



SPECIAL MEETING

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

*The Board of Directors conducted this meeting in accordance with
California Government Code section 54953.*

DRAFT MINUTES

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA
REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

President Cyr called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 9:35 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Karen Holman, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Yoriko Kishimoto, Margaret MacNiven, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Controller Mike Foster, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson, Budget & Finance Manager Rafaela Ocegueda, Engineering & Construction Manager Jason Lin, Grants Program Manager Carol Schimke, Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight, Information Systems & Technology Manager Casey Hiatt, Land & Facilities Manager Brandon Stewart, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Public Affairs Manager Lori Low, Real Property Manager Allen Ishibashi, Procurement Program Manager Sarah Araya, Chief Ranger/Visitor Services Manager Matt Anderson, Budget Analysts II Elissa Martinez, Budget Analysts I Jordan McDaniel, and Governmental Affairs Program Manager Josh Hugg

President Cyr announced the public has the opportunity to comment on the agenda, and the opportunity to listen to this meeting through the internet or via telephone. This information can be found on the meeting agenda, which was physically posted at the District's Administrative Office, and on the District website.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Gleason seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

BOARD BUSINESS**1. Preliminary Review of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 through Fiscal Year 2027-28 Capital Improvement and Action Plan (R-25-25)**

Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, and Assistant General Manager Brian Malone presented.

Director Riffle expressed concern about the perception of reducing the budget for fire prevention following the Los Angeles fires and recommended careful communication when explaining these changes to the public. He also suggested that Public Affairs further publicly highlight the District's fire prevention efforts.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone stated that in relation to the decreased funding for fire prevention projects the District has two projects for grant-funded work for Los Gatos Creek Watershed project and the other project in Skyline. Funding has not yet come through which has delayed implementation and the District may need to proceed without the federal funding. He noted the District now has 11 staff on two resource management fuel reduction crews operating both the Skyline and Foothills area which amounts to over \$1M every year dedicated to fire prevention, an amount that is in addition to the capital budget. The District's resource management and fuel management are integrated, while staff is doing fuel work, they are also performing forestry restoration. He stated staff can consider a way to reflect these ongoing operating costs related to fuel management and fire resiliency work for the public, since these budget allocations are not reflected in the capital project costs.

Director Holman requested including land acquisition pie charts for the past five years or an average to accompany the FY26 Capital Improvement and Action Plan (CIAP) by program to provide clearer context for budget allocations for both the Board and the public.

Director Holman noted that the number of acquisitions completed to date in partnership with Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in the last 5 to 10 years have been significant and worth celebrating.

Director Riffle highlighted that the scope of El Mirador Land Conservation for FY26 is optimistic and would prefer more realistic timelines.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested highlighting the District's contingency plans in the event state and federal funds are no longer available so that the public is assured that fire resiliency efforts will continue regardless of external funding.

Director Kishimoto inquired if her fellow colleagues would be interested in a study session focused on the fish passage projects, and the state of the creeks, specifically on the coastal side.

Ms. Ruiz asked the Board to let staff know by the end of the meeting whether there is interest.

Director Riffle expressed interest in presentations on animal-related projects but without overloading staff with too many presentations. He suggested rather than handling these initiatives as one-off presentations, it might be worth considering a more structured approach to make this information more accessible to the public and partner agencies.

Ms. Ruiz noted that the District will be hosting a Science Symposium in FY26 which will be the primary place for people to come together and listen to these various topics. In addition, staff frequently presents on such topics, which are then posted to the District's website.

Director Kersteen-Tucker noted that at the last Kings Mountain Association meeting there were numerous concerns about safety, speeding, and parking along the corridor of Highway 35 near Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. She asked if the District could meet with the County Sheriff and Caltrans to explore additional measures for a safer corridor. She noted that it is not part of the project but asked whether it should be or if a separate project could be undertaken by the District to address the concerns of local residents.

Ms. Chan explained that it would be a separate effort since it is an ongoing issue along the corridor. She stated that the District has limited influence with Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol, but the District can work collectively with other stakeholders to be able to increase influence.

Director Kishimoto commented that it may not necessarily need to become a project but suggested that the District systematically partner with the County, Caltrans, and other agencies to launch a countywide or skyline corridor campaign on speeding.

Director Kersteen-Tucker replied that it is a regional issue and since people are visiting the area to access the preserves, the District should consider how to work with partners early on to address safety concerns.

Director Kishimoto suggested working with other agencies to make the Peters Creek loop more accessible in the Butano-Pescadero Creek area.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested increasing public knowledge on the District's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts, emphasizing the outward facing component and the significance of this work, the District's investment, and its regional benefits.

President Cyr called for a recess at 12:19 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 12:56 p.m. with all Board members present.

Director Gleason stated he would like to prioritize adding the Purisima-to-the-Sea trail and parking projects back on the Big Rocks list and remove the Bear Creek Redwoods (BCR) Phase 2 Trail Improvements project, as the biggest piece of the project has already been completed. He noted that the remaining work consists of a smaller discreet project.

Director Riffle asked about the tradeoff of removing BCR from the list to accommodate the Purisima-to-the-Sea trail and the parking projects.

