



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

REGULAR MEETING

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Administrative Office – Board Room
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022

February 24, 2015

DRAFT MINUTES

I. ROLL CALL

Director Cyr called the Regular Meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Larry Hassett, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Steve Abbors, Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Sheryl Schaffner, Operations Manager Michael Newburn, Operations Project Manager Aaron Hébert, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Planner II Gretchen Laustsen, Planner III Lisa Bankosh, and Interim District Clerk Kim Marie Smith

II. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

VOTE: 3-0-0

III. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Appointment of Committee Chair

Director Cyr nominated Director Riffle as Committee Chair and Director Hassett seconded the nomination. Director Riffle accepted the position.

VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Approve December 2, 2014 Minutes

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Hassett seconded the motion to approve the

minutes of October 21, 2014.

VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Mt. Umunhum Trail Guadalupe Creek Overlook – Viewing Platform (R-15-31)

Planner III Lisa Bankosh summarized the staff report and said this an opportunity to create a visitor destination about halfway along the trail with a spectacular viewpoint. The meeting tonight is to review design guidelines and discuss a preliminary conceptual design. She showed a cell-phone video taken of the area and the proposed overlook location. She said that it is a beautiful spot and they hope to keep it as natural as possible, but with the volume of users expected, it needs improvements to make it safe and to protect the sensitive plant community.

Mr. Bob Birkeland, of the Restoration Design Group, discussed the design challenges, and showed a series of example slides illustrating ways in which they could protect the native vegetation and natural landforms; create a safe destination accessible to trail users with a wide range of abilities; integrate with the natural setting while minimizing visibility from surrounding areas; prioritize durability, longevity and sustainability in materials and design; and create a timeless design.

Ms. Bankosh said that the conceptual design is being done now, with schematic designs and permitting planned for March, construction documents in April, the bid process in May, and the construction would begin in June 2015.

Director Hassett said that he was in favor of the concept as shown in the image with the red fence sketched in, because it was unobtrusive but still safe.

Director Cyr said this is an exciting location, and offers a variety of opportunities for various users. Using native materials when possible will allow it to fit in, and he agreed with Director Hassett that the simple railing is the best choice.

Discussion followed about whether bicycles would be allowed, if lock-up facilities or bike lockers were feasible, and how natural barriers on the spur trail, such as rough surfaces or closely spaced boulders, could be used to keep people from riding their bikes into the overlook area. Mr. Birkeland said lockers would probably not work in this area, since it is so remote, and if there was a malfunction that would pose a problem for the rider. Ms. Bankosh noted that there would probably be one or two steps as well.

Discussion followed about the desire to accommodate horseback riders, cyclists and hikers on a multi-use trail, and it was agreed that the spur trail is such a constrained site that horses would not be allowed at all, and bicycles must be walked or carried.

Director Riffle asked if there were any other overlooks similar to this one. Ms. Bankosh mentioned the Tafone deck, and the Gene Sheehan overlook, which is a trail with a railing.

Mr. Birkeland explained that original budget was \$150,000 because it was initially envisioned as something more like the Tafone deck, but those plans have been scaled

back to keep the site more natural, and the overlook improvement cost could be as low as \$50,000.

At 2:42 p.m. the hearing was opened. There were no speakers, and the hearing was closed.

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Hassett seconded the motion to: (1) Confirm Guadalupe Creek Overlook Design Guidelines, as expanded in the staff report, to guide the overlook design to ensure the protection of sensitive natural resources and visitor safety; and (2) Confirm the draft preliminary conceptual design for the overlook that integrates the proposed guidelines.

VOTE: 3-0-0

4. Use and Management Plan Amendment to Close Two Designated Trail Segments at Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve for maintenance and safety reasons. (R-15-40)

Skyline Area Superintendent Brian Malone reviewed the staff report, and said the intent was to highlight beautiful natural areas and increase user safety.

He explained that the North Ridge trail is not a loop, and just after the knoll there's a steep descent, which ends at a gate on private property that has not been maintained, so hikers must turn around anyway. Also, there were some safety complaints about loose gravel, so was posted saying the trail is not maintained beyond that point. He said the visitor experience would actually be enhanced if the last portion of the trail were closed off.

Mr. Malone explained that the Lobitos Creek trail was adopted with property acquisition. It doesn't make sense to maintain such a remote out-and-back trail with no long-term connection to the Purisima-to-the-Sea trail, and although the first section is a popular hike through redwoods, after a half mile it is not maintained. The fiscal impact of closure is minimal, about \$400 for signing and fencing, but there will be some long-term savings in not maintaining existing trails.

Discussion followed about how the District maps are updated, and Mr. Malone explained that GIS map changes are made immediately, and paper copies are updated on the next printing run.

At 3:02 p.m. the hearing was opened. There were no speakers, and the hearing was closed.

Motion: Director Hassett moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to approve the following recommendations for the full Board of Directors' consideration:

1. Find that the recommended actions are Categorically Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
2. Adopt a Use and Management Plan Amendment to close the majority of the Lobitos Creek Trail in Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve except for the first ¼ mile.
3. Adopt a Use and Management Plan Amendment to close the last ¼ mile of the North

Ridge Trail in Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve.

Director Riffle asked if it would be possible to delay the starting time of the next meeting until 2:30 pm. Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz talked about the items expected to be on that meeting. General Manager Steve Abbors said he would work with staff to see if the agenda order could be changed, and Director Riffle said he would like to be present for the staff facilities item and the accessibility plan update.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Director Siemens adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 3:10 p.m.

Kim Marie Smith, MMC
Interim District Clerk