



AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPROVED MINUTES

Virtual Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order
April 28, 2022 | 5:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Steve Rabinowitsh	Don McEnhill	Tawny Tesconi	Curt Nichols
Brian Barnacle	Bill Smith	John Nagle	Cary Fargo
Paul Martin	Jan McFarland	Sue Conley	Neysa Hinton

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michelle Whitman	Kristina Tierney
Oswaldo Jimenez	Jesús Guzmán
Wendy Eliot	

STAFF PRESENT:

Misti Arias, General Manager; Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager; Mary Chambers, Agricultural Specialist; Kim Batchelder, Vegetation Management Coordinator; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Call to Order

Vice Chair, Don McEnhill, standing in for Chair Michelle Whitman, called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

Public Comment

Chair McEnhill asked for any public comments on items not on the agenda. There were none.

Approval of Minutes from March 24, 2022

Chair McEnhill asked for any comments or revisions regarding the March 24, 2022 minutes. There were none. Paul Martin motioned for the minutes to be approved as is. John Nagle seconded the motion. All in favor except Cary Fargo, Curt Nichols, Tawny Tesconi, John Nagle and Neysa Hinton who abstained as they were not present at the March meeting.

General Manager's Report

- The Americorps Trail Matching Grant Project is going to the Board on May 3, 2022.

- The Saddle Mountain Wildland Ladder Fuel Reduction Contract is going to the Board on May 24, 2022.
- The Vegetation Management Grant Program, being led by Kim Batchelder, Vegetation Management Coordinator, was featured in the Tuesday, April 26 Press Democrat with a photo of a 2021 project site. The Board of Directors approved eighteen projects on April 19, 2022 for \$3.3 million. In addition, the Board approved \$500,000 to be used to develop a mini-grant program for technical and planning assistance for projects that are high priorities and show excellent potential.
- On May 5-6, 2022, Sonoma County will host the Governor's Task Force on Wildfire Prevention and Forest Resilience event at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. Ag + Open Space will be staffing tables and co-leading tours with the Sonoma Valley Wildlands Collaborative about our collective vegetation management work in the Sonoma Valley.
- The California Artisan Cheese Festival will be held on May 7, 2022 and we are sponsoring the event and will have a booth right next to Vivien Straus and her Cheese Trail Map.
- The Sonoma County Farm Bureau's Water Summit will be held on May 10 and 11, 2022. We are sponsoring the event and several staff will be attending. You can find more information on this event on the Farm Bureau's website.
- The North Bay Science Discovery Day will be held on May 15, 2022. We will be hosting a booth at the event. You can go to our website for more information on all of these events.
- Ag + Open Space launched the 2022 cycle of the Matching Grant Program. There was a virtual information session held last Thursday, April 21, 2022. The deadline for applications is July 1, 2022. For more information, including a recording of the virtual information session, go to our website at SonomaOpenSpace.org/MGP.

Chair McEnhill asked if there were any comments from the Advisory Committee members or from members of the public on the General Managers report out, and there were none.

Vegetation Management Grant Awards Update

Kim Batchelder, Vegetation Management Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the comprehensive view of the progress being made with the Vegetation Management Grant program. He discussed selection criteria and project ranking, projects highlights, conditionally approved projects, and next steps in the program. Since its inception, the Grant Program has steadily improved by focusing on landscape level projects in the most vulnerable areas. The program has supported the development of shaded fuel breaks, prescribed fire and grazing, some targeted roadside and defensible space projects and educational efforts. To date, the program has supported 44 projects with \$8.2 million of grant funds.

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

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

Chair McEnhill realized a roll call had not been taken yet for this meeting and called for one now:



Sue Conley, yes; John Nagle, yes; Steve Rabinowitsh, yes; Jan McFarland, yes; Curt Nichols, yes; Cary Fargo, yes; Paul Martin, yes; Bill Smith, yes; Brian Barnacle, yes; Neysa Hinton, yes; Tawny Tesconi, yes; Don McEnhill, yes.

Agricultural Support and Protection (ASAP) Program Update

Mary Chambers, Agricultural Specialist, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Agricultural Support and Protection Program. This is a one-time emergency matching grant program created to respond to economic impacts of the pandemic, and to help prevent land conversion by ensuring that local farmers and ranchers can continue productive use of Sonoma County's agricultural lands. Nine applications were accepted with a total funding of \$177,148.

Chair McEnhill 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. Chambers at Ag + Open Space. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

Projects in Negotiations

Chair McEnhill asked if there were any comments or questions from the Advisory Committee members or members of the public on the projects in negotiations spreadsheet found in the packet, and there were none.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

No announcements from Committee members.

Sue Conley did ask when Advisory Committee meetings could meet in person again, and Ms. Arias responded that Ag + Open Space is working on that and that they will hopefully be able to meet in hybrid meetings by the end of summer. She will follow up with Julie Mefferd, the Administrative & Fiscal Services Manager who handles COVID related protocols for the District.

Adjournment

Chair McEnhill adjourned the meeting at 6:05.

Next Meeting: May 26, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson
Advisory Committee Secretary

