



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

March 3, 2020
Board Meeting 20-05

SPECIAL MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Mitchell Park Community Center
El Palo Alto West Community Room
3700 Middlefield Rd.
Palo Alto, CA 94303

**Tuesday, March 3, 2020
9:30 AM**

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

President Holman called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 9:32 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Larry Hassett, Karen Holman, Yoriko Kishimoto, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Pete Siemens

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, Controller Mike Foster, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Public Affairs Specialist Leigh Ann Gessner, Engineering and Construction Manager Jay Lin, Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight, Information Systems Technology Manager Casey Hiatt, Visitor Services Manager Matt Anderson, Land and Facilities Manager Michael Jurich, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Real Property Manager Mike Williams, Finance Manager Andrew Taylor, Budget and Analysis Manager Carmen Narayanan

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Dan Olstein, Director of Land Programs and Stewardship at Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), spoke in favor of collaborating with the District to support its strategic priorities and projects. Mr. Olstein spoke in support of agriculture on the San Mateo Coast, wildlife linkages

and corridors, and public access through regional trails.

Shani Kleinhaus from the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society and local chapter of the Sierra Club spoke in support of wildlife corridors. Ms. Kleinhaus spoke regarding roadkill along Alma Bridge Road and the need to remediate the impact of increased public access and traffic on wildlife to create a net benefit to wildlife. Ms. Kleinhaus spoke against opening District trails to e-bikes.

Director Kersteen-Tucker arrived at 9:38 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

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

BOARD BUSINESS

General Manager Ana Ruiz provided opening comments summarizing the agenda topics for the retreat and describing the various organizational changes the District has undergone in the past five years to increase efficiency, ability to deliver projects, and manage an expanding amount of open space.

Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak reviewed the budget planning cycle. Mr. Jaskulak reviewed the preliminary fiscal year 2020-21 (FY21) budget including proposed expenditures and estimated revenues and reviewed the key themes and updates to the Strategic Goals and Objectives from the December 9, 2019 Board retreat.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested updating Goal 3, Objective 3 to refer to “a regional environmental protection vision” to be consistent with the other strategic goals and objectives.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to approve the following language Goal 3, Objective 3 to refer to “a regional environmental protection vision” for the FY20-21 Strategic Goals and Objectives.

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

Director Kishimoto commented on the need to address increased conflict between wildlife and human travel throughout the region as public access to open space increases.

Director Riffle commented on the need to balance funds used to fulfill the District’s mission with infrastructure costs associated with staff facilities. Director Riffle also spoke in support of a regional, multi-modal approach to improving access to District open spaces, through parking, transportation/transit, etc.

President Holman suggested the Board may need to consider the net benefit of opening District lands to the public in order to continue to protect wildlife as public access increases.

Ms. Ruiz spoke regarding the District's recent projects to protect wildlife while providing a public benefit, such as the wildlife refuge islands at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve to provide safe havens to wildlife from predators and humans during high tide events.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone reviewed the FY21 Capital Improvement and Action Plan (CIAP) priorities and Measure AA five-year list of projects and progress on each. Mr. Malone described the development of the proposed FY21 CIAP, including resource loading, application of the Board-approved Measure AA prioritization criteria, and the Vision Plan.

President Siemens arrived at 10:20 a.m.

Director Kishimoto requested staff provide the list of Board-approved 5-year Measure AA projects for future retreats.

Mr. Malone reviewed the grant and partnership funding secured for FY21 projects.

The Board reviewed the four programs of the draft CIAP, requested and received clarification regarding the projects included. The Board also requested edits to various project descriptions.

Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan reviewed the land acquisition and preservation program describing potential opportunities for new land acquisitions, including Gordon Ridge, Cloverdale Ranch, and Johnston Ranch, and potential opportunities to acquire watershed lands. Ms. Chan described the lot line adjustment process required for several acquisitions, which includes outreach to several advisory bodies.

Director Kersteen-Tucker commented regarding the lot line adjustment process and responding to the comment letter from San Mateo County Farm Bureau and suggested creating a high-level District response related to lot line adjustment issues.

General Counsel Hilary Stevenson reported the comment letter received was directed at San Mateo County, and District staff will be working with County staff to respond.

Ms. Ruiz reported staff will review the draft a response letter to determine if a separate response from the District is warranted or if the County response letter should carbon copy the District.

Director Kishimoto requested a copy of the San Mateo County Farm Bureau response letter be provided to the Board.

Director Siemens expressed his hesitation in the District becoming responsible for the water system at Cloverdale Ranch.

Director Kishimoto suggested creating public access guidance documents similar to the proposed project that will establish land conservation guidance documents.

General Manager Ruiz responded by offering to hold consideration for inclusion of the item as part of the CIAP for Fiscal Year 2022, recognizing that the proposed CIAP for Fiscal Year 2021 is fully resource loaded.

The Board recessed at 11:30 a.m. and reconvened at 11:47 p.m. with all directors present.

Mr. Malone reviewed projects associated with the natural resource protection and restoration program, including the Highway 17 wildlife crossing, review and development of an agricultural policy, programmatic permitting for routine maintenance and facilities improvements program, badger and burrowing owl habitat assessment, wildland fire resiliency program, and continued implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

Director Riffle spoke in support of the District's Climate Action Plan, wildlife linkages, and building a more collaborative relationship with the San Mateo County Farm Bureau to provide input.

Director Kersteen-Tucker spoke in support of working with additional agricultural organizations along the San Mateo Coast.

Mr. Malone commented on the San Mateo County Farm Bureau's acknowledgement and appreciation of the District and its staff engaging with them on District projects.

Director Hassett requested and received clarification regarding the sequestration-carbon farm plan at October Farm.

President Holman suggested providing a map and documentation of when and where mountain lion sightings and encounters have occurred.

Ms. Ruiz and Mr. Malone provided a summary of the types of tracking and documentation the District has related to mountain lions and stated that the District passes along all of the information to the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, which monitors mountain lion activity.

The Board received an update on the various projects within the Wildland Fire Resiliency Program, including the prescribed fire program, District-wide fuel reduction, and Los Trancos eucalyptus removal project.

Ms. Chan reviewed projects in the public access, education, and outreach program, including Ravenswood Bay Trail, Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and parking lot, Highway 35 pedestrian crossing and parking/multi-modal access, Alpine Road Regional Trail, Beatty trailhead and parking area, and Districtwide ADA barrier removal.

Director Riffle suggested the Board may want to consider taking a leading role in a regional collaboration effort to address parking and transportation issues related to helping the public safely access open space and regional trails.

Mr. Malone reported the Santa Cruz Mountain Stewardship Network and Peninsula Working Group both have trail subgroups that are working cooperatively on a mapping effort for regional trail connections, allowed trail uses, parking, and accessibility.

President Holman also noted the District will need to balance public access with the carrying capacity of District preserves.

Director Siemens spoke in favor of pursuing additional land acquisitions, where possible, to support parking and public access at various preserves.

Director Riffle requested an update on the Cooley Landing Education Center Business & Operating Plan.

Ms. Ruiz provided an update reporting that an operator has been identified, and the District will largely fund the development of a business and operation plan for the center and park.

Director Kishimoto requested an update on the District's diversity initiatives.

Public Affairs Specialist Leigh Ann Gessner reported that District staff implements the various diversity initiatives throughout its outreach and engagement efforts and is looking to replicate the successful Latino Outdoors partnership with other diversity groups.

Mr. Malone reviewed projects in the vehicles, equipment, facilities, and other program, including repainting the La Honda Creek Red Barn, structural improvements, District facilities, increased efficiencies in business systems, and communications and outreach initiatives.

Mr. Malone reviewed CIAP projects to support various areas of interest, including agriculture and diversity.

Director Cyr reported the Special Parks District Forum will be in May in Ohio and encouraged the Board members to attend.

President Holman and the other Board members thanked staff for their efforts to prepare for the retreat and ongoing support for the District.

Director Riffle spoke in support of safe public access to open space and suggested the Board will need to address this issue.

Director Kersteen-Tucker spoke in support of protecting land health.

Public comments opened at 2:07 p.m.

No speakers present.

Public comments closed at 2:07 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

President Holman adjourned the Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 2:08 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk