



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Administrative Office
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022

March 20, 2018

APPROVED MINUTES*

CALL TO ORDER

Director Siemens called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Cecily Harris, Larry Hassett, and Pete Siemens

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Acting General Manager Ana Ruiz, Acting Assistant General Manager Christine Butterfield, Acting Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Acting General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Planning Manager Jane Mark, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth,

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No speakers present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Selection of Committee Chair for Calendar Year 2018

Motion: Director Siemens moved, and Director Hassett seconded the motion to select Director Harris to serve as Committee chair for calendar year 2018.

Director Harris accepted the nomination.

VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Approve the May 9, 2017 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Minutes

Motion: Director Hassett moved, and Director Siemens seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the May 9, 2017 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting.

VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Red Barn Public Access Site Plan (R-18-25)

Acting Assistant General Manager Christine Butterfield spoke regarding the history of the project and previous opportunities for public comment and engagement, such as Vision Plan priority setting, District site visit and open house, and previous public meetings.

Planning Manager Jane Mark introduced Mark Brandi and John Bass from Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman, Inc. (MIG), the District's consultants on this project and provided an overview of the project, describing the history of the Red Barn area, previous District repairs and restoration of the Red Barn, and geography and constraints of the site. Ms. Mark provided the project timeline and outlined the project goals, including establishing public access, design elements to preserve the site's rural character, and protection of scenic views of and from the site.

Ms. Mark described the two design alternatives previously reviewed by the Committee and community in May 2017 and summarized the feedback received from the Committee and members of the public.

Mark Brandi described a third design alternative and how it addresses feedback previously received, such as maintaining scenic views and the rural character of the site, driveway safety and traffic impacts, and increased parking capacity to reduce the potential of overflow parking along Highway 84. Mr. Brandi displayed visual interpretations of the proposed design alternatives and described potential options that may reduce the visual impact of the improvements, including colored asphalt, vegetative restoration, and traditional fencing to screen the access road.

Director Hassett inquired if the Red Barn would be repainted as part of the public access project.

Ms. Mark reported the Red Barn would be repainted before the area is opened to public access.

Director Siemens requested clarification regarding the safety guardrails.

Mr. Mark explained guardrail determinations would be made in coordination with CalTrans.

Director Siemens suggested removal of the yellow lane striping to further preserve the site's rural character.

Director Siemens requested clarification regarding the size of the relocated cattle coral and its close proximity to Weeks Creek.

Mr. Brandi explained the current grazing tenant was comfortable with the smaller coral because the cattle are rarely in the coral area. Additionally, a bioswale area is anticipated for location between the coral and Weeks Creek.

Director Harris inquired regarding prevention measures to discourage large non-bus vehicles parking in the bus only parking areas.

Mr. Brandi suggested signage and temporary barriers to discourage illegal parking there.

Director Harris inquired whether trashcans would be considered for the site.

Acting General Manager Ana Ruiz explained staff continues to monitor heavily visited areas, such as Mount Umunhum, and will continue to increase visitor education and may return to the Board with a policy decision in the future.

Director Siemens commented on problems associated with trashcans located at Windy Hill and the District's eventual decision to remove the trashcans. Director Siemens encouraged additional signage and education will help minimize the problem.

Ms. Mark outlined the next steps and project timeline.

Public comment opened at 3:06 p.m.

Karin Bird, resident of La Honda, expressed her concern related to an increase in garbage in the area as more areas of open space are opened to public access. Ms. Bird also spoke in favor of preserving the rural character of the site.

Bob and Sharon Dooley, neighbors to the Red Barn property, spoke regarding the potential public access improvements to the old coral area and suggested moving the improvements to behind the ranger house. Mr. Dooley also commented on increased traffic in the area. Mr. Dooley questioned where visitors will go when they visit the area.

Barbara Hooper, resident of La Honda, thanked staff for the changes included in design Alternative 3 but expressed concerns regarding traffic along Highway 84. Ms. Hooper quoted from the District's traffic studies and asked the Committee to further consider traffic impacts. San Mateo County has designated the area a scenic corridor and commented that a 70 space paved parking area is not scenic.

Carole Bridgeman member of the Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee and commented on the removal of equestrian parking in Alternative 3. Ms. Bridgeman suggested increasing the number of equestrian parking spaces included in Alternatives 1 and 2.

Kathleen Moazed commented on the increased number of parking spaces in Alternative 3 and stated she would not like to see the parking lot from the road. Ms. Moazed inquired if the District's traffic study looked at weekend traffic. Finally, Ms. Moazed reported a petition is being circulated in La Honda regarding the project

Hilary Heart commented on the emergency landing zone and inquired how often the landing site is used on an annual basis. Additionally, Ms. Heart inquired if the local fire brigade has been contacted regarding the emergency landing zone.

Public comment closed at 3:22 p.m.

Ms. Mark reported the emergency landing zone will be relocated, and District staff will consult with necessary agencies to determine the location.

Ms. Mark reported three traffic studies have been completed to date and additional studies may be included as part of the environmental impact report. Also, Caltrans will be consulted regarding this and other traffic concerns.

Ms. Mark commented on the La Honda trail system and Phase II trails anticipated for completion before or at the time the Red Barn public access area is opened to the public.

Director Harris inquired regarding the owls found in the Red Barn.

Resources Specialist Matt Chaney provided additional information regarding barn owls, bats, and rats located in the Red Barn and reported additional studies will be completed.

Director Siemens suggested the District may want to consider an unpaved access road.

Ms. Mark reported that due to the bats located in the Red Barn, noise must be kept at a minimum and drivers on gravel roads may disturb them.

Director Siemens suggested reconsidering equestrian parking at the Sears Ranch Road parking lot.

Director Hassett spoke in favor equestrian parking areas at the Driscoll Event Center and inquired regarding the permit requirement for that site.

Ms. Mark reported that parking areas is an interim lot, and additional site planning is needed to determine the permanent number of equestrian parking spaces on the site.

Motion: Director Hassett moved, and Director Siemens seconded the motion to recommend Board approval of the Red Barn Public Access Area Site Plan Alternative 3, as described in the staff report.

VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Director Harris adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 3:43 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk