



Attachment "A"

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
September 27, 2012 MINUTES

5:08 p.m. Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,
Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

Members Present

Janet Orchard	Bill Smith	Jan McFarland
Laurie Gallian	Cary Fargo	Kristin Thigpen
Steve Rabinowitsh		

Members Absent

Guy Wilson	Sue Conley	Suzanne Doyle
Dennis Murphy	John Nagle	Jeff Holtzman
Shanti Wright		

Staff Present Bill Keene, General Manager; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager; Sue Gallagher, County Counsel; Sara Press, Associate Open Space Planner; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Public Attendees Ken Wells, Amanda Benton, Donna Spilman, Nancy Summers, Donna Norton, Susan Baritell

Announcement from the Chair

No announcements from the Chair

Public Comment

No public comments on items not on agenda.

General Manager's Report

- There are several vacancies on the Advisory Committee. Three current and two that will be coming up in the near future: Guy Wilson and Chair Janet Orchard will not seek reappointment and there is currently no replacements for them in place.
- Suzanne Doyle, Environment, will also not seek reappointment, however, Don McEnhill of the Russian Riverkeeper, will be taking her place if appointed by the Board in December 2012 or January 2013.

- The Second District, Agriculture and Business are currently vacant, and the General Manager, Bill Keene, will be doing outreach to the Agriculture and Business communities to help fill these vacancies.
- The Advisory Committee was asked to make any recommendations that they might have. There was discussion regarding absent members and if there is a policy regarding absenteeism. Bill Keene currently calls members who are not always in attendance to find out if they have lost interest and if that person would like to step down. There has been a problem of late to even have enough members for a quorum, which is a concern because then the meeting has to be cancelled and people have wasted their time. Sue Gallagher, County Counsel, did suggest that it is important that members call or email Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk, if they are not going to be able to make it ahead of time so it can be ascertained if there will be enough members to make a quorum, and if there are not, the meeting can be cancelled before members arrive. Bill Keene will send an email to members regarding attendance.
- PG&E is trimming some trees within their transmission line easements at the Coopers Grove property as well as on Saddle Mountain, in an effort to address those trees that are an immediate threat to the lines. Additional tree work on Coopers Grove is pending evaluation of the riparian area by a biologist. PG&E does not anticipate much in the way of tree removal from the easement area, primarily tree trimming and pruning, which is needed for fire safety.
- Repair and remaining project work on Laguna Trail is on track to be completed by mid October. The District is looking towards having an opening event in November with ribbon cutting and getting people out on the trail.
- The newly recommended Matching Grant Program projects from the 11/12 cycle were accepted by the Board of Directors on September 18.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Orchard asked for comments on the minutes of July 26, 2012, and pointed out a correction that needed to be made to the spelling of the name of a public attendee. Motion by Laurie Gallian to approve minutes with the correction and seconded by Kristin Thigpen. All were in favor.

Ranking Criteria Revisited

Chair Orchard explained that this item was not ready for a presentation, and needed to be moved to October or November's meeting. Laurie Gallian motioned to approve the new date for this item, and Jan McFarland seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve Master Plan

Sara Press, Associate Open Space Planner, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Master Plan and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve. Regional Parks and the District will take this to the Board on October 9. The District has been working with the community and Regional Parks for over two years to complete the Master Plan. The Master Plan was developed in such a way as to protect the natural resources present on the properties that comprise Taylor Mountain, while also

allowing for appropriate types of recreation. The transfer of title from the District to Regional Parks is planned to take place the winter of 2012-13. The District will retain a conservation easement upon transfer of the property.

The Advisory Committee shared their thoughts on the project. Many felt that this is a project that should be used as an example of what the District does with tax payers' money that has a positive effect on the community. A member of the public commented that he had attended several public meetings for the Master Plan, and felt that his group's input was heard and incorporated into the final version of the document.

SCTA Mitigation Funding Agreement

Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager, presented the SCTA Mitigation Funding Agreement update. Laurie Gallian, Vice Chair, recused herself from the conversation as an Advisory Committee member and would act as a member of the public for this item as she has a personal interest in this item.

In February of 2012, the Board of Directors authorized the District General Manager to enter into negotiations with the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) regarding providing funding for riparian enhancement work at the Cresta Ranch property. The negotiated agreement specifies that SCTA will provide \$190,000 towards the project. The SCTA-funded portion of the project will include planting and maintenance of willows and other native riparian plant species; reimbursement of project planning, management, and administrative services costs, as well as a portion of the original acquisition cost; and placement of land use restrictions onto the planted areas to maintain the areas of natural habitat.

Committee members discussed the project. Ms. Thigpen asked if other agencies had expressed interest in providing mitigation funds towards projects on District-protected lands. Mr. Keene indicated that this had not occurred. Ms. Orchard asked that public comments be taken into consideration for this project, and for the District Habitat Mitigation Policy in development.

Public comments included:

Concern that the District is not within its mission to engage in mitigation activities. District can fund enhancement activities through grants instead of accepting mitigation funding. Concern that this project was not put out to bid, was not made available to private mitigation bankers. Would like to understand commitments of District has made as part of this funding agreement. Concern that the District does not enforce or will not enforce success of the project. (District staff indicated that the project success criteria are set by the regulatory agencies working with SCTA, and expressed in their permit documents, but that the District does have a robust conservation easement monitoring program and this property would be included within the scope of that program once a conservation easement is recorded).

Concern that District is involved in mitigation at all. Is it possible that later the work at Cresta Ranch would become a mitigation bank? (Staff indicated that this was not the case). Is it possible that the District, if not responsible for mitigation success or failure, then the enhancement work would not be successful? (District staff indicated that since the SCTA funded project is a portion of the District's own stewardship project, the District is very much interested in the success of the riparian enhancement work, and has contracted with restoration ecologists and other experts to be sure that the work is done according to the best available and scientifically supported methodology).

The District will bring the proposal to the Board of Directors on October 16.

Projects in Negotiations

New Matching Grant Projects are now added to the projects on the Project in Negotiations list. (see spreadsheet attached).

Announcements From Advisory Members

Laurie Gallian

- Sonoma Garden Park in Sonoma, one of the Matching Grant Projects, is having an event on October 6 from 10:00 to 3:00. There will be a pie eating contest, pumpkins, young chefs and more

Kristin Thigpen

- The Tolay Fall Festival will be taking place for two weekends in October: 11-14 and 17-21.

Bill Keene

- Trail construction on the North Slope of Sonoma Mountain is complete. A plan is in place to visit the trail as an Advisory Committee Meeting on May 23, 2013. This is one of Sonoma County's great treasures.

Adjournment: 6:54pm

Next scheduled meeting date: October 25, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson,
Advisory Committee Secretary