



AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPROVED MINUTES

**Virtual Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order
October 22, 2020 | 5:00 pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cary Fargo	Don McEnhill	Michelle Whitman	Bill Smith
Curt Nichols	Neysa Hinton	Paul Martin	Evan Wiig
John Dell'Osso	Jan McFarland	Taj Hittenberger	Kristina Tierney
Doug Lipton			

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tawny Tesconi	John Nagle	Jennielynn Holmes
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STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Keene, General Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisition Manager; Jen Kuszmar, Matching Grant Coordinator; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Dell'Osso called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

Public Comment

No public comment on items not on the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Dell'Osso asked for any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections to the minutes. Don McEnhill motioned to approve the minutes from September 24, 2020 as is, and Jan McFarland seconded the motion. All were in favor, with one abstention from Cary Fargo who was not in attendance at the September meeting.

General Manager's Report Out

- Bill Keene, General Manager, spoke about the interim General Manager position and reported that the Board of Directors did not appoint one last week so he is still the General Manager until an interim is appointed. He also said a recruitment will be held next year for the long term General Manager position.
- The Torr project, next to Bohemian Highway, closed.

- The Mattos Dairy project, near Roblar Road, will close in November.
- The Fiscal Oversight Commission letter to the Board of Directors regarding the PG&E settlement funds was sent to the Advisory Committee members. The letter discussed the money from the settlement that would be designated for work for fire damages to Ag + Open Space properties. The Advisory Committee can discuss and send a letter also if they would like to. The item would need to be agendaized for the next meeting in December.

Subcommittee Report Out

The Advisory Committee currently has one active subcommittee, the Matching Grant Program. The Subcommittee has not met since the last Advisory Committee meeting and had no report out. The applications are in for the Matching Grant Program for the 2020 cycle, however, and were included in the packet sent to the Advisory Committee members. A new subcommittee will be created tonight during item #7.

Ag + Open Space Transition

Mr. Keene spoke of his retirement from Ag + Open space and the appointment of an interim General Manager during the period before the recruitment for a permanent General Manager in 2021. There was a discussion between Advisory Committee members about the process the Board of Directors are taking in selecting an interim General Manager. Some members were not in favor of the process. There was a discussion about writing a letter to the Board of Directors asking them for more transparency and to consider an internal candidate which they currently were not considering. Members of the public also spoke: Susan Kirks from Paula Lane Action Network and Madrone Audubon Network and Teri Shore from Greenbelt Alliance were both in favor of a letter to the Board. A motion to send a letter was proposed by Doug Lipton and was seconded by Don McEnhill. Then that motion was rescinded because the committee was split on the matter. Another motion was proposed by Kristina Tierney to ask for more information from the Board on the process and to support internal candidates but the motion was not seconded and thus did not carry. This item may be revisited at the next meeting in December to see if there has been more clarity around the process and what steps have been taken by the Board.

Appoint Matching Grant Subcommittee Members

Jennifer Kuszmar, Matching Grant Coordinator, created the next Matching Grant Subcommittee for the 2020 funding cycle. All applications are in and were part of the Advisory Committee packet that was sent out prior to the meeting so that members could review and recuse themselves from the process if there was a conflict of interest or even a perception of a conflict of interest. Chair Dell'Osso asked for volunteers for this year's cycle. There can be up to 6 members on the subcommittee from the Advisory Committee. The subcommittee also includes two members from the Fiscal Oversight Commission who already volunteered at their last meeting, Bob Anderson and Mike Sangiacomo. Kristina Tierney and Michelle Whitman recused themselves for conflicts of interest. Neysa Hinton and Taj Hittenberger volunteered this evening. An email will go out to the members not present in tonight's meeting to see if they have interest in volunteering as long as there is no conflict of interests. There will be subcommittee meetings in early December and the beginning of 2021 and then the recommendations will go the Board for consideration. Ms. Kuszmar will upload the applications on the Ag + Open Space website for the public to view.



Projects in Negotiation

- Mattos Dairy, 866 acres near Roblar Road, was approved by the Board.
- The Torr property, 360 acres in Camp Meeker and Monte Rio and connects to Willow Creek and Bohemia Ranch, closed.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members and Members of the Public

Paul Martin

Mr. Martin asked about the response to the ASAP Matching Grant Program. Ms. Kuszmar responded that there was an article in the Press Democrat and that there have been several inquiries and one application has been received so far.

Doug Lipton

There has been an ongoing 600 acre restoration project in the Delta and there will be a small celebration on Tuesday, October 27, 2020 in the morning.

Neysa Hinton

Ms. Hinton asked that the PG&E letter be brought back and agendized for the next meeting in December and if that would work time wise. Mr. Keene said yes, the timing would be fine and the Advisory Committee members can take action at the next meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Next Meeting: December 10, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson
Advisory Committee Secretary

