



AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPROVED MINUTES

747 Mendocino Avenue – Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401
October 26, 2023, | 5:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Paul Martin Thembi Borrás Bill Smith Mark Stapp
John Shribbs Kevin McDonnell Josh Proctor

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kristina Tierney Ladi Asgill Steve Rabinowitsh Jesús Guzmán Wendy Eliot
Don McEnhill Dayna Ghirardelli Angel Lopez

STAFF PRESENT:

Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager; Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner; Michelle Nozzari, Administrative Aide.

Call to Order

Chair Thembi Borrás called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. She took roll call.

Public Comment

Chair Borrás opened public comment for items not on the agenda.

- Duane Dewitt spoke about the Matching Grant Revisions, and he is in favor of having awardees commit to a timeline.

Approval of Minutes from September 28, 2023

Chair Borrás asked for any comments or revisions to the September 28, 2023 meeting minutes.

- A clarification to the announcement portion of the minutes was noted. The City of Petaluma received a Federal Infrastructure Resiliency Act grant from CalFire for \$1,000,000 to plant trees in parks and neighborhoods. This grant is disbursed as \$200,000 a year for five years.

Chair Borrás took roll call. A vote took place to approve the minutes with revisions. Members Michelle Whitman & Jan McFarland abstained from the voting; the minutes were approved. The meeting minutes were approved with revisions by a majority.

General Manager's Report

Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager on behalf of Misti Arias, General Manager

Upcoming Board Items

- 10/24 The General Manager & staff presented the Matching Grant Program Guidelines which will come back to the Board after the first of the year.
- 11/7 Environmental Services Contracts & Fourth Round of Grant Funding to be Awarded 2024 and Position Allocation
- 11/28 Spring Hill Ranch Conservation Easement Acquisition
- 12/5 Lafranchi (Laguna) Conservation Easement Acquisition
- 12/12 Mark West Wikiup Open Space Preserve Fee Title Purchase and CE Acquisition, McCormick Ranch Reg Park (Joint with Parks), Land Management Services Contracts
- 2/1/24 MGP Program Guideline & Process – Adoption of new draft guidelines/app process

Chair Borrás opened this item for member comment and questions.

- Member Michelle Whitman shared that she watched the presentation of the Matching Grant item to the board, and she found it moving when Mose the Skateboarder spoke on the impact on Skateboarding on his life. She noted this was an example of how Matching Grants makes positive changes to people's lives.

Chair Borrás opened this item for public comment.

- Duane Dewitt expressed concern about Sonoma Water working with Ag + Open Space.

Subcommittee Appointments and Report Outs

Report Outs

- Acquisition – Subcommittee has met.
- Agricultural Subcommittee – Subcommittee has met.
 - Subcommittee spent time at this meeting was focused on the BUY/PROTECT/SELL Limited Resource Farmer.
 - The Subcommittee also discussed a Farm Park, like a co-op/shop center composed of different parcels that offer produce and agricultural products that allows public access.
 - Allison Schichtel, Senior Planner, also mentioned that Ag & Open Space in collaboration with UCCE completed a study on Limited Resource Farms and those findings have been compiled in an 89-page report.
 - Endowment Subcommittee has not met.

Acquisition Update

Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager

Chair Borrás opened this item for public comment.



- Duane Dewitt, spoke about the struggle of making sure that conservation easement remains strong. He talked about how unincorporated agricultural lands at threat of development citing an example in Santa Rosa.
- Susan Kirks, representing Paula Lane Action Network and Madrone Audubon Society, spoke about opportunities for conservation funding for properties with environmental value and plant-based agriculture easement.

Projects in Negotiations

- A member of the public through the chair asked about how to approach the District and the Committee about getting onto the agenda. The chair clarified that this process would be addressed in the Managers Report.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

Member Kevin McDonnell stated that another round of Docent Training is going to take place on the Lafferty Property.

Adjournment

Chair Borrás adjourned the meeting at 6:38 pm.

Next Meeting: December 14, 2023

This meeting will be in person with an option for members of the public to join via zoom. The meeting place is to be determined (TBD) and will be publicly posted in compliance with the Brown Act.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Nozzari
Advisory Committee Clerk

