



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

**PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

Administrative Office – Board Room
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022
April 21, 2015

DRAFT MINUTES

ROLL CALL

Director Riffle called the Regular Meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 4:06 p.m.

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Steve Abbors, General Counsel Sheryl Schaffner, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Meredith Manning, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Public Affairs Manager Shelly Lewis and Interim District Clerk Kim Marie Smith

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Concept design plans for the Mount Umunhum Summit Project (R-15-67)

Meredith Manning Senior Planner introduced Bob Birkeland Senior Principal Landscape Architect with Restoration Design Group (RDG) to give the Committee a presentation of the draft conceptual design for the Mt. Umunhum summit. Mr. Birkeland along with his associate Rich Walking presented to the Committee a PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the Mt. Umunhum summit concept plan. They discussed the District goals and objectives which are

to establish a fiscally and environmentally sustainable visitor destination that aligns with the District's mission by balancing public access, enjoyment, and education with environmental restoration. Creating a destination that is accessible to and accommodates a broad range of user groups, remove or permanently cap physical hazards and restore the native landscape and habitat for wildlife as much as possible, provide ample, rich, and diverse trail experiences for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians and highlight the rich natural and cultural history of the site through interpretive and educational opportunities. Discussion ensued.

Director Cyr asked is portable water was going to be on site. Ms. Manning stated that currently planned at the trail head there will be a horse trough and shelter and staff will be exploring the potential for portable water at the trail head site.

Director Riffle asked roughly when the Board of Directors will be making a design decision on the tower. Ms. Manning commented that the decision will not be made until October 2017.

Director Riffle also shared his concerns with Director Cyr and stated that he recommends that portable water should be available for the public and horses.

Director Riffle stated that in 2012 the hang gliding communities concerns are not on the conceptual plan an asked if their concerns were going to be addressed. Ms. Manning reported the hang gliding community would be invited to see the conceptual design and obtain their comments at the next phase of the design.

Director Riffle asked Director's Cyr and Hassett if they had and concerns with not addressing the hang gliding communities concerns. Director Hassett commented that his vision is not to have them jump of the tower of bald mountain but would like to obtain the information of any commitments that have been made to the community. Ms. Manning commented that hang gliding was addressed in the Environmental Impact Report and was evaluated as an environmental impact and was included as a concept and permits would be issued by the District. Currently there is a conceptual agreement with them that there would be no more than two to three people at a time and they would have to police themselves. Director Cyr also echoed Director Hassett and asked if any commitments have been made to the hang gliding community. He also stated that is not high on his priority list but does not want to exclude it as an option. His vision is that he would want a world class space to invite the public and have them understand the multiple uses that are on the ground. General Manager Abbors confirmed that the Committee would like to consider hang gliding in some form but not have it dominate the experience and will take that direction. Director Riffle stated that a decision will need to be made either there will or will not have hang gliding and if it is decided to accommodate it in one form or another we should be put into the design. He also stated that in the year 2012 a vocal organized hang gliding community attended the meetings and shared their concerns. Mr. Birkeland stated that in the 2012 plans there was a place for hang gliders at either the upper or lower parking lot but apparently that is not where they want to launch. If they want to launch from the upper parking lot the District may consider allowing hang glider events on certain days or on a weekend by obtaining a permit.

Director Riffle commented that he was glad that the District is working with the Amah Mutsen and accommodating their cultural needs but stated that there is also a large community of military veterans and they need to be honored independently from what may happen to the tower.

Ms. Manning responded that the interpretive specialist will be contacting some of the prominent veterans to work in the interpretation and will have a very robust interpretative program independent from the tower.

Director Riffle commented on the harshness of the summits environment and how wind could reach up to 100 mph and could potentially have double-digit rainfall. He asked if there was a way to control access or would there be seasonal closures. Ms. Manning answered that as part of the concept plan the gate currently at Bald Mountain will stay and there will be several control points on the way up to the mountain.

Director Riffle stated that if there are any road closures that this information be posted onto the District website so that the public is aware of any closures and also recommending having a web-cam onsite. He also recommends having wi-fi access at the summit which in turn could be an opportunity to expand on the interpretive program. Ms. Manning stated that that these recommendations will be discussed in phase two.

Director Riffle expressed his concern about the cost and even though this is a very high quality well thought out and through project it is on top of a very unforgiving mountain. He questioned whether the constituents would question the cost of the project since historically the District usually has gravel parking lots and a toilet and mentioned that the constituents would not expect the District to build a world class facility. Director Riffle asked Director's Cyr and Hassett if they were concerned with the cost. Director Cyr stated that this project is unique to the District, he felt more comfortable with an elaborate design. He also stated that most of the design is moving material and bringing it closer to its original shape and form and will allow for an intimate and emotional connection to the site. Director Hassett agreed with Director Cyr and mentioned that there is higher interest from the public to access the site.

General Manager Abbors stated that the summit would be more a world class experience than a world class project and commented that the materials that are going to be used are going to withstand the elements. He also reminded the Committee that this past June the public approved this project and budget.

Director Riffle reminded staff that we need to accommodate any future potential partner such as the Mt. Um Conservancy as we go forward as terms of transparency and our willingness to work with a partner.

Ms. Manning stated that the next step is to take all of today's input and then present the committee with a 50% schematic designs in June and at which time will have a better understanding of the cost of the project.

ADJOURNMENT

Director Riffle adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 5:45 p.m.

Maria Soria
Deputy District Clerk