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# Attachment "A"

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# SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 27, 2014 MINUTES

5:03 p.m. Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,

Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

 **Members Present**

Laurie Gallian Jan McFarland Curt Nichols

Sue Conley Bill Smith Don McEnhill

Kristin Thigpen John Dell’Osso Janet Orchard

**Members Absent**

Jeff Holtzman John Nagle Gary Wysocky

Cary Fargo Steve Rabinowitsh Shanti Edwards

**Staff Present** Bill Keene, General Manager; Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisitions Program Manager; Alex Roa, Assistant Planner; Kathleen Marsh, Stewardship Coordinator; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager; Sue Gallagher, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

**Public Attendees**  Ken Wells, Mark Smith, John Green, Patricia Tuttle-Brown

**Public Comment**

Mark Smith, public attendee, presented a proposal for an archery site. He would need a property and permission to do this. He has spoken with Regional Parks who directed him to the District .Mark has contacted Stuart Martin, Land Acquisition Specialist at the District, who has given him some advice on next steps to be taken. He wanted to make the proposal at a public meeting for others to be aware of his idea. He will be in touch with Bill Keene, General Manager, at a future date.

Chair Gallian informed the committee members, District staff and members of the public that item #6 on the agenda, Poff Ranch Management Plan, would be moved to the #5 spot.

**Approval of Minutes**

 Chair Gallian asked for comments on the minutes for January 23, 2014. No comments except

 from Chair Gallian who asked for a correction on the last paragraph of the minutes. She asked that

 the reduction of up to 25% of water use be changed to 20% -the actual amount that

 the Santa Rosa Utilities Water Advisory Committee requested.. All members accepted the minutes

 with that one correction. The Advisory Committee Clerk will make the correction.

**General Manager’s Report**

* Mr. Keene introduced two new committee members who were in attendance, Curt Nichols representing Business, and Janet Orchard, who is returning after a break from serving on the Committee, representing the Second District. John Azevedo is also a new committee member who will be representing Agriculture but was not in attendance at this meeting.
* Negotiations are ongoing for the Andy Lopez Memorial Park with the County and the owner of the property. Regional Parks may submit a Matching Grant Program application for this project.
* The Advisory Committee Executive Subcommittee is meeting on March 6, 2014 to discuss revising the Rules and Procedures and this will be an agenda item for next month.
* The Board approved the Cresta phase II acquisition on January 28, 2014. Combined with the Cresta phase I acquisition, there will now be an 1100 acre preserve in the Mark West area.
* Kristine Acquino, the District’s Assistant Planner who is coordinating the Matching Grant Program, held a Matching Grant Program Public Workshop this morning, Thursday, February 27, 2014 at PRMD. It was well received with fifty attendees. The application deadline is April 11, 2014. Future updates will be brought to the Advisory Committee on how the application process is proceeding.
* Advisory Committee Member Dennis Murphy has stepped down from the committee due to conflicts in his schedule that keep him from being able to attend on a regular basis. Mr. Keene is working on finding a replacement to assist member Bill Smith in representing the Fourth District. Mr. Murphy currently is the chair of the Sonoma RCD and will continue to work with the District in that capacity. He was on the Advisory Committee for over twenty years. The District will be acknowledging Mr. Murphy’s service on the committee at a future meeting or at a different venue and will inform the Advisory Committee of the date and location..

Don McEnhill, Advisory Committee Member, pointed out that the Mitigation Policy is scheduled to come to the Committee in June, but that the minutes from January 23, 2014 says that there was a vote to take a summer break in June and commence meeting in July 2014. The Advisory Committee Clerk will update the future schedule to reflect that the Mitigation Policy will be scheduled for the July meeting and that there will be a summer break in June.

 **Open Space and Ag Conservation Easements Case Study: Holden OS Easement**

Misti Arias, Acquisitions Program Manager, presented information on open space and agricultural easements and how they differ and what their function is. Open space easements typically come to the District as part of a development project; they are not purchased. In the past, the District did not have a prominent role in drafting these easements and many were more lenient than the District would have liked. That has changed and now the District does have more of a role in crafting open space easements.

Kathleen Marsh, Stewardship Coordinator, presented information on the District’s Permitted Use Request process, which includes staff review of the request, review of the easement provisions, discussion with counsel and District management as necessary, and responding to landowner within prescribed timeline. She also presented information on the Holden Open Space Easement, which included discussion of the easement language and permitted uses, particularly as they apply to winery and agricultural operations and related events.

The presentation created a discussion among the members, District staff and the public that were present regarding the Holden open space easement in the Dry Creek Valley specifically. Bill Smith reminded the members of an article that was published in The Healdsburg Tribune last month called “Tasting Room Approved Despite Open Space Protection”. The public does not want tasting rooms and event halls to be able to be built on wineries and places that effect neighbors with noise and traffic, such as on the Holden property. However, the Holden open space easement states that the sale of agricultural goods is allowed on this easement. There was controversy among the members and there is controversy with the public regarding this issue, and the District is being seen in a negative light in regards to allowing tasting rooms and events on District easements.

To respect the timing of the meeting, Chair Gallian asked that the discussion end in order to move onto the next item on the agenda. Mr. Keene offered his time as well as staff time to speak with the people who are affected by the Holden open space easement to help clarify the situation. Bill Smith will contact the District if that is what the public would like to pursue. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request at the District offices.

  **Poff Ranch Management Plan**

Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager, updated the committee on the Poff Ranch Management Plan. The draft plan has been put on hold as this property was originally going to be transferred to State Parks and is now of interest to Sonoma County Regional Parks.. The District is currently working with Regional Parks to determine a shared approach to developing the management plan and potentially transferring the property to Regional Parks.

**Update on Conservation Valuation**

Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager, and Alex Roa, Assistant Planner, updated the committee on the initiative focused on the economic value of conservation. Healthy Lands, Healthy Economies is a project that consists of three counties: Santa Cruz, Santa Clara and Sonoma. It is being funded by the Moore Foundation, Bechtel Foundation and the Coastal Conservancy. The goals are to educate the community and decision makers regarding multiple benefits of natural capital and conservation, to increase the capacity of District staff, partners and community to make the economic case for conservation and to increase investment in conservation. After the PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Roa handed out a spreadsheet of seventeen case studies that the District is considering using as illustrative stories that can be presented as examples to show the value of conservation. These stories will be made available to the general public. Mr. Roa asked the committee members to review the spreadsheet and to offer some input and feedback. This feedback will help the District decide which case studies best illustrate economic valuation and thus which analyses to develop further. Advisory Committee members will send further input to Mr. Roa in the next couple weeks via email.. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request at the District offices.

Advisory Committee member John Dell’Osso offered to bring a recently published study on the economic benefits of National Parks to the next meeting to share with members, District staff and the public. Mr. Keene and Ms. Gaffney agreed that this would be informative and the item would be agendized at next month’s meeting.

 **Announcements From Advisory Committee Members**

Kristin Thigpen

Ms. Thigpen commended Mr. Bill Keene on the Southeast Greenway presentation that he made at their community update on February 8th, 2014, stating is was very valuable to their cause. It was a well attended event, with two hundred people braving the rains to be present that day, and Mr. Keene’s vision and words were well received.

 **Adjournment:** 7:18 pm

Next scheduled meeting date: March 27, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

 Mariah Robson,

Advisory Committee Secretary