



Attachment "A"

*SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
February 26, 2015 MINUTES*

5:03 p.m. Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,  
Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

**Members Present**

Sue Conley	Janet Orchard	John Azevedo	Doug Lipton
Bill Smith	Jan McFarland	Kristin Thigpen	Jeffrey Holtzman
Shanti Edwards	Curt Nichols	Laurie Gallian	Cary Fargo
Don McEnhill	Gary Wysocky	Steve Rabinowitsh	John Dell'Osso

**Members Absent**

John Nagle

**Staff Present** Bill Keene, General Manager; Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisitions Program Manager; Sara Press, Land Acquisition Associate; Kim Batchelder, Conservation Planning Associate Planner; Hannah Spencer, Stewardship Technician; Robert Pittman, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

**Public Comment**

Chair Steve Rabinowitsh asked for public comments on items not listed on the agenda.

Duane DeWitt from Roseland shared a map with the committee members of park equity studies for the City of Santa Rosa. The map showed demographic layers and was created by the U.S. Geological Survey in a 2010 census. He said that the District has helped more neighborhoods than the City of Santa Rosa in the South West corner of the city which has the highest population of low income people. Park land has been purchased by the District and has been a good thing for the Roseland area. There is the Bayer Farm in the Roseland neighborhood, and Roseland may get a Roseland Arboretum and gardens. He was grateful to the District and wanted the committee to be aware of how much the District has done for the Roseland neighborhoods.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Rabinowitsh asked for comments on the minutes from January 22, 2015. Committee members had no corrections and Chair Rabinowitsh announced that the minutes were approved.

## **General Manager's Report**

- There will be an official opening celebration of the East Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail on Saturday, March 14, 2015 at 10:30 at Jack London State Historic Park Winery Ruins.
- There will be an official opening celebration of the North Sonoma Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve on Monday, March 23, 2015 at 2:00 at Jacobs Ranch. Supervisor Gorin, District staff and Regional Parks will be at the event. There will be an organized hike.
- There was a public meeting on February 18, 2015 to discuss the Saddle Mountain Preserve Resource Management Plan and it was well attended. Staff shared information about the property, constraints as they relate to public access, and the proposed management actions for the Plan's 5-10 year timeframe. Meeting participants offered comments on property management and the proposed level of access. The proposed management plan will be taken to the Board for approval sometime this spring.

## **Urban Farm Update**

Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager, updated the Advisory Committee members on the Urban Farm Project, which has been added to the agenda as a standing item for brief updates each month to the committee. The District has reached out to the City of Santa Rosa and the County of Sonoma and plan to take the item to the Board in April. The District staff are working on a formal proposal now, and the Advisory Committee's Ag Subcommittee will be discussing next month at their next meeting.

## **District Comprehensive Plan**

Ms. Gaffney presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Advisory Committee on the District Comprehensive Plan that was requested of the District from the Board's Management Review. The District's Conservation Planning Program is working on an integrated hierarchal planning framework to help the District fully integrate and make accessible all of its data.. These data will be available to everyone in one location and can be used for conservation prioritization, grants and funding requests, community relations and Board information requests. Staff will work closely with the Board and the Advisory Committee on this project.

The PowerPoint presentation is available at the District upon request.

## **Draft Initial Public Access, Operation and Maintenance Policy**

Bill Keene, General Manager, and Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager, presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Advisory Committee on the Draft Initial Public Access, Operation and Maintenance Policy. Mr. Keene and Ms. Emerson have been meeting with partners and stakeholders to get feedback. There was a public meeting a month ago for partners and the public to help the community understand this issue and to inform them about what the policy includes and what it doesn't include. Ms. Emerson shared highlights from the District's Fiscal Oversight Commission discussion of the IPAOM Policy. Mr. Keene spoke with Ted Eliot and Andrea MacKenzie, two people that were part of the creation of Measure F, and Tim Smith, who was a Board member at the time, who said that he pushed for the 10% instead of 5% to help get a jump start for lands to become accessible to people so that the measure would be passed. However, the 10% was never intended for substantial capital improvements.

Chair Rabinowitsh turned the meeting over to the committee members and members of the public to ask questions and discuss the IPAOM Policy revisions. Questions and comments are as follows:

Committee questions:

- Clarification on proposed calculation of 25% cap on IPAOM request for road work (25% of the total IPAOM funding request from a transfer recipient).
- Clarification on how 10% is calculated (10% of total revenues collected through the life of Measure F. With debt payments, etc, this amount is actually more than 10% of available funds).
- Docent led tours are public access and should be included in the 10%.
- Does the public understand what has to happen to get a property open? Would be helpful to have the info around how sensitive resources actually are, communicate around accomplishments and what is being protected.

Public comments:

- (Name not provided): What properties are eligible for this funding? (Properties owned in fee by the District or where the District holds a conservation easement and the property is intended for recreational use).
- Craig Anderson, LandPaths: In New Zealand have witnessed the ‘wilderness ethos’. Important to get people on the land early, connected with it. For some the urban open spaces are the only ones they have known.
- Jim Nantell, Regional Parks: Necessary improvements vary by site. Appreciate the increased clarity and flexibility in the revised policy. Appreciate the District’s responsiveness to comments. Parks will provide additional comments, mostly technicalities. Parks is supportive of the funding going towards permanent, even if pump-out, bathrooms. Board has stated that they do not like temporary bathrooms.
- Patricia Tuttle Brown: didn’t hear the strong emphasis on getting on the land during the public meeting. Agricultural value and recreational value should be discussed at the time of acquisition.

Additional comments from the Committee:

- Is there a role for the AC in Implementation of this, procedure on page 3? Do people agree on the definitions? Can the Board reallocate from the Reserve fund? At Montini, volunteers are amazing, and have an important role. Should recognize this aspect.
- Important to build partnerships, appreciate the additional flexibility.
- Favor the policy as written-makes most efficient use of limited funds. Most access to the most properties. Keep the flexibility. Keep outings in the 10%. Understand that IPA will vary by site.
- Saddle Mountain is an example of how spending a large amount of money to do the road work for open public access would not make sense—docent led outings make sense there, it’s ok to provide access in different ways.
- Need outside partnerships. May not have all of the money to get improvements done, good to look to grants for funding.
- Support policy, will potential future costs of IPAOM be considered when acquiring new properties? (Yes. Important to note though that there are times when properties are purchased to protect them from a threat like development, subdivision, etc-like Saddle Mountain-and the recreation piece, where appropriate, is in addition to fulfilling the primary acquisition purpose).
- Favor policy. In implementation is where you’ll find out what the problems are.
- Public awareness, expectation of spending the full 10%. Should go ahead and do so.

- What is the status of the Fee Land Transfers, will IPAOM funding cover getting those transferred and open?
- What is the current balance of the IPAOM Reserve Fund? (Between 1-2 million now, collect 2 million per year, have been spending as we go. Not prudent to spend ahead of revenue collection. IPAOM requests have ranged from \$60,000 to 1.7 million in recent years).
- Matching Grant Program helps with public perception around providing access.
- ADA compliance, is it always expensive, always paved? (Montini example of unpaved, relatively inexpensive).
- Would like to reiterate that for initial access don't need to have major improvements.
- Docent led tours should be in the 10% while the property is not yet open, during the interim period only. Once open, tours not in the 10% category.
- Unanimous approval of moving the policy forward as revised to the Board. 16 of 17 members voting.

Chair Rabinowitsh asked for a vote to move forward with the recommended policy as drafted. Laurie Gallian motioned and Curt Nichols and Jeffrey Holtzman both seconded the motion. All were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Sixteen out of seventeen members were present and voted. The Advisory Committee will send a letter to the Board of Directors to recommend the draft IPAOM Policy.

The PowerPoint presentation on the IPAOM Draft Policy is available at the District upon request for more information

### **Projects in Negotiations**

The McCullough Phase 2 property is on hold and may someday become a park but it could take a long time. The property owner wants to stay on the land. The District will not move forward on negotiations until the landowner feels ready. There was a meeting with the District and Regional Parks regarding Cresta and McCullough and there are projects that can be done to begin planning the park.

### **Announcements From Advisory Committee Members**

#### Jeffrey Holtzman

Mr.Holtzman was at Taylor Mountain last night with the Madrone Audubon Society participating in a bird census. They were up until midnight owling and the next morning looking for day birds. The Madrone Audubon Society birds on several Regional Parks properties such as Doran, Spring Lake and Taylor. It would be wonderful to create bird check lists for District properties.

**Adjournment:** 6:50 pm

Next scheduled meeting date: March 26, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson,  
Advisory Committee Secretary