



**AG + OPEN SPACE**  
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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**APPROVED MINUTES**

**Virtual Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order  
February 23, 2023 | 5:00 pm**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Don McEnhill	Wendy Eliot	Thembi Borrás	Paul Martin	Mark Stapp
Josh Proctor	Bill Smith	Cary Fargo	Kristina Tierney	Angel Lopez
Steve Rabinowitsh	Curt Nichols	Neysa Hinton		

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Brian Barnacle      Jan McFarland      Michelle Whitman      Jesús Guzmán

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Misti Arias, General Manager; Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager; Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager; Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner; Olivia Fiori, Acquisition Specialist; Lukas Steinrueck, Stewardship Technician; Kendall Gutt, Stewardship Technician; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk.

**Call to Order**

Chair Thembi Borrás called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Approval of Minutes from January 26, 2023**

Chair Borrás asked for approval of the January 26, 2023 minutes. Curt Nichols motioned to approve the minutes and Bill Smith seconded the motion. A vote took place and all were in favor. Josh Proctor abstained as he was not present at the January meeting.

**General Manager's Report**

- The March 2023 meeting will be in person for Advisory Committee members and staff, and a hybrid option will be available for members of the public. They can join by zoom or come in person. We are working through the kinks now.
- The Regional Conservation Partnership Program – Vital Streams and Forests grant will be taken to the Board on March 7, 2023.

- The Forestville Conservation Easement second amendment will be taken to the Board on March 14, 2023.
- Ag + Open Space is recruiting for two Community Relations Assistants. Each position has different priorities. We will post the announcement on the County website and the Ag + Open Space website. Please let anyone who might be interested know about these opportunities.
- Paula Lane Open Space preserve in Petaluma was acquired as a Matching Grant Project. Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Manager, the City of Petaluma and a biologist visited the preserve recently to consider a grazing project on the property. A community trail was built in the last year and there has been concern for the large American badger populations on the property. During the site visit the biologist determined that there has been quite a bit of recent badger activity, and the grazing project would help to improve habitat and reduce fire risk.

Chair Borrás opened the meeting for questions and comments from Advisory Committee members and members of the public. Steve Rabinowitsh took this opportunity to welcome the newest Advisory Committee member, Mark Stapp, who is representing the Mayors and Councilmembers. Mr. Stapp introduced himself to members. There were no comments from the public.

#### **Acquisition Program Updates**

Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager, introduced the acquisition program updates as two presentations by two different Acquisition staff, lasting 15 to 20 minutes each with questions and answers following.

Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Project Evaluation Criteria process since the adoption of the Vital Land Initiative, and explained how staff have been streamlining the process.

Olivia Fiori, Acquisition Specialist, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Sonoma Mountain Vernal Pools project. This is a 174-acre property in Glen Ellen along Bennett Valley Road. The property is undeveloped farmland along with oak woodlands, grasslands and vernal pools with two creeks. This project will close on March 3, 2023.

For more information, please feel free to contact Ms. Kuszmar, Ms. Schichtel or Ms. Fiori at Ag + Open Space. The PowerPoint presentations are available upon request.

#### **Ad Hoc Committee Assignments**

Four Ad Hoc Committees were formed or continued with changes:

- Matching Grant Program Revisioning Subcommittee – 5 available spots  
--Steve Rabinowitsh and Don McEnhill volunteered
- Agricultural Subcommittee – 2 available spots  
--Angel Lopez volunteered
- Endowment Subcommittee – 6 available spots  
--Wendy Eliot and Thembi Borrás volunteered



- Acquisition Subcommittee – full, no one stepped down

### **Projects in Negotiations**

Chair Borrás asked for any comments or questions on the Projects in Negotiations spreadsheet and there were none.

### **Announcements from Advisory Committee Members**

No announcements from Advisory Committee members.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Borrás adjourned the meeting at 6:24

### **Next Meeting: March 23, 2023**

This meeting will be in person with an option for members of the public to join via zoom. The meeting place is: 747 Mendocino Ave, Ste 100, Large Conference Room, Santa Rosa

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson  
*Advisory Committee Secretary*

