



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

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

Senior Coastsiders Building
925 Main St.
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

**Tuesday, January 22, 2019
2:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Director Siemens called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at to order at 2:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Larry Hassett, Yoriko Kishimoto, and Pete Siemens

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Rangeland Ecologist/Botanist Lewis Reed

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Oral communications were heard after Item 3.

BJ Burns commented on cattle losses at McDonald Ranch and requested clarification of the situation.

Erik Markegard reported the cause for the cattle losses has yet to be determined.

Ron Sturgess commented that he spoke with the state veterinarian who also indicated the cause has yet to be determined.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Director Hassett suggested hearing oral communications at the end of the agenda due to Director Siemens's need to leave early.

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Siemens seconded the motion to adopt the agenda, as amended.

VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Selection of Committee Chair

Motion: Director Siemens moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to select Director Hassett to serve as Committee chair.

Director Hassett accepted the nomination.

VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Approve the October 9, 2018 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Minutes

Motion: Director Siemens moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the October 9, 2018 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting.

VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Toto Ranch Rangeland Management Plan Update (R-19-13)

Rangeland Ecologist/Botanist Lewis Reed described the location of Toto Ranch and the natural resources located on and the current uses for the property. In addition to the rangeland, there are residential and agricultural leases for the site. Mr. Reed provided an overview of the rangeland management plan (RMP), including its purpose, key proposed improvements, and monitoring. The RMP recommends leasing to a single tenant for year-round rotational cattle grazing and provides guidelines for rangeland use involving horses. Proposed infrastructure improvements include road improvements and culvert installation; fencing along west and south boundary fencing and partial pond fencing to protect sensitive species habitats; and water improvements, such as installation of water troughs. Rangeland management improvements include brush management in enhance rangeland productivity. Monitoring protocols include photo monitoring, invasive plant tracking, and measuring of residual dry matter. Mr. Reed outlined the next steps of the process, including fulfillment of CEQA requirements and Board approval.

Director Kishimoto inquired whether the RMP includes carbon-farming options.

Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington reported staff is working with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to create a carbon-farming plan, which is moving forward separately.

Director Kishimoto inquired if any additional water would be used under the proposed rangeland management plan, which would change the balance of water to be used for grazing and by wildlife.

Mr. Lenington reported the RMP does address water usage through additional water storage and pond improvements.

Director Siemens inquired regarding public access and whether providing public access is addressed in the lease.

Mr. Lenington reported public access would be addressed in a preserve plan, which has not been completed for this property.

Director Hassett inquired if the eucalyptus trees will be removed.

Mr. Sifuentes-Winter reported staff is looking at future removal but must first determine whether the trees are monarch-nesting sites.

Mr. Lenington reported the eucalyptus trees will also be studied as part of the carbon-farming plan.

Director Hassett inquired regarding removal of coyote brush by use of the District's masticator.

Mr. Sifuentes-Winter reported staff and District consultants are studying the most efficient and cost-effective methods of coyote brush removal while also taking into account species living in the brush.

Director Kishimoto commented the District may want to consider public access at Tunitas Creek Beach as it determines public access for this property.

Director Hassett commented on the use of mineral supplements and whether they are effective.

Mr. Reed explained the use of mineral supplements may be more useful following a forage analysis, which would determine whether supplements are needed.

Director Hassett spoke in favor of opening the property to volunteers to learn more about a working ranch.

Mr. Sifuentes-Winter reported staff can work with the Visitor Services department to suggest this as a volunteer activity.

Public comment opened at 3:07 p.m.

Erik Markegard spoke in favor of developing the agricultural plan in tandem with the RMP and suggested delaying approval of the RMP until the agricultural plan is developed. Mr. Markegard shared his concerns with the RMP, including the description of the hay barn, the effects of horse use on natural resources, suggestion to build horse stalls in a new hay barn, and removal of three donkeys on the property. Mr. Markegard requested building farm labor housing on Toto or nearby McDonald or Cloverdale Ranches. Mr. Markegard spoke regarding the need to address climate change and soil-building through carbon-farming.

BJ Burns commented on the need for the RMP to be presented to the San Mateo County Farm Bureau to provide input.

Ron Sturgess expressed concern regarding the process and spoke in favor of the San Mateo County Farm Bureau providing input into the planning process for the RMP. Mr. Sturgess spoke

regarding a proposed conservation easement stating that the conservation easement should be seen before approval of the RMP.

Public comment closed at 3:19 p.m.

Director Siemens inquired when the RMP would be presented to the Farm Bureau.

General Manager Ruiz reported the RMP is first presented to the Committee in order to ensure that the Committee is in agreement with the proposed RMP before it is presented to the farm bureau.

Director Siemens commented that some of the goals/objectives in the RMP should be included in the preserve plan and suggested including “Establish provisions for minimizing erosion and transport of potential pollutants into creeks.” However, he suggested revising it to remove the term “potential.”

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone explained the intent of creating the RMP was to prepare for entering into a long-term grazing lease. The District would separately enter into an agricultural license to allow time to analyze and create an agricultural plan. The District did not want to delay entering into a long-term grazing lease in order to draft an agricultural plan.

Director Kishimoto suggested inclusion of a timeline addressing carbon-farming and creation of the agricultural plan to allow the Board to see the timeline for the entire project. Also include information regarding current water use and number of animals.

Motion: Director Siemens moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to recommend Board approval of the final draft Rangeland Management Plan for Toto Ranch. If significant changes are identified through the public outreach process, staff should return to the Committee to review the item before it is brought to the full Board.

VOTE: 3-0-0

Director Siemens left at 3:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Director Hassett adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 3:38 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk