



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

May 9, 2018
Board Meeting 18-17

SPECIAL AND REGULAR MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Red Morton Community Center
1120 Roosevelt Ave.
Redwood City, CA 94061

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

APPROVED MINUTES*

SPECIAL MEETING – STUDY SESSION

Vice-President Harris called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Nonette Hanko, Cecily Harris, Yoriko Kishimoto, Curt Riffle, and Pete Siemens

Members Absent: Jed Cyr and Larry Hassett

Staff Present: Acting General Manager Ana Ruiz, Acting General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Acting Assistant General Manager Christine Butterfield, Acting Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, Acting Public Affairs Manager Cydney Bieber

1. Preserve Use Survey Project – Focus Group Update (R-18-44)

Acting General Manager Ana Ruiz discussed the ability of the preserve user survey to help identify preserve visitors and those communities that are not visiting preserves.

Acting Public Affairs Manager Cydney Bieber outlined the goals of the survey, the methodology used for recruiting and organizing the focus groups, and timeline during which they were conducted. Ms. Bieber introduced Patrick Tierney, Ph.D., who facilitated the focus group discussions.

President Cyr arrived at 6:09 p.m.

Dr. Tierney reviewed the questions asked and results from the seven focus groups, including themes and recommendations. Every participant in the focus groups were interested in visiting Midpen preserves in the future, and many showed interest in additional facility and trail

*Approved by the Board of Directors on May 23, 2018

developments at preserves. Dr. Tierney outlined various barriers to visiting and concerns identified by focus group participants, such as lack of information about preserves, lack of restrooms and transportation to preserves, inadequate parking, unknown trail conditions, etc. Focus group recommendations include additional outreach to communities through community groups and in native languages; additional restrooms; creation of a trail rating system expanded public and private transportation options; more family, kids, and women’s programs; address personal safety concerns. Dr. Tierney compared the results of the focus groups to the previously completed intercept surveys completed at District preserves.

Director Riffle suggested additional resources could be used towards decreasing soft barriers, such as providing education and information, rather than the larger, more expensive barriers, such as transportation.

Dr. Tierney suggested outreach and providing information to the communities could significantly increase preserve visitor use.

Public comments opened at 7:00 p.m.

No speakers present.

Public comments closed at 7:00 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 7:00 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

President Cyr called the regular meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 7:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Nonette Hanko, Cecily Harris, Yoriko Kishimoto, Curt Riffle, and Pete Siemens

Members Absent: Larry Hassett

Staff Present: Acting General Manager Ana Ruiz, Acting General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, Acting Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Acting Assistant General Manager Christine Butterfield, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Planner III Leslie Chan, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Senior Resource Management Specialist Coty Sifuentes-

Winter, Engineering and Construction Manager Jay Lin, Visitor Services Manager Matt Anderson

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No speakers present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Hassett absent)

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

- Introduction of staff
 - Leigh Ann Gessner, Public Affairs Specialist II

CONSENT CALENDAR

Public comment opened at 7:08 p.m.

No speakers present.

Public comment closed at 7:08 p.m.

Motion: Director Riffle moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to approve the Consent Calendar, as amended.

VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Hassett absent)

1. Approve April 25, 2018 Minutes

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported the Board has been provided with amended minutes based on Directors Siemens' request to add additional Board comments.

VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Hassett absent)

2. Claims Report

3. Fiscal Year 2017-18 Quarter 3 Budget Amendments (R-18-45)

Acting General Manager's Recommendation: Adopt a resolution approving the proposed FY2017-18 Quarter 3 Budget amendments and the transfer of General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance to four Committed and Restricted Reserves as follows: (1) \$600,000 to an existing Committed Reserve for Equipment Replacement; (2) \$1,000,000 to a new Committed Reserve for Capital Maintenance; (3) \$300,000 to a new Committed Reserve for the Promissory Note; and (4) \$250,000 to an existing Restricted Reserve to reimburse Measure AA costs of issuance.

