



AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A P P R O V E D M I N U T E S

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Thembi Borrás	Paul Martin	Angel Lopez
Josh Proctor	Bill Smith	Cary Fargo
Steve Rabinowitsh	Michelle Whitman	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Brian Barnacle	Jan McFarland	Jesús Guzmán
Kristina Tierney	Mark Stapp	Neysa Hinton
Don McEnhill	Wendy Eliot	Curt Nichols

STAFF PRESENT:

Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager; Pamela Swan, Grants Coordinator; Lauren Alpert, Community Relations Specialist; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Michelle Nozzari, Administrative Aide; Lisa Pheatt, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk.

Call to Order

Chair Thembi Borrás called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

Public Comment

Susan Kirks, representing Paula Lane Action Network and Madrone Audubon Society, commented on the Paula Lane Open Space Preserve and her concern for the American badger habitat on that property due to construction of a trail.

Approval of Minutes from January 26, 2023

Chair Borrás asked for any comments or revisions to the February 23, 2023 minutes. There were none. A vote took place, and all were in favor and the minutes were approved. Michelle Whitman abstained as she was not present at the February meeting.

General Manager's Report

- Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager, presented the General Manager report out for Misti Arias, who was not in attendance. Ms. Ricard introduced Michelle Nozzari,

Administrative Aide, who was hired a few weeks ago. She previously was employed at the University of California Cooperative Extension. She is in training to take over the Ag + Open Space Advisory Committee Clerk responsibilities. Ms. Nozzari introduced herself to the committee members.

- The Regional Conservation Partnership Program – Vital Streams and Forests grant and Forever Forestville Conservation Easement Amendment will be taken to the Board on April 4, 2023.
- The Amendment to Mowing and Wildlife Surveys Contracts will be taken to the Board on April 18, 2023.
- There will be a Budget Workshop for the Ag + Open Space at the Board on April 25, 2023.
- Soda Springs Open Space Preserve, Outings and Education Contracts and the Denner Ranches Conservation Easement will all be taken to the Board on May 16, 2023.
- Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve, the Ayers Addition, and Lafranchi will be taken to the Board on June 6, 2023.
- The 2023 Vegetation Management and Wildfire Resilience Program’s request for proposals opened on March 22, 2023. The deadline is April 20, 2023. In preparation for the 2023 wildfire season and beyond, the County of Sonoma is directing up to \$3 million for vegetation management activities in high-risk areas. This grant cycle will support long-term vegetation management that will be sustainable and consistent with the protection of natural resources and ecosystem services.
- The 2023 Living with Fire – Sonoma County Forest Conservation conference is taking place June 23 and 24, 2023 at Shone Farm. The aim of the conference is to support our community’s wildfire resilience and forest health through collaboration and sharing best management practices to protect our communities, land, and natural resources.
- Sonoma Mountain Vernal Pools project closed. Ag + Open Space will hold the easement over the 174-acre property. Sonoma Land Trust will hold fee title with the goal of eventually transferring ownership to Regional Parks.
- Ag + Open Space is launching a riparian conservation easement program to expand our efforts to protect critical streamside areas throughout Sonoma County. We are outreaching now to agricultural properties in floodplain areas, including the Laguna de Santa Rosa, Russian River, Sonoma Creek, and Atascadero Creek, among others where we and partners are interested in balancing agricultural use and protection and restoration of historic floodplains.
- Ag + Open Space is recruiting for two Community Relations Assistants. Each position has different priorities. The recruitment is open until March 29, 2023. Please let anyone who might be interested know about these opportunities.

Chair Borrás opened the meeting for questions and comments from Advisory Committee members and members of the public, but there were none.

Matching Grant Program Update

Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager, explained that a few more new projects have come in with the second round of the Matching Grant Program application period that closed on March 10, 2023. Pamela Swan presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Matching Grant Program and the six additional projects that came in during the second application period. Ms. Swan went through



the new projects and shared a map showing where each project is located in the county. She went over next steps and discussed the upcoming Matching Grant Program revision plans.

Chair Borrás opened the meeting up to the members and the public, and a discussion ensued.

For more information, please feel free to contact Ms. Ricard or Ms. Swan at Ag + Open Space. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

Create the Matching Grant Project Review Subcommittee

Ms. Ricard explained the time commitment of this committee and reminded the Committee that members who may have a conflict of interest in a property should not join the subcommittee.

Chair Borrás asked for volunteers for the Matching Grant Project Review subcommittee. Angel Lopez volunteered. There were no other volunteers at this time.

No vote was taken at this meeting and the item will be added to next month's meeting to take action.

Projects in Negotiations

Chair Borrás asked for any comments or questions on the Projects in Negotiations spreadsheet. Paul Martin said that the length of time Ag + Open Space has been working on the projects would be a great addition to the spreadsheet.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

Paul Martin requested that once all the subcommittees have been formed, that a new updated list be sent out to the Advisory Committee members with names of who is on which committee.

Adjournment

Chair Borrás adjourned the meeting at 6:15 in honor of Mike Senneff, a local civil attorney who recently passed away and who was influential during the Ag + Open Space Measure F campaign.

Next Meeting: April 27, 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