Planning Manager Jane Mark noted that both the trail and parking lot depend on CEQA review for environmental clearance, which delay the next phases of work.

Ms. Ruiz suggested also adding the Purisima Creek Redwoods Comprehensive Use and Management Plan (CUMP) amendment, as the trails and parking projects are interconnected and depend on completion of the CUMP.

Ms. Chan agreed to add Purisima-to-the-Sea trail, parking and CUMP to the Big Rock list and remove the BCR project off the list.

Director Kishimoto spoke about her earlier request whether the state of the fisheries topic should be added to the science symposium or hold a study session. She requested that the General Manager return to the Board with a scope for the science symposium or whether a separate study session is needed.

Public comment opened at 1:27 p.m.

District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria reported no public comments were submitted for this item.

Public comment closed at 1:27 p.m.

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Riffle seconded the amended motion to:

1. Review and affirm or amend the preliminary Fiscal Year 2025-26 through Fiscal Year 2027-28 Capital Improvement and Action Plan.
2. If amended, direct the General Manager to reevaluate staff and resource capacity and, if needed, return to the full Board with any additional recommendations for further discussion and direction.
3. Amend the proposed highest priority “Big Rocks” project list to further guide the organizational focus for the upcoming fiscal year to replace Bear Creek Redwoods Phase II Trails with Purisima to the Sea Trail, Purisima Creek - Verde Road Parking Area, and Purisima Creek Preserve Comprehensive Use and Management Plan.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

2. Comprehensive Measure AA Projects List (R-25-26)

Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan presented.

Public comment opened at 2:06 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported no public comments were submitted for this item.

Public comment closed at 2:06 p.m.

No Board action required.

3. Debrief of the Bear Creek Stables Ad Hoc Committee Process and Formation (R-25-27)

General Manager Ana Ruiz presented.

Director Riffle noted there were Brown Act barriers which caused communication difficulties among the Bear Creek Stables Ad Hoc Committee (BCS Ad Hoc) working groups and he asked how to refine the process in the future to make it more efficient. He also expressed missing staff involvement during specific parts of the working group activities.

Director Holman commented that the working groups were largely driven by the working group members themselves and agreed it would be helpful to identify ways to best incorporate volunteers. She expressed her preference for keeping the ad hoc committee formation process simple without agendizing the creation of or change to an ad hoc committee.

President Cyr stated he is interested in codifying how an ad hoc committee gets created and expressed discomfort with how rushed the formation of BCS Ad Hoc felt towards the end of the May 14, 2024 meeting.

Director Kersteen-Tucker requested that voting on the formation of future ad hoc committees or Public Access Working Groups (PAWGs) be delayed until a subsequent meeting to allow staff an opportunity to provide preliminary estimates of staff time needed. She emphasized the importance of each ward having representation and including agenda language which states the Board is considering the creation of a committee involving members of the public.

Director MacNiven suggested that any committee that involves community members should be a working group organized through a process facilitated by staff. Although PAWGs are time consuming, they are well-run and give the participants a chance to understand differing views and the constraints of the District.

Director Kishimoto noted the BCS Ad Hoc was self-selected and while it was successful in bringing intensely interested parties with expertise, it did not reflect a balanced representation of the District. She noted the importance of clearly outlining roles and responsibilities of staff, the Board, and the public and suggested there be rules or templates for how groups operate. If it is a citizen-driven proposal, it should be made clear that the decision ultimately belongs to the Board. She also recommended time for the Board to reflect on the formation prior to voting to create such a group or committee.

President Cyr suggested there could be different models of how committees operate depending on the function and goal of the committee.

Director Gleason noted the May 14, 2024 Board meeting included a large amount of new and detailed information about the status of the project while also having a large amount of people present. He stated generally the District splits the meetings into a study session, which includes staff presenting new ideas, shortly followed by a Board meeting to make a decision. He expressed the preference for holding a separate meeting to receive information to alleviate the potential pressure to quickly make a decision and suggested that future controversial items have both an informational and decision-making meeting. He explained that integrating staff's knowledge with the public's expertise was critical to creating an efficient process.

Director Kersteen-Tucker recalled that the BCS Ad Hoc was formed with the intention it would not take staff time. She highlighted the importance of being realistic since unusual projects will

require staff time and therefore the Board should slow down the process to reflect on how best to proceed. She expressed that when the BCS Ad Hoc returned with a recommendation, there appeared to be no consideration for operators aside from the Friends of Bear Creek Stables which gave a feeling of lack of openness.

Director Holman stated that the BCS Ad Hoc was open to anyone interested. She suggested that future notices of citizen work group opportunities can be published.

Ms. Ruiz stated staff can return with draft policy language for Board consideration to create more structure for ad hoc committee formations. Staff can also propose policy language regarding citizen working groups and how to integrate a citizen working group with an ad hoc committee.

Director Gleason suggested a community-led charge could be targeted to a specific topic or point of information, which can later be integrated into a broader PAWG recommendation to the Board.

Public comment opened at 3:12 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported no public comments were submitted for this item.

Public comment closed at 3:12 p.m.

No Board action required.

ADJOURNMENT

President Cyr adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 3:12 p.m.

Shaylynn Nelson, Deputy District Clerk
Maria Soria, MMC, District Clerk