4. Contract Amendment with Ecological Concerns, Inc., for Invasive Species Management Work (R-18-48)

Acting General Manager's Recommendation: Authorize the Acting General Manager to amend a contract with Ecological Concerns, Inc., in the amount of \$406,741.50, for a total not-to-exceed contract amount of \$980,224.50, to conduct invasive species management work under the Integrated Pest Management Program at multiple Preserves through the end of Fiscal Year 2018-19.

Director Riffle inquired regarding grant funding for the contract.

Senior Resource Management Specialist Coty Sifuentes-Winter reported Santa Clara Valley Water District awarded \$200,000 grant funds per year up to \$1 million over five years.

5. Roll call vote to authorize the District to enter into a Grant Agreement with the Santa Clara Valley Water District for the Webb Creek Bridge Replacement (R-18-38)

Acting General Manager's Recommendation: Adopt a resolution by roll call vote confirming an application for the Safe, Clean Water Priority D3 Grant Program, affirming that sufficient funds are available to complete this work, and authorizing the General Manager to execute the grant agreement with the Santa Clara Valley Water District to receive \$149,500 for replacement of the Webb Creek Bridge.

ROLL CALL VOTE: VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Hassett absent)

BOARD BUSINESS**6. Informational Presentation on the Red Barn Public Access Site Plan - Conceptual Design Alternative 3 (R-18-47)**

Acting Assistant General Manager Christine Butterfield provided introductory comments and outlined the project goals, including public access, amenities to facilitate environmental education, protection of scenic views, and balance of public access and grazing activities.

Planner III Leslie Chan provided a brief history of the Red Barn area, including existing infrastructure and its role as a local landmark visible from Highway 84. Ms. Chan described the access constraints for the site and the project timeline. This is a Measure AA-funded project, which includes \$11.7 million to open the upper half of the La Honda Open Space Preserve to public access, including biking/hiking trails, dog access, staging areas; loop & connector trails; habitat restoration for rare species; and improved fencing, corrals, and water systems to reintroduce conservation grazing. The Board approved the La Honda Master Plan in 2012, which included various priorities, such as use and maintenance of the Red Barn, parking, picnic areas, potential restoration of the adjacent former pond, etc. Ms. Chan described several site constraints, such as driveway line of sight, steep topography, protected species habitats, scenic corridor, etc.

Director Riffle inquired regarding previous traffic studies completed for Highway 84 and how they compare to the public's comments on Highway 84 traffic.

Ms. Chan reported two traffic studies were previously completed and another is planned; however, traffic studies cannot always account for various illegal activities and driving along Highway 84.

Director Siemens inquired if a turning lane is being considered for Highway 84.

Ms. Chan reported that based on current traffic counts and study, the site does not warrant a turning lane according to Caltrans regulations. Staff will be engaging in further conversations with Caltrans to discuss a turning lane and other safety enhancement measures, such as flashing lights.

Ms. Chan described the two design alternatives previously reviewed by the Planning and Natural Resources Committee (Committee) and La Honda community in May 2017 and summarized the feedback received from the Committee and members of the public.

Ms. Chan introduced Mark Brandi from Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman, Inc. (MIG), the District's consultants on this project. Mr. 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 for 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. Mr. Brandi reviewed additional public feedback received and reported the project team continues to welcome feedback to help the team understand and address the impacts of the various design alternatives.

Ms. Chan reported the current cost estimate for design alternative 3 is \$5 million, which is within the public access allocation for the Measure AA portfolio for this project.

Director Kishimoto commented on the visual impact of the access road suggesting a narrower gravel road.

Ms. Chan reported the current design conforms to standard building code, but its width may be considered as part of further project analysis. Colored asphalt is recommended because cars driving on a gravel road would have a negative impact on the pallid bats that live in the Red Barn.

Director Kishimoto requested clarification regarding the buffer around the Red Barn.

Ms. Chan reported the District's biologist recommends a 50-foot buffer around the Red Barn to prevent disturbance of the pallid bats.

