

From: umunhum.conservancy@gmail.com
To: [web](#); [Clerk](#); [General Information](#)
Subject: Full Board of Directors and District Clerk - Board Contact Form
Date: Friday, May 10, 2019 11:25:24 AM

Name * Sam Drake
Select a Choice * Full Board of Directors and District Clerk
Email * umunhum.conservancy@gmail.com

Location: (i.e. City, Address or District Ward) San Jose

Daytime Phone Number (if you wish to be contacted by phone) (408) 827-5150

Comments: *

Umunhum Conservancy Update – Spring 2019

I would like to take a few minutes to update you on the status of the Umunhum Conservancy's efforts to preserve the historic radar tower atop Mt. Umunhum.

Tower update

Full update: <https://umunhumconservancy.org/umunhum-conservancy-update-spring-2019/>

The summit of Mt. Umunhum and the historic radar tower are owned by the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District (MidPen). In May 2016 the tower was declared historic by unanimous vote of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. In response to this, in June of 2016 MidPen adopted the “retain and seal” option for the historic radar tower atop Mt. Umunhum. They agreed to cease their efforts to demolish the tower. However, no work was actually performed to preserve the tower, and such work has not yet been performed.

Back in 2016 MidPen described the next steps along with a timeline for them:

Assess the tower's condition in late 2017–early 2018

MidPen board approval for repairs early–mid 2018

Implementation of repairs beginning in 2019

As often happens in life, this schedule didn't work out. The MidPen board did not approve an assessment until January of this year (2019). We understand that the assessment is now under way, and look forward to seeing the detailed engineering analysis.

The current MidPen timeline for “next steps” is:

MidPen board reviews repair options and approves repair elements – Summer 2019

MidPen board awards contract to complete construction plans – Fall 2019

MidPen board awards contract to perform repair work – Spring 2020

The Umunhum Conservancy looks forward to the completion of all repairs that are necessary to truly preserve the historic radar tower for future generations.

Umunhum Conservancy Update

While we await the engineering assessment, the Umunhum Conservancy has been patiently waiting. Until we know what repairs are needed to preserve the tower, there hasn't been much to do. Now that the assessment is underway, we expect that will soon change!

While primary responsibility for maintaining the tower lies with MidPen, there are potentially opportunities for the Conservancy to provide funds to assist with necessary repairs. We believe that the Conservancy's role should be to:

Provide funds to accelerate the implementation of urgent repairs, and/or to
Provide funds to allow repairs to be performed to a higher standard than MidPen would fund alone

Once the engineering assessment is complete we expect to begin a productive dialog with MidPen management to discuss priorities and see how the Conservancy can best help with funding of repairs.

We expect those discussions will involve two topics:
Spending current funds on hand, and
Potential future fundraising

Thanks to the wonderful generosity of the Bay Area, the Conservancy has over \$100,000 available to assist with tower preservation. We hope to spend the bulk of those funds on repairs (within the parameters discussed above), once the necessary repairs are known.

While waiting for the engineering assessment, the Conservancy has not actively engaged in fundraising. (It's quite difficult to raise money when you don't know what it will be spent on, or whether it is needed.) Once the engineering assessment is available we hope to reach an understanding with MidPen about the need for the Conservancy to participate in future fundraising.

In our past discussions with MidPen management they have indicated that they don't see a need for the Conservancy to participate in future fundraising; their management has noted that "we have POST (the Peninsula Open Space Trust) for that".

Because of that feedback from MidPen management the Conservancy is not currently planning to resume active fundraising. If MidPen changes their mind and would like the Conservancy to assist in future fundraising we're sure that MidPen management will get in touch to begin that conversation.

Finally, we continue to remind MidPen that another source of funding is available to them, which they have so far refused to take advantage of. Santa Clara County makes approximately \$500,000 available each year in grants to property owners for the preservation of historic structures. To be eligible for those funds MidPen would need to agree to formal "landmark" status for the tower and then apply. To date they have not done so. We strongly suggest that MidPen take this common sense step to fund tower preservation prior to engaging in additional fundraising from the community as a whole.

In conclusion, we want to thank everyone in the Bay Area who has helped to protect the historic radar tower to date, and who will participate in its preservation for future generations.

...Sam Drake / President / Umunhum Conservancy

Spared For Now
Not Yet Preserved
We're Not Done!
Thank You For Your Support!



Sam Drake
President Umunhum Conservancy
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San Jose, CA 95153

RE: Umunhum Conservancy Update - Spring 2019

Dear Sam Drake,

Thank you for your interest in the Mount Umunhum Radar Tower. We appreciate the Umunhum Conservancy's efforts to support Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (Midpen's) work to seal and retain the tower. It is important to clarify a few of the statements made in your letter. Prior to June 2016, Midpen was evaluating three options which included retain and seal. All options were under consideration until June 8, 2016, when the Board of Directors made a formal decision in an open public session to retain and seal the tower.

Since 2011, Midpen has performed extensive work on the tower:

- 2011 – Removed peeling and flaking paint from the radar tower interior and exterior as part of the overall hazardous materials remediation project of all the buildings on Mount Umunhum.
- 2015-2016 – Completed interim repairs on the radar tower, including covering exterior openings, covering floor openings, completing structural repairs required for collapse prevention, sealing first floor openings, and patching the 1st floor exterior concrete.
- 2018 – Remediating and removing paints and coatings on the exterior walls of the tower, and sealing all entry points to prevent wildlife entry.

The approximate cost for work on the tower since 2015 is \$900,000. In addition to this work, Midpen constructed numerous public access improvements around the exterior perimeter of the radar tower, including paved pathways, benches, railings, and interpretive signs. At this time due to spalling of small pieces of concrete from the building, the area around the radar tower is closed to the public. Midpen is currently under contract with a consultant to develop a basis of design for additional repairs consistent with the retain and seal status of the tower that will allow Midpen to reopen the area around the tower to public access. Based on the repair options presented, the Board will direct the final scope of the repairs to then proceed with the preparation of construction documents and bidding for construction.

As the Umuunhum Conservancy is on our notification list for the project, you will receive notices of future public meetings on this project, including:

- Board review of repair options and approval of repair elements - Summer 2019
- Board award of contract to complete construction plans - Fall 2019
- Board award of contract to construct the repairs - Spring 2020

Midpen continues to welcome donations toward the repairs of the radar tower. If additional improvements or an acceleration of the repair schedule is requested as part of funding contributions, Midpen will need to consider the fiscal impact and the impact to the schedule of other important public access and natural resource protection projects. At this time Midpen is not seeking formal landmark status for the radar tower as such a designation may complicate future site management actions to uphold the Board's retain and seal decision for the radar tower.

Regards,

Pete Siemens
MROSD Board President