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# Attachment "A"

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# SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 27, 2014 MINUTES

5:05 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 Jeff Holtzman

Kristin Thigpen John Dell’Osso Janet Orchard

John Nagle Cary Fargo Steve Rabinowitsh

**Members Absent**

Don McEnhill

Gary Wysocky

Shanti Edwards

John Azevedo

**Staff Present** Bill Keene, General Manager; Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisitions Program Manager; Mary Dodge, Administrative and Fiscal Services Manager; Tom Robinson, Associate Conservation Planner; Alex Roa, Assistant Planner; Sue Gallagher, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

**Public Attendees**  Ken Wells, Duane Dewitt, Jenny Blaker, Patricia Tuttle-Brown, Jim Nantell

**Public Comment**

Chair Gallian asked for public comments on items not listed on the agenda. Duane Dewitt, from the Roseland area of Santa Rosa, asked the Advisory Committee members to look into the proposed demolition of two buildings in the Roseland area that are on conservation easements and to put forward an idea to the City of Santa Rosa to help keep these two buildings from being demolished and finding an alternative use for them.

**Approval of Minutes**

 Chair Gallian asked for comments on the minutes for February 27, 2014. No comments on the

 minutes from members. Chair Gallian announced the approval of the minutes.

Chair Gallian announced and introduced new Advisory Committee Member Curt Nichols, who is representing Business.

**General Manager’s Report**

* The Sonoma County Water Agency has proposed a project to the District on Fryer Creek in Sonoma that involves creating an area to hold back heavy floodwaters on the Montini property. The proposed benefits of this project would be enhancing wetlands and increasing habitat and flood control for the community. The project is not very far along and once it is more developed the District will evaluate further via its permitted use request process; to receive approval it would need to be consistent with the easement. This project is creating some controversy among the neighbors of Montini but to date there has not been anything formally presented to the District. Soil samples are currently being taken and the results will help SCWA determine if they wish to proceed with their proposal to the District. This item will be brought to the Advisory Committee at a future meeting if and when there is something more to discuss.
* There was a Marin Carbon Project field tour in Nicasio Valley this week. The Marin Resource Conservation District has been working with UC Davis and local landowners in Marin to evaluate the role that compost plays in rangelands to increase production, hold water and sequester carbon. The science is new but there could be a lot of potential. The growth rate is much greater with the application of compost and thus forage is greater and native grasses are returning and thriving. This could be a great benefit to farmers and a way to reuse waste food.
* The Advisory Committee Executive Subcommittee met on March 6, 2014 to discuss revising the Rules and Procedures. They looked at the rule on absences and each of the rules in general to make sure they are up to date and accurate. Sue Gallagher, County Counsel, is now reviewing the changes suggested and will come back to next month’s meeting to discuss with members.
* There is one vacancy left on the Advisory Committee and Mr. Keene is actively working on filling the position and is meeting with someone soon.
* The Matching Grant Program applications are coming in and there is a lot of interest. The District will receive applications until April 11th and then will begin the evaluation process with the MGP Advisory Committee Subcommittee.

 **Long Range Financial Plan**

Mary Dodge, Administrative and Fiscal Services Manager, presented information on the District’s Long Range Financial Plan. Ms. Dodge handed out a spreadsheet to Advisory Committee members of the Long Range Financial Plan tool that she has developed. This tool, or a Long Range Financial Plan in general, is used to help an organization to identify goals, responsibilities and to determine estimates in order to be fiscally successful. This tool will also help the District to have a better idea of how much money is available each year for acquisitions, and ultimately for the remainder of the measure. Ultimately, this model can help the District make financial decisions by looking at the cash flow over time. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request at the District offices.

  **2012 National Park Visitor Spending Effects**

John Dell’Osso, Advisory Committee Member, presented information on the 2012 National Park Visitor Spending Effects. A study just came out on National Park Visitor spending which could apply to any open space recreation and natural resources values. There are intrinsic values to National Parks that are being proved scientifically and they include health benefits, access to wild life, historic preservation, and economic benefits for local areas, including lodging and food service, an increase in land values, and the creation of jobs. Go to the link provided here to see the article:

<http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs%5CNPSVSE2012_final_nrss.pdf>

**Transfers and Transfer Process**

Misti Arias, Acquisition Program Manager, updated the committee on the District’s Transfer Process. The District’s role when transferring a property is to help keep the land protected and stay open once transferred. The District is transferring several properties right now and it is a very complicated and timely process, much more so than acquisitions. When State Parks had its financial problems in 2008, there were several properties that were slated to go to them, but had to be kept by the District until new owners were found. Regional Parks has shown interest in adding these properties to the Sonoma County Regional park system. These properties have been allocated to tier one and tier two categories in the District’s adopted Fee Lands Strategy, the tier one properties being ones that had an immediate taker. The tier one properties are in the process now of being transferred and taking a lot of time and energy of staff. There is a process that is in place that staff has to follow. Since the transfers take so much time and energy and the District is working to transfer lands to other entities, the District can work on about two transfers to Regional Parks per fiscal year. Right now the District is working on transferring North Sonoma Mountain and Lawson to Regional Parks, Montini to the City of Sonoma, Healdsburg Ridge to the City of Healdsburg, and Wright Preservation Bank to the State of California. In the next two fiscal years, there will be two transfers each year for properties going to Regional Parks in addition to 2-3 transfers to other recipients. To see the transfer process in detail, the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request at the District offices.

**Projects in Negotiations**

Cresta II and McCullough Phase II are in process currently and Cresta II should be closing by April 4th and McCullough by the end of the year.

 **Announcements From Advisory Committee Members**

Laurie Gallian

There will be a public meeting held by Supervisor Gorin and the Sonoma County Water Agency on Monday, March 31, at Sonoma’s Vintage House, 264 First St. E., from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. This meeting will provide information on the state of the Valley water supply.

 **Adjournment:** 6:30 pm

Next scheduled meeting date: April 24, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

 Mariah Robson,

Advisory Committee Secretary