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# Attachment "A"

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# SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 22, 2014 MINUTES

5:07 p.m. Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,

Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

 **Members Present**

Laurie Gallian Curt Nichols Jan McFarland

John Azevedo John Dell’Osso Steve Rabinowitsh

Bill Smith Gary Wysocky Kristin Thigpen

**Members Absent**

Janet Orchard Shanti Edwards Jeff Holtzman

Don McEnhill John Nagle Cary Fargo

Sue Conley

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

**Public Comment**

Chair Gallian asked for public comments on items not listed on the agenda. There were no public comments on items not listed on the agenda.

**Approval of Minutes**

 Chair Gallian asked for comments on the minutes from April 24, 2014. There were no comments on

 minutes. Steve Rabinowitsh motioned to approve the minutes, and Bill Smith seconded the

 motion. Chair Gallian announced the approval of the minutes.

**General Manager’s Report**

* Bill Keene, General Manager, asked members if they would like to take an outing onto one of the District properties this year in August or October. Members decided on October as it will be cooler. Mr. Keene suggested going to North Slope this year, and light refreshments will be provided. The date of the outing will either be the third or fourth Thursday of October, depending on the nature of the items to be brought to the Advisory Committee that month.
* The Mitigation Policy will come back to the Advisory Committee in December of this year. The Board of Directors have other items that they want the District to focus on right now. The plan is to take the Mitigation Policy to the Board next spring.
* There is no update on the Andy Lopez memorial park.
* The Matching Grant Program Advisory Subcommittee will meet in July and the recommendations will be brought to the Advisory Committee in September. Misti Arias will provide the dates of the Subcommittee meetings in July and a list of properties which will allow members to determine if they need to recuse themselves due to a conflict of interest.
* The revised Rules of Procedures for the Advisory Committee will go to the in Board in June.
* There was a public meeting May 8th in Valley Ford regarding proposed public access at the Bordessa Ranch on Highway 1.  It was helpful to hear directly from the neighboring landowners and interested public on issues of concern.  The District is at this point working with Regional Parks and PRMD on completing studies necessary to determine an appropriate location for the 50 foot trail easement and staging areas allowed in the trail easement, held by the District.  Environmental review will be completed and additional public input gathered before a trail corridor location is designated.  The property supports amazing natural resources and has been grazed historically, and so any public access must be consistent with the protection of these conservation values.
* There will be a brief presentation of the District Management Review at a future meeting. The review looked at how the District is operating and gave the District recommendations. The CAO’s office will bring this to the Board on June 10, 2014. One of the recommendations is for the District to have additional monitoring of our easements. We are in the process of hiring two technicians to monitor conservation easements.  This will double our ability to visit easement properties, checking conditions to ensure compliance with easement terms.  In addition the Stewardship Program is working towards improving technology used in the field during monitoring visits to increase efficiency.  Program staff are also developing a volunteer easement monitoring program.  These steps are being taken towards reaching our goal of monitoring every easement every year.
* Pole Mountain acquisition was approved by the Board this week. This property represents a critical connection between the Jenner Headlands and Sonoma Land Trust's Little Black Mountain Preserve.  Sonoma Land Trust will own and operate the preserve while the District holds a conservation easement. Not only does protection of this property ensure wildlife connectivity and healthy natural areas but also a future trail connection to the highest peak on the Sonoma coast.
* Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager and Tom Robinson, Conservation Planner, are working on the Vegetation Map and LiDAR study which is hitting the ground this week. There is a press release that will go out. People can go to sonomavegmap.org to see a two minute video that describes LiDAR that is easy to access.
* The District has a new Community Relations Specialist, Amy Ricard, who is helping us with our website and getting our message out to the public.
* Advisory Committee member Kristin Thigpen offered a suggestion to have the Sonoma County Farm Bureau visit the District Advisory Committee Meeting at a future date to present to members and District staff what the Farm Bureau is working on within the County. John Azevedo, Advisory Committee Member and Vice President of the Farm Bureau, will speak with the staff of the Farm Bureau to invite them to a future meeting.

 **Urban Farm Concept**

 Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager, presented the Urban Farm Concept. The concept includes placing the District’s offices on an urban agricultural site in Santa Rosa with the intent of saving District building lease costs over time, better reflecting the District’s agricultural identity, and providing agricultural open space in an economically disadvantaged community. This idea will go to the Fiscal Oversight Commission in July and the District will begin to reach out to potential partners and stakeholders in the next few months to receive input. The Advisory Committee members were in agreement that this is an exciting project and would like to see it move forward. To see the Urban Farm Concept in more detail, the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request at the District offices.

  **Consider Forming an Agricultural Subcommittee**

 Ms. Gaffney explained that the District has been working with the agricultural community and would like to better support them going forward. The District would like to ask the Advisory Committee, through the chair, if they would like to form an Agricultural Subcommittee. The subcommittee would consist of up to six members. The Advisory Committee clerk will send an email to members that were absent tonight to determine interest. The meetings would take place at a different time than the Advisory Committee Meeting and the subcommittee would meet for twelve months and then will be evaluated to see if it should continue. Chair Gallian asked for a motion on the formation of the agriculture subcommittee. Kristin Thigpen motioned and Jan McFarland seconded the motion. All were in favor, no oppositions and no abstentions. This will be brought back to the July meeting.

**Project Update – East Slope Sonoma Ridge Trail**

Alex Roa, Assistant Planner, updated the Committee on the East Slope Sonoma Ridge Trail. This trail starts in Jack London State Park and ends in a loop at the Eliot family property, owned by Ted and Pat Eliot. Ted ran the Measure F campaign and he and Pat have donated this trail easement to the District. The project has been in process for many years. There are sensitive native grasslands and oak woodlands and the trail builders have kept sustainability in mind and used low impact methods to build the trail. The trail consists of public and private lands and involves many partners coming together to be completed. The Valley of the Moon Natural History Association will take over the operations and maintenance once the trail is complete. There are two phases to complete the construction. Phase I utilizes a licensed contractor to do a “rough cut” of the trail, using heavy machinery. The award of contract for Phase I will be going to the Board of Directors in late July or early August. Phase II was awarded in 2013 to the Sonoma County Trails Council, Directed by Ken Wells. This phase will be the finish cut of the trail. $10,000 of the Phase II contract is a grant from REI, for use in overseeing volunteer work on the trail. Ken Wells will send an email to the Advisory Committee Clerk who will forward onto the Advisory Committee members regarding volunteer days this summer if anyone is interested in joining them. The planned opening is New Year’s Day 2015. It will be a multiuse trail for walking, bikes and horses, but no dogs will be allowed. To see the East Slope Ridge Trail Project in more detail, the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request at the District offices.

**Projects in Negotiations**

* Pole Mountain will close in June.
* Curreri will be brought to the Board in late June.
* Fitch Mountain is making progress and getting closer to moving forward, and should close by the end of this year.
* Monte Rio’s Creekside Park is having a Grand Opening dedication tomorrow at 11:00.

 **Announcements From Advisory Committee Members and General Manager**

 John Dell’Osso

There was a meeting on May 21st regarding Rohnert Park and Cotati groundwater and there will be one more in Santa Rosa. It demonstrated that in Rohnert Park areas the groundwater has plummeted. There is a critical need for open space to recharge these areas.

Bill Keene

There is a Sonoma Valley and Santa Rosa Plain Panel that has helped to fund investigations into the best areas for recharging. Managing this in a sustainable way is important. There could be a role in the future for the District.

Laurie Gallian

The City of Sonoma’s Arbor Day festival was beautiful. There were new plantings in the arboretum in the plaza and all are invited to come take a look.

There will be a chicken barbeque and a reenactment of the Bear Flag on June 14th.

 **Adjournment:** 6:50 pm

Next scheduled meeting date: July 24, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

 Mariah Robson,

Advisory Committee Secretary