Director Kishimoto suggested an accessible parking area could be located at the Red Barn site, and other visitors could access the area from other locations in the preserve, such as from the Driscoll Event Center.

Director Riffle inquired if agricultural stakeholders have been consulted.

Ms. Chan reported staff consulted the District's rangeland ecologist and current grazing tenant regarding the various alternatives.

Director Riffle suggested that due to the potential popularity of the site, the District may want to consider implementation of both phases at the same time.

Director Harris spoke in favor of design alternative 3 and spoke to the likely popularity of the site. Director Harris inquired regarding San Mateo County permitting requirements for the driveway.

Ms. Chan reported District staff consulted with San Mateo County planning staff to discuss preliminary designs, and further consultations will continue after designs are complete.

Public comments opened at 8:13 p.m.

Patty Mayall resident of Old La Honda Road spoke regarding fatal car accidents on Highway 84 and individuals who illegally race along Highway 84. Ms. Mayhall requested the Board consider gathering traffic information from the La Honda School District, La Honda Fire Department, and Skylonda California Highway Patrol station.

Kathleen Moazed spoke in opposition to the project site, and stated parking should be limited to 20 spaces. Also, no parking signs should be installed along Highway 84.

Barbara Hooper spoke in opposition to the project stating it was not in character with the District's mission because it would not maintain the rural character of the site and would turn the area into a tourist site. Ms. Hooper reported on a traffic study she conducted on Highway 84 during an hour on a weekend day.

Bob Dooley, neighbor to the Red Barn site, thanked staff for providing documents related to the historic nature of the site. Mr. Dooley spoke in favor of restoring a former pond on the site and its value to the habitat and historic value of the ranch.

Steven Lafon spoke in opposition to the proposed project plan due because it does not take into account the rural nature of the site and potential traffic increases.

Lynette Vega, resident of La Honda, spoke in opposition to the project plan stating it would interfere the rural character of the area. Additionally, the driving patterns of the road would create unsafe conditions, especially on the weekends.

Carol Bridgeman spoke regarding the lack of equestrian parking on the site stating that parking at Driscoll Ranch is not always possible for equestrian visitors due its distance from the Red Barn. Ms. Bridgeman suggested the Board reconsider creating equestrian parking at the Sears Ranch Road parking lot.

Garrett Morris spoke regarding vehicle accidents along Highway 84 and stated the District should work with local emergency services to address traffic concerns.

Ken Nitz inquired whether a parking lot was considered further south. Additionally, Mr. Nitz suggested the public may want to get closer than 50 feet to Red Barn and recommended implementation of Phase II immediately to address parking needs.

Lou Bordi spoke regarding the potential parking needs for the Red Barn site. Mr. Bordi spoke regarding his traffic safety concerns and overflow parking along Highway 84. Mr. Bordi suggested the parking lot be located at Driscoll Ranch instead.

Public comments closed at 8:34 p.m.

No Board action required.

The Board recessed at 8:35 and reconvened at 8:40 with Directors Cyr, Hanko, Harris, and Kishimoto present.

7. Acceptance of the Final Report for the Docent & Volunteer Program Structure Study (R-18-46)

Acting General Manager Ana Ruiz spoke regarding the high value of the District's volunteers and docents that make District programs successful. Purposes for studying the volunteer and docent programs include encouraging new communities to participate in the programs, including youth and ethnic communities. Ms. Ruiz described follow-up meetings by staff with District volunteers and docents to receive additional feedback on the study.

Directors Riffle and Siemens returned at 8:42 p.m.

Management Analyst II Gordon Baillie described the projects goals, which include reviewing the program structures, exploring additional services the programs could provide, studying current staffing levels, data gathering methods, and evaluating the services currently provided. Mr. Baillie identified key themes found in the study, such as creation and enhancement of key messages, methods to monitor program success, and improved communications between the Visitor Services and Public Affairs departments.

Director Harris inquired regarding the recommendation for an interpretive master plan asking whether individual preserve master plans are needed.

