good morning.

Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:34:32

I apologize for being late. I'm coming from a meeting over in Petaluma at Supervisor Rabbit's office, and so it always takes longer to drive than you think. Oh yeah. Oh yeah, especially on Fridays.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:34:47**

I think we're waiting for Peterson to log in.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:34:55**

Did you get my email?

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:34:58**

Uh which one? Which email? I sent you an email saying suggesting I was worried this was a Brown Act meeting. A violation of a Brown Act with two of the three executive committee meeting uh members on uh call.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:35:19**

I said it about an hour or two ago, so you may not have gotten it. Oh I'm sorry, I haven't been in a meeting and then got in, so I can't see it. So the gist of it is that I believe this is a violation of the Brown Act because it wasn't noticed. This is a two I mean two thirds of the executive committee is a valid standing committee meeting. If uh if you want to share with

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:35:41**

Me, what you heard from the county council, I suggested get rid of Peterson because he and I can't get together, and Alexandra and I can't get together, and Alexander and he can't. Two of the three constitute a valid Brown Act meeting of the executive committee, and I don't think you want to do that.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:36:00**

Well, Gregory, I uh this is about the Brown, this is actually about the I know I know this, yeah. I know the subject. I know the subject. Uh setting aside the subject let me say um that I included Peterson because he's the chair of the board. I know. So I don't know if you can't do this.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:36:24**

Why not? Because two of the three members of the executive committee, just like a quorum of the board, is a valid meeting of the board, and it has to be noticed. You can't just call a quorum of any standing committee of any commission and say we're gonna have a meeting, but we're not gonna notice it.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:36:48**

If Peterson shows up, it's gonna be a valid board meeting. It's standing committee, is he and I and Alexandra.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:37:00**

That's a quorum. That's

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:37:05**

that's just like having an executive committee, and we're not noticing this like we do our executive committees. It's not I can't call two members of the committee, just like I can't call five members or six members of the board together. Every time we do that, we make it a meeting that's official. Well, we can okay, so I can talk to you, and then we could if based on what you're saying, we could schedule a meeting that includes Alexandra and Peterson, and you have to talk about what I'm gonna talk about with you. Okay, exactly.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:37:41**

That's the way it's that's the way it's supposed to happen.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:37:46**

Okay, I understand. I understand what you're saying. So, Gregory, uh, I mean, Peterson's late, so that works into our advantage. So, what I wanted to do was that um with something like this, uh I wanted to include Peterson because I guess as the chair of the board, he needs

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:38:01**

To know that this is going on. So exactly. But this isn't the way to do it. Because this okay. All right, Gregory. I understand. Okay. Just bringing it to your attention. I don't want us to get in trouble.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:38:16**

Okay. We might get into a little trouble, but hopefully we can get out of trouble. I'm not just like but I don't want to violate anything. You know, I want to be in compliance with whatever. But absolutely. Um that's why I sent you the email. And I always I do like to have in something like this, it would be good to have another person there so they can they are also it would be well, I just assume because Peterson is the chair, he should notice this going on. But I understand what you're saying because of Brown Act, okay? Thank you, thank you. So the reason um so the reason I wanted to talk to you is that uh over the weekend you sent a mess uh message to um Christina Rivera because you were one you were wanting to post um the integrated plan on uh uh a web one of your website HIPAA website. Right. And um so then she asked Nolan to look look into it, and then Nolan decided to me. So I met with county council to talk about the parameters. And so um

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:39:31**

so then and so what county council has given me this advice and I wanted to share this with you and then I think we can have a meeting with the executive committee. Is that uh TEPA, is that how you call it your website, PIPA? Yes, yes, it is. It's called HEPA. It sounds it it stands for homeless emergency you know assistance programs long ago when the federal government gave some money, they called it heap H E A P and we as we created an association of all those people who got the money called EPA, an association of heap people. So I under okay, yeah. And I've been to your website, so I I I know what I've I've checked it out. Great. But you know, Sonoma County is at this point is

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:40:23**

website is not a website that we're endorsing. And you don't have to we well we we our preference is that any the integrated plan and those sorts of things, those get posted on our website, not on your website. It can be on both.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:40:42**

It can be on both. I mean there's no reason why I can't put it on my website. You prefer that I don't and I'm hearing you that is our preference and we would we would ask that you respectfully respect that. Well I want to see what you're gonna put on your website. I don't have to I'm not gonna bless something I don't even know what it is. I don't know how you're gonna do it. I have my preferences to how I get out to the public and how I help the public understand it. And so far you haven't done anything so I'm really trying to you know defer to what you're doing. I was pleased to hear that Melissa said you guys are gonna put it on your website. What's it gonna look like on your website? Is it just gonna be a document? Is it gonna be commentable? Yeah commentable somewhere where people can comment or is it just gonna be something they can download and look at I mean honestly yeah you're asking me to sort of trust you that you're gonna do it as well as I think I can and I haven't seen anything yet work with me.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:41:48**

You bring up a good point I I assume if it gets when we post it and it should actually the draft of the integrated plan should be on our website right now. Uh-huh I haven't checked it out but it should be on there. Uh-huh and I am assuming that people can comment on just like they can comment on uh the plan when we post it when we do the 30 day item so and if they can't we we will find out and we will make it accessible that people could comment on it of course. Okay well you know I I believe that you believe that it happens that way. It's been my experience that it does not that the things you put on the website that's true. And you know what it's uh posting things on a website is not as easy as you think it is, okay? So we have to make Dapta when she has to post all the stuff from the board. Yeah. She has to go

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:42:47**

I know how same thing with the MHSA plan and now the BHSA plan. Melissa has to put a ticket in to IT and it has to go in. I know. So that so there's several steps that go through. So I think in the past there definitely were problems. And it was the feedback, I think I remember Kathy Smith in particular saying, she wrote she sent me a couple emails, Jan. This is this is not on the website.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:43:18**

People, this is not on the website, blah, blah, blah. So my understanding is that now it's cleared up and the website is much more accessible and informative, right?

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:43:29**

No.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:43:31**

It it yes, it's well, no, it's listen to me, Jan. It's more than it has been in the past. It's not anywhere near what it needs to be in order to have full participation by the public. Okay. I understand how hard it is to get the website changed. I was in charge of the website of Marin County for ten years. Okay. I know what it's like to have the sort of system of of the bureaucrats of people in IT and I you know, I I feel for you. That's why I'm setting it up outside. Because I don't believe that you will get to the point where people can actually look at the integrated plan and on your website post their comments. There's nothing of preventing, I mean, if you believe that the way that the citizens can, you know, provide

input is to say something on your website, then go to some other place and post their comments, like sending you emails or you know, it is not easy at all to provide comments. Very few websites do that in county governments because you have lots of rules that prevent it. Okay. So I'm suggesting that if you're going to open up your website to comments directly on the website to the document, I'll be happy. You know, it'll be a wonderful new addition to your the county website because nobody else does that. Okay. There's no other document.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:44:57**

That says I'm seeming very uh strident.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:45:00**

Comment down. Look, I'm trying to help you do what you think you can do, and I'm trying to help the county uh get comments about the integrated plan in a robust way. Now I think the way to do it is to do it outside the county because I've struggled for a long time to get county websites to be really approachable and usable and uh useful to the public. I've you know, I got my doubts as to whether you're gonna have it. But I'm willing to wait until you do. Okay.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:45:38**

I mean it it is getting better. The our IT department, our own health services IT department has is improving. So they've been through some things, they've had we've had a couple of big changes, but I think overall it's improving. And so let's give it a chance and I'll we'll make sure to find out that we post the plan that people can comment on it. I mean, what's the point of posting the plan if you can't comment on it? Now you understand now you understand a lot of what the frustration of most of the public is because that's a good question, but it's the people who tried to do things like that in the past. And I'll give you an example of what did work. I've been working with the city of Santa Rosa for a long time on a lot of the documents that they put on the website. And they hired some consultants that worked with the city's web staff webmaster when they did a park plan uh and they wanted people to to um comment on what the park plan was about. So it they put it up in a PDF format that allowed within the county within the city's website people to put comments directly on the document that the consultants were working for. They did the same thing when they did the downtown area station plan about try to, you know, put ten thousand more units downtown. Where should they go, how high should they go, what kind all the different processes of that plan were open to the public to comment on. Okay. Those are the only two instances I know around in this county where anybody has ever put somebody a document on the website and had people be able to alter that website, and it's not altering it in policy, it's putting a little comments, you know.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:47:21**

says this line I'll you know comment on the line it puts a little thing on the corner that says Gregory thinks this that's all I'm talking about okay now I want to see that happen I want to help you happen okay so if that's what you're hearing from the county council that you would like me to wait until you get that up on the website and see whether it works and then perhaps not do what I'm doing I'll consider that sounds good. Okay now one more thing since you've been in a meeting uh sabta put out an email about the retreat that her email says I looked back into the past of what we did on a retreat and we didn't let anybody come to our retreat we simply made a zoom available for them to listen that's a violation of the Brown Act our retreat has to be open to people you can't do it the way she said we used to do it and so I sent her a note saying here's the Brown Act it's gonna be really embarrassing if our guest comes in and tells us in the meeting that we're violating the Brown Act by not letting people come to the meeting. So I sent her an a note I thought at the meeting on Wednesday that we agreed that we were going to have Zoom capability for people who wanted to listen in to the retreat. So we did but we were wrong. Okay we I since checked with the Brown Act and with uh a couple of my friends who've done a lot of retreats and I reread the Brown Act and I so I sent the section. Wait a minute there's something wrong with your sound Gregory now I can't hear you. Really? What happened here? I don't know. Can you hear me? So hold on a second because I can't hear you. So let me check my audio settings. Okay.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:49:45**

Okay, you should be able to hear me now. I can hear you. Can you hear me?

