



Attachment "A"

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
September 26, 2013 MINUTES

5:07 p.m. Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,
Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

Members Present

Laurie Gallian	Sue Conley	John Dell'Osso	Shanti Edwards
John Nagle	Jeff Holtzman	Steve Rabinowitsh	Kristin Thigpen
Bill Smith	Cary Fargo		

Members Absent

Dennis Murphy	Don McEnhill
Gary Wysocky	Jan McFarland

Staff Present Bill Keene, General Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisition Program Manager; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager; Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager; Kim Batchelder, Conservation Associate Planner; Stuart Martin, Land Acquisition Specialist; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Public Attendees Ken Wells, Ted Eliot

Public Comment

No public comments on items not on agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Gallian asked for comments on the minutes of August 22, 2013. Motion by Jeff Holtzman to approve minutes; Kristin Thigpen seconded. Nine members were in favor, Steve Rabinowitsh abstained due to absence.

General Manager's Report

- After submitting a Concept Proposal earlier this year, the District has now been requested to submit a full proposal to the Proposition 84 Urban Greening Grant Program (Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006) to fund the acquisition of approximately 75 acres east of Rohnert Park, between Petaluma Hill Road and Crane Creek Regional Park. This acquisition is part of the Copeland Creek Watershed Project, which is a

collaboration between the District, the Sonoma County Water Agency, Regional Parks and the City of Rohnert Park, to address storm water detention, groundwater retention, sedimentation, riparian habitat restoration and multi-use trails in the Copeland Creek watershed. The 75-acre property would be added to the 128-acre Crane Creek Regional Park, with the District holding a conservation easement over the addition.

This acquisition will provide the land necessary to implement the Crane Creek Regional Trail Matching Grant Project, which was recommended for the District's Matching Grant Program by the District's Citizens' Advisory Committee in 2007. For the Matching Grant Project, the City of Rohnert Park and Regional Parks would enhance the trail along Copeland Creek through Sonoma State University, create a trail crossing at Petaluma Hill Road, and construct a trail from Petaluma Hill Road to Crane Creek Regional Park

- The East Slope Sonoma Mountain Trail was approved by the Board on September 24, 2013. This trail is near Jack London State Park, and when the North Slope Trail is open next year, the two will connect creating an 18 mile trail. Ted Eliot, co-chair of the Measure F campaign, and Ken Wells, Executive Director of the Sonoma County Trails Council, have been working on this trail for the past 20 years, donating time for trail finishing work. Tjiska Van Wyk of the Valley of the Moon Natural History Association, who also is managing Jack London State Historic Park, has taken on long term responsibility for the trail.
- The District was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the One Bay Area Grant program to develop an integrated GHG reporting model for Sonoma County that includes conservation. This builds on our ecosystem services project, as well as our collaboration with the Nature Conservancy entitled Climate Action Through Conservation. The District is partnering with RCPA and SCTA as well as other county agencies.
- District partner University of Maryland was awarded a \$2.2 million grant to develop LIDAR for Sonoma County, which will support multiple District and county efforts – including prioritization of conservation acquisitions, carbon mapping, the vegetation and habitat mapping program, fuel load suppression, and environmental compliance.
- The Calabazas Creek Open Space Preserve Management Plan is moving forward, and the field reconnaissance on the property is revealing incredible biological diversity and sensitive resources. The District has some wonderful photos of wildlife and will send some of these to Advisory Committee members to view.
- District staff attended the Land Trust Alliance Rally in New Orleans last week. The agenda included the latest land conservation strategies and information related to climate change. The District is ahead of the game on many levels. The rally is a great way for staff to network with other colleagues around the country and to learn and be inspired by the latest innovations. One of the District's closest collaborators, The Sonoma Land Trust, was accredited at the Rally.
- The District's Operations and Maintenance Policy will be going to the Board on October 15, 2013 in the afternoon at a time certain of 2:10 pm. The Board is looking at moving some tier two properties to tier one, making them a priority, as well as looking at our fee lands strategy and being updated on the District's Outings Program.

Advisory Committee Recommendation Letter to the Board of Directors

The Advisory Committee reviewed the draft Recommendation Letter to the Board of Directors. The draft letter consisted of the following:

- Continue to limit payments for operations and maintenance to entities receiving transfer of recreational District properties to three years.
- Continue to provide agricultural and environmental education, public outings, and permit programs on recreational properties not currently open to the public.
- Continue to provide resource management and infrastructure maintenance of recreational District properties until they can be transferred to an appropriate entity.
- Capital projects related to providing initial public access including construction of trails and related amenities.
- Staff time and legal costs related to the above.

The public had an opportunity to comment and ask questions on the draft letter, and Ted Eliot, who co-chaired measure F in 2006, along with some of the Committee members, suggested revisions to the letter.

There was a unanimous decision by the Committee to submit a written letter signed by Chair Gallian to the District Board of Directors with the following additions.

- 1) Encourage District to work closely with Parks on opening additional properties to the public
- 2) Recommend that capital costs be included as part of the 10% cap over the life of the measure
- 3) Recommend updating the definition of O&M to include providing ‘initial public access’

Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve Transfer

Stuart Martin, Land Acquisitions Specialist, presented information on how the District does land transfers. Healdsburg Ridge is in process for transfer to the City of Healdsburg.

Several documents must be in place before the transfer:

- 1) a conservation easement over the property;
- 2) Recreation Covenant, a requirement that the new owner has to use it as a recreation property;
- 3) Transfer Agreement, how much operations and maintenance will be needed and how will it get accomplished; and
- 4) Management Plan, an outline that shows how plans are going forward for future management.

Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve Management Planning

Kim Batchelder, Associate Conservation Planner, presented a Powerpoint presentation to discuss the management planning process for the Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve, a 155 acre parcel on the northeast side of the City of Healdsburg. His presentation focused on the steps the District has taken to protect the property, develop capital improvements, provide operations and maintenance, assess the conservation values of the Preserve, and then enter into an agreement with

the City of Healdsburg to transfer the property by November 2013. Starting in 1998, the District began to protect this property through conservation easements and fee title purchases. In 2006, an interim management plan was developed highlighting the need to redesign the trail network, control invasive species, and manage public and emergency access.

In 2008, the District entered into an agreement with the City of Healdsburg defining the roles and responsibilities of each entity during the 5-year transition period. The District agreed to complete capital improvements on the property to create trailheads, redesign and complete a 3.5 mile trail network. The District also installed benches at overlooks and bridges to cross streams and dam spillways and installed universally accessible trail to an observation deck overlooking Fox Pond. The District also agreed to manage the natural resources for the first 5 years of the agreement including vegetation removal for fire abatement, invasive plant management, and habitat enhancement on specific sites within the Preserve.

The City of Healdsburg agreed to take responsibility for the operations and maintenance of the Preserve and manage public access and safety. The fundamental piece of this agreement was to transfer the land title from the District to the City at the end of the 5 year transition period. The District is now completing the final phase of transition agreement by revising the management plan to highlight what the City should focus on in order to maintain and enhance the conservation values of the property and provide public access into perpetuity. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request at the District offices.

Work Plan Update and Metrics

Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager, presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee to show where the District is in relation to our three year Work Plan. The District is in its second year of the Work Plan, and we are in the process of evaluating our progress, which will be presented to the Board in the next few months. Ms. Gaffney presented the draft Performance Measures and Evaluation Metrics to the Committee for feedback. The summary of advice from Committee members include: more concise wording, include graphics and graphs for better visual appeal, more explanations of why and an appendix to lessen the amount of information and make it more readable. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request at the District offices.

Projects in Negotiations

- There are 13,000 acres of projects in negotiations and Matching Grants.
- A new Matching Grant cycle will be coming up in the next year. An Advisory Committee subcommittee will be formed in 2014 to review the projects.

Announcements From Advisory Committee Members

Laurie Gallian

- 1) Chair Gallian will notice the Mayors and Councilmembers' at the October 10th meeting of the upcoming Matching Grant schedule.
- 2) Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival is celebrating its 117th year on Saturday, October 5th, and Sunday, October 6th and there will be a 5k race on Sunday.

Steve Rabinowitsh

Vice Chair Rabinowitsh shared with District staff that when teaching at his Santa Rosa Junior College class, that out of 250 students, only about 5% knew anything about the District and he found this unsettling and would like to see the word of the District get out to the public and the youth of our community. The District needs a Community Relations person to get the word out.

Bill Keene

Mr. Keene, General Manager, agreed with Vice Chair Rabinowitsh and let the Committee know that the District is going to be hiring a Community Relations person in late 2013 or early 2014. Mr. Keene's goal is to have the District make a presentation at least once a week to the community. He would like our new Community Relations person to start reaching out to cities, rotary clubs, and other community venues. Mr. Keene also asked the Committee Members if they had any interest to speak on behalf of the District, and to spread the word as well.

Jeff Holtzman

Committee Member Mr. Holtzman recommended an Agricultural Preservation and Open Space Day on different properties, making it easier for people to access. District staff could act as guides. Several district staff and Committee Members agreed this would be one great way to get the word out.

Adjournment: 7:09 pm

Next scheduled meeting date: October 24, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson,
Advisory Committee Secretary