



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 24, 2022 | 5:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Steve Rabinowitsh	Don McEnhill	Kristina Tierney	Wendy Eliot
Brian Barnacle	Bill Smith	Michelle Whitman	Oswaldo Jimenez
Paul Martin	Jan McFarland	Sue Conley	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tawny Tesconi	Cary Fargo	Curt Nichols
John Nagle	Jesús Guzmán	Neysa Hinton

STAFF PRESENT:

Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager; Catherine Iantosca, Stewardship Specialist; Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner; Mary Chambers, Agricultural Specialist; Taylor Acosta, Stewardship Technician; Marina Montes, Stewardship Technician; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Michelle Whitman called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm. Chair Whitman did a roll call: Steve Rabinowitsh, yes; Cary Fargo, no; Paul Martin, yes; Don McEnhill, yes; Bill Smith, yes; John Nagle, no; Wendy Eliot, yes; Jesús Guzmán, no; Neysa Hinton, no; Curt Nichols, no; Kristina Tierney, yes; Tawny Tesconi, no; Jan McFarland, yes; Sue Conley, yes; Brian Barnacle, yes; Oswaldo Jimenez, yes.

Public Comment

Chair Whitman asked for any public comments on items not on the agenda. Susan Kirks, from Petaluma and the Paula Lane Action Network, reported out that the Network is trying to ensure that the conservation terms are upheld for the Paula Lane property as it is an important area for the American badger that are native to California. Mapping for the American badger habitat in Sonoma County will be completed by the end of 2022.

Approval of Minutes from February 24, 2022

Chair Whitman asked for any comments or revisions regarding the February 24, 2022 minutes. There were none. Kristina Tierney motioned for the minutes to be approved as is. Sue Conley

seconded the motion. All in favor except Sue Conley, Jan McFarland and Brian Barnacle who abstained as they were not present at the February meeting.

Chair Whitman introduced and welcomed the newest Advisory Committee member, Osvaldo Jimenez. He is the mayor of Healdsburg and has been on the City of Healdsburg City Council since 2019. He owns Noble Folk, a local ice cream and pie eatery in Healdsburg and Santa Rosa, and has lived in Sonoma County for the last 35 years. He comes from an agriculture family and attended Piner High School and the Santa Rosa Junior College. He has a long list of accomplishments.

Mr. Jimenez said he was eager to work on the Advisory Committee and to get started. Advisory Committee members welcomed him to the Committee.

General Manager's Report

- Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager, presented the General Manager's Report for Misti Arias who is out of town. She welcomed Mr. Jimenez and is looking forward to working with him.
- The second round of the Vegetation Management Grant Program, CalFire Prescribed Burning Agreement and a staffing request are all going to the Board on April 19, 2022.
- The Americorps Trail Matching Grant and the Barton Open Space Easement Amendment are going to the Board on May 3, 2022.
- A Creative Services Contract extension will go to the Board on May 10, 2022 and Saddle Mountain Wildland Ladder Fuel Reduction contract will go to the Board on May 24, 2022.

Chair Whitman asked if there were any public comments on the General Managers report out, and there were none.

Riparian Easements: RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangement & Department of Conservation Grant

Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner, and Mary Chambers, Agricultural Specialist, presented a PowerPoint presentation on riparian easements on agricultural lands and an overview of the Alternative Funding Arrangement (AFA) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) Grant. They discussed riparian areas in Sonoma County and why Ag + Open Space is protecting them and an overview of the DOC and AFA programs.

Chair Whitman opened up the meeting for discussion with the Advisory Committee members and members of the public.

For more information, please feel free to contact Ms. Schichtel and Ms. Chambers at Ag + Open Space. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

Conservation Easement Acquisition Fundamentals

Ms. Kuszmar presented a PowerPoint presentation on conservation easement acquisition fundamentals. She discussed the four steps of the conservation easement process. Step 1 includes project evaluations, what makes a property important and how it meets the Ag + Open Space Vital Lands Initiative criteria, and property site assessment, which entails looking at the existing structures, roads and natural features. Step 2 is the project structure process that helps identify



purpose and why there is interest in protecting the property. Step 3 is the appraisal process and step 4 is the Board approval process and the closing of the project.

Chair Whitman opened up the meeting for discussion with the Advisory Committee members and members of the public.

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

Projects in Negotiations

Chair Whitman asked what is happening with the Wikiup property. Ms. Kuszmar responded that it is in the appraisal phase and waiting for a response to our offer. It went to the Fiscal Oversight Commission and was approved.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

Sue Conley mentioned that Ms. Kuszmar had sung the National Anthem at the Farm Bureau's Crab Feed in February. She also asked if the Advisory Committee would be meeting in person again and Ms. Kuszmar responded that possibly this summer there would be some meetings in person, and she will bring this topic up to the management team to discuss.

Brian Barnacle supported meeting in person, possibly quarterly, and having a social gathering afterwards as a way for new Advisory Committee members to get to know everyone.

Adjournment

Chair Whitman adjourned the meeting at 6:29.

Next Meeting: April 28, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson
Advisory Committee Secretary

