



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

REGULAR MEETING

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Administrative Office – Board Room
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022
April 14, 2015

DRAFT MINUTES

ROLL CALL

Director Riffle called the Regular Meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Larry Hassett, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Steve Abbors, Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz, Assistant General Manager Kevin Woodhouse, General Counsel Sheryl Schaffner, Senior Real Property Agent Allen Ishibashi, Operations Manager Michael Newburn, Operations Project Manager Aaron Hebert, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Planner III Lisa Bankosh, Planner II Gretchen Laustsen, and Interim District Clerk Kim Marie Smith.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

There were no speakers.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Cyr moved and Director Hassett seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Approve March 10, March 16, and March 18, 2015 Minutes

Motion: Director Cyr moved approval of the minutes of March 10, March 16, and March 18.

Director Riffle suggested an amendment to March 10, Page 3, to change “futurist consultant” to

read “a consultant who understands future workspace requirements.” and on Page 4, remove the word “two” from the vote on item C. The other committee members concurred that this was their original intent.

Director Cyr accepted the amendment. Director Hassett seconded the motion to approve the minutes of March 16 and 18 as presented, and March 10 as amended.

VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Draft “Other Power-Driven Mobility Device Policy” (R-15-63)

Skyline Area Superintendent Brian Malone explained that an Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices, or OPDMD, is a mobility device other than a wheel chair used by person with a mobility disability. He reviewed a series of PowerPoint slides that highlighted requirements for OPDMD use, policies in other agencies, where the devices would and would not be allowed, and the variance procedure.

Director Hassett inquired regarding speed limit signs for OPDMDs. Mr. Malone explained primary notice will be done through the website and district literature.

Director Riffle asked how many of the District’s has 230 miles of trails would fall under this policy. Mr. Malone said it would apply to fire roads, easy access trails, and a limited number of paved and pathways of travel, which would be about half of the District trails.

Planning Manager Jane Mark noted that the Planning Department would be updating the accessibility plan this fiscal year, and an Americans with Disabilities Act specialist will perform an assessment and provide recommendations for compliance.

The public hearing was opened at 2:37 p.m.

Mr. Shawn McKenna, President of Silicon Valley Mountain Bikers, said he fully supported the proposed policy. He stated his community is divided about the use of electric bikes, and they would like to leave the management of those up to the land manager.

The public hearing was closed at 2:38 p.m.

Motion: Director Hassett moved and Director Cyr seconded the motion to recommend the approval of the Draft “Other Power-Driven Mobility Device Policy” to the full board, and recommend staff draft language to amend the preamble in the Board Use Trail Policy to include a reference to OPDMDs, and bring the draft amended policy directly to the full Board for approval.

VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve Plan and Related Planning Coordination (R-15-64)

Planner III Lisa Bankosh provided the staff report, discussing constraints on the site, the history of the project, and the public hearing process currently underway.

Ms. Alma Du Solier, representing landscape architecture firm Populous, continued the presentation describing elements of the preserve plan, focus areas, and the proposed project schedule.

The public hearing was opened at 3:13 p.m.

Mr. Michael McNamara said that he was the adjacent property owner, and wanted to ensure the project would not degrade the privately owned spring watershed.

Ms. Bankosh stated staff will continue with conservation efforts keeping water quality in mind and noted that currently the plans show only a general alignment.

Ms. Jenny Whitman expressed her thanks for the sensitivity with which this project has been handled and said the people interested in the project impressed her because they are helping children connect not just with the horses but also with nature.

The public hearing was closed at 3:18 p.m.

The committee members accepted the report and no action was taken.

4. Bear Creek Stables Preliminary Site Design Alternatives Study Session (R-15-65)

Planner II Gretchen Laustsen gave an update on the Bear Creek Stables site planning process.

Ms. Alma Du Solier of Populous described the public process, the planning process goals, and presented the draft design alternatives. She explained the preliminary cost estimates for the three alternatives, which included: (1) Alternative A, Essentials, with an estimated cost of \$5 million to \$7 million; (2) Alternative B, Equestrian+, with had an estimated cost of \$7 million to \$9 million, and (3) Alternative C, Community+, had an estimated cost of \$10 million or more.

Ms. Laustsen stated the next steps would be a permitting feasibility analysis of land use to refine the scope of each alternative, as well as a water assessment for Bear Creek Preserve and the stables site. She said that funding options might include District funds for areas of heavy public use, that there was potential funding through the lease, and there was the possibility of a capital improvement funding campaign. Ms. Laustsen said the District would commission the water assessment, rather than the stables, because it would be more efficient on such a tight timeline, and the final cost of the project will include solving the water problems in the area.

Director Riffle asked if there was any thought given to having a non-profit build on the District property, as had happened at the Folger Stables. Ms. Glenda Smith Shaw, audience member, said that the contracting in that case was done by the County.

Director Riffle said that since this is a community asset perhaps the District could provide a base amount of funds and then allow the Friends of Bear Creek Stables or other groups raise additional money, so that the public is covering only a portion of the cost. He also mentioned that the Calero Equestrian Center was shut down and never re-built, and perhaps that is something the County would like to consider sharing in this location.

The public hearing was opened at 4:20 p.m.

Ms. Lyndall Erb, Friends of Bear Creek Stables, and Bay Area Farms and Trails, thanked everyone for the transparency in the process. She said she preferred Alternative B, and was glad the tree was still included. She was in favor of the livery area. She said that covered arenas are nice but are only needed a couple of months a year.

Mr. Frank Bakonyi said he was a boarder at the stables and a potential concessionaire. He was in favor of a covered arena for lessons, because it's often too hot, or when it rains it gets muddy. He said the trailer parking should have the simplest access possible and not be on the other side of the ranch. Mr. Bakonyi said that the water issues need to be addressed, and more water storage area would improve efficiency. He thanked the District Board and staff for their efficiency.

Ms. Jenny Whitman was in favor of keeping the tree in the meeting area, and suggested the small animal barn be closer to the hillside and away from the wild animals that come up from the stream.

Ms. Glenda Shaw Smith suggested a second cottage so that an additional caretaker could be on site when the regular caretaker is away.

Mr. Bakonyi agreed with Ms. Smith that two residences are preferred, and that could provide affordable accommodations for visiting instructors.

The public hearing was closed at 4:30 pm.

Director Hassett expressed his concerns regarding the water supply, and in light of the current drought requested assurance of a future water source. He preferred Alternative A or B, or a hybrid of the two.

Director Riffle supported Alternatives B and C, but serious consideration must be given to fundraising, because the public will have a fairly limited use. He said equal attention should be given to both payment and design, and the Board must decide how much would be public funds. He said that one approach would be to public funds go toward preserving the natural resource and expanding community access, and then have a viable financial option for the rest. He invited the Friends of Bear Creek Stables to consider a significant fund-raising effort.

Director Hassett said there are other models that might help reduce overall costs, and referred to the project happening at the Hawthorne estate in which a general contractor is rehabilitating an old mansion through a combination of his own funds and community fundraising.

ADJOURNMENT

Director Riffle adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 4:40 p.m.

Kim Marie Smith, MMC
Interim District Clerk