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:49:51**

No, I I heard you first. Now I can't.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:49:57**

Audio settings are all messed up. Okay. I can hear you.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:50:09**

I keep pressing on the microphone. I'm gonna have to probably restart my computer. Okay.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:50:16**

Um okay, so the the sh the short response is we were wrong. At at the meeting where we said we could set up just a zoom, that violates the Brown Act. Because the Brown Act says it retreats, we should have people able to show up.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:50:37**

Not good enough for us to simply have a Zoom as I thought. And I'm simply pointing that out to her before she sets it up.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:50:50**

So that people can show up if they want to. Yeah. And if they can't if they can't come in person, they can listen in on the zoom. That would be perfect.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:51:01**

I agree.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:51:03**

I agree. And then uh and then the food thing is an issue because I'll bring tons of food. Don't worry about the food. We can deal with that later, but I think that it should be both. So do I. That was my understanding. It's like if someone so for instance that young woman that was there on Wednesday, she wants to come to part of the retreat. She could come in person if she wants. Right. Like anything else. Exactly. Exactly. I just didn't want Sab to to put out a agenda that says nobody can come. Which is what she was planning on doing. Okay. So I'm just telling you I wanted to I'd send it to her because I don't want I don't I don't like going overhead all the time and I just hope she'd say, Oh gosh, Gregory, point it out that I have to let people I'll call you or you know, you work it out.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:51:58**

Okay, so she sent this routine.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:52:08**

Well trying to talk to Seth. Okay. Okay. I will I'll talk to her about those things. Good. That's all I'm trying to do is alert you to the fact that I said something to her that will confuse her.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:52:23**

I better call her

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:52:29**

now. Okay. So because this she hasn't sent this out, has she? No, no. She just sent it and said to you actually she said she was gonna let us preview the end result before she sent it out, which is good. Um so I just think she sent it out to me and maybe you know, like Peterson and I didn't look at who she sent it out to besides us, but I can't imagine her wanting to send it out to anybody but just the exec committee. So yeah, let me call her so she can it's happening. Yeah people can come in person and or come via Zoom. Yeah. And um yeah. Yeah, that's good. Thank you.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:53:11**

Okay, I understand what you're saying. Okay, all right. Well I uh I heard you, I don't think we need to do much more on this call. Um you heard that I will hold off. Let me do some you know, investigating to make sure because

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:53:28**

maybe I'm naive, but it is my assumption. If you post something on our website that then the public may make comments. There has to be somewhere where the public can respond. Yeah, let's test it out. Let's let's let's go your direction. I don't want to put it on HIPAA if I can avoid it. Okay, I we pre we prefer that we use the standard accounting website. So yeah. So do I.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:53:54**

So I will call Seth now and make sure that she understands that. Great. Thank you. Okay. All right. Thank you, Grandpa. See you later. Have a good weekend. You too.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:54:20**

Yay.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:54:23**

She heard me, she understood, I heard her.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:54:25**

Oh the retreat. No, yeah, the the staff was gonna send out a note to everybody uh saying you can't come to the retreat unless you're the board. That's the right unless you're a member of our board. Uh huh. It's like the Board of Supervisors saying, We're having a meeting but nobody can come. Right. It's a Brown Act violation, clear and simple, but Sabta went back to two years ago where they put a line on it saying, This is not an open meeting, you can't come and said, We'll do it like that. Because we all at a meeting this week said we'd kind of prefer to be doing our own business and not be bothered by the public. Right. Which is kind of like really stupid. But it Well no, you want to retreat. I know, but that's not the way you say it. That's not the way you publish you know it. So it's now a closed meeting. No, it's not a closed. Now it is an open meeting in which we just think nobody will show up and that's fine. It's okay.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:55:20**

Because you can only have a closed meeting for certain kinds of things like personnel actions and lawsuits. You know, you've been to meetings before when they closing.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:55:29**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well the open part where we're talking about policy and stuff. We gotta be open. Yeah, yeah, got it. But that wasn't the subject of the meeting. The meeting was that she says, You know the thing you want to do and put on your website and everybody do it. We want to do it on ours. And we think we're doing it that way, and I said, No, you're not. Nobody can comment on anything that's on your website. Your web IT people won't let it. Yeah. And so she said, Well they should, and so I said, Yeah, you're right, thank you. Now she becomes an advocate for doing inside the county what I want to do outside the county, I don't have to do it. Yeah. That's why I said, Yeah.

**user - Feb 06, 2026 11:56:06**

No, you're right, I know. And I'm just gonna have a disillusioned staff member who's finally gonna agree that I have to do it.

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 11:57:23**

Uh

**Unknown - Feb 06, 2026 12:19:09**

Yeah.