Rici Peterson of Conservation by Design explained the majority of the work is completed as part of the master plan, and individual preserve plans are often only a few pages based on specific regions.

Director Harris commented on the need to define underserved communities because varying definitions are being used throughout the District.

Ms. Peterson reported that in the Volunteer and Docent study underserved communities refer to those communities that do not engage with the District or its preserves.

Director Kishimoto commented on future policy decisions the Board may need to consider, such as the role of District rangers in the volunteer and docent programs.

Ms. Ruiz reported staff will be further studying these and other policy implications, which would be implemented gradually as part of future strategic plan and budget updates.

Director Kishimoto spoke regarding the need for the District and the Board to evaluate policy decisions, such as diversity in hiring, bilingual outreach materials, interpretive master plans that incorporate diversity into a conservation message.

Public comments opened at 9:05 p.m.

Mary Bernstein, District docent and volunteer, thanked District staff, Board, and the consultant for taking docent and volunteer feedback and incorporating it into the study.

Ken Nitz expressed concern regarding creation of interpretive master plan speaking in favor of continuing creativity for docent activities.

Public comments closed at 9:08 p.m.

President Cyr spoke in favor of augmenting District staff efforts by increasing the number of District docents and volunteers.

Motion: Director Hanko moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to accept the Final Report for the Docent and Volunteer Program Structure Study.

VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Hassett absent)

8. Motion for Reconsideration of the Board of Directors' April 25, 2018 action regarding the Project Goals, Project Delivery Process, and Timeline for the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower Long-Term Repair Project (R-18-49)

President Cyr spoke regarding the motion for reconsideration stating his desire to learn more about the staff safety procedures.

Director Harris commented on her previous vote regarding the goals, timeline, and costs of the projects and stated her support for the project goals. Director Harris expressed concerns regarding the other aspects of the recommendation presented to the Board.

Director Siemens stated his concerns regarding the project stating his support for exterior remediation but not for interior repairs. Director Siemens suggested the Board might want to only consider and vote on the project goals.

Director Kishimoto suggested the Board should learn more about mothballing of buildings so it may better understand the project.

Ms. Ruiz reported the original assessment of the radar tower only examined the need for short-term repairs. Additional information is needed to determine what long-term repairs are needed to exclude wildlife, continued deterioration, and whether staff will need to enter the building.

Public comments opened at 9:25 p.m.

No speakers present.

Public comments closed at 9:25 p.m.

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to reconsider the Board of Directors' April 25, 2018 vote to take no action regarding the project goals, project delivery process, and timeline for the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower Long Term Repair Project. If the Board votes to reconsider the item, it would be placed on an agenda for the June 13, 2018 meeting.

VOTE: 3-3-0 (Directors Harris, Kishimoto, and Siemens dissented; Director Hassett absent)

Motion fails.

Director Kishimoto suggested one option for the radar tower might be to allow water to enter the building but create a drainage system to allow it to also flow out.

Ms. Ruiz reported a second assessment can examine this option.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

A. Committee Reports

Director Riffle reported the Action Plan and Budget Committee met on May 1, 2018 to review the proposed FY2018-19 Budget and Capital Improvement and Action Plan.

B. Staff Reports

Ms. Ruiz reported on her recent meeting with Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority General Manager Andrea Mackenzie to discuss agency priorities and potential coordination projects.

C. Director Reports

The Board members submitted their compensatory reports.

Director Harris reported she will be attending the Bay Area Open Space Council meeting on May 10, 2018. Additionally, she commented on the 50th anniversary and grand opening of a new entrance to Castle Rock State Park on September 29, 2018.

Director Riffle reported he met with the District's newest Volunteer Trail Patrol class.

President Cyr reported Director Kishimoto will be attending a meeting on May 10, 2018 to represent the District in selecting a special district representative to serve on the new Santa Clara County Countywide Redevelopment Agency Oversight Board.

ADJOURNMENT

President Cyr adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 9:34 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk