



Attachment "A"

*SONOMA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND OPEN SPACE  
DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

*May 24, 2018 MINUTES*

5:03 pm Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,  
Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

**Members Present**

Bill Smith	Curt Nichols	Doug Lipton
Halei Trowbridge	David Cook	Paul Martin
Steve Rabinowitsh	John Dell'Osso	Cary Fargo

**Members Absent**

Jan McFarland	Don McEnhill	Evan Wiig
Tawny Tesconi	John Nagle	Neysa Hinton

**Staff Present**

Bill Keene, General Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisition Program Manager; Jennifer Kuszmar, Matching Grant Coordinator; Amy Ricard, Community Relations Specialist; Seamus Rafferty, Stewardship Technician; Allison Schichtel, Conservation Planning GIS Analyst; Indigo Bannister, Conservation Planning Technician; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Chair Dell'Osso called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

**Public Comment**

Chair Dell'Osso asked for public comments on items not on the agenda.

Susan Kirks passed out the Leaves newsletter of Madrone Audubon Society. She spoke in support of wildlife corridors, Paula Lane, and keeping urban lands that are wild such as Roseland Creek Preserve in their natural state.

Duane DeWitt asked that the minutes from the April 26, 2018 meeting be amended to reflect that he was representing a neighborhood group and not all of Roseland.

Mr. DeWitt spoke in favor of keeping the Roseland Creek Park as a nature preserve and suggested that a veterans' memorial garden be created.

**Approval of Minutes**

On a request by Jen Santos from the City of Santa Rosa, Chair Dell'Osso asked that the second sentence from the second paragraph under the City of Santa Rosa Roseland Creek item be deleted since they did not speak about the bicycle and pedestrian master plan.

Chair Dell'Osso asked for approval of the April 26, 2018 minutes as amended. Steve Rabinowitsh motioned to approve and Paul Martin seconded the motion. All in favor, with one abstention from Doug Lipton.

Bill Keene, General Manager, announced there would some changes to the agenda this evening. Item #8, Impacts of the October Fires to District-Protected Properties, was postponed because the presenter, Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager, was sick. This item will be presented in June. In addition, item #6, the Vital Lands Initiative's original presenter, Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager, could not attend, so Mr. Keene will be the presenter in her place.

### **General Manager's Report Out**

- On May 23, 2018, Ag + Open Space issued a press release regarding the McCullough Phase 2 acquisition. The Press Democrat, Sonoma County Gazette, and other publications are expected to publish the story. The project went to the Board of Directors on Tuesday, May 22, 2018 and was approved. McCullough Phase 2 and Wendle properties will go to the Board of Directors in July 2018 for approval as a 1191-acre Sonoma County Regional Park.
- Rips Redwoods is going to the Board of Directors for approval on June 5, 2018. This is a coastal property along the Gualala River. It is a 1600-acre property with a three mile trail.
- Ag + Open Space recruited another youth member for the Advisory Committee. His name is Taj Hittenberger. He graduated from UC Berkeley and currently works for the Community Soil Foundation. He will start next month.
- Steve Barbose will be appointed to represent the first district for the Advisory Committee. He will also start next month.
- On Saturday June 2, 2018 from 1:00 to 5:00, there will be an Andy's Unity Park Opening and Dedication. Mr. Keene will be speaking during the program from 1:00 to 2:00. Ag + Open Space will have a table at the event. If anyone would like to assist at the tables, volunteers are welcome.

### **Subcommittee Report Out**

The District currently has three active subcommittees:

1. Matching Grant Program
2. Agriculture
3. Vital Lands Initiative

There are no report outs on subcommittee meetings this month as none have met since the last Advisory Committee meeting.

### **Regional Parks Challenges & Opportunities Presentation**

Bert Whitaker, Director of Regional Parks, explained that Regional Parks has grown but that funding has not kept pace. Over 50 years they have grown to over 11,000 acres and 150 miles of trails in 56 parks, open spaces and marinas. In the last ten years, the park system has doubled, going from 5,648 acres to 11,071 acres. Parks now faces critical shortfalls for maintenance, new park openings, fire recovery and the protection of natural resources. Currently, there is no dedicated funding source to protect and support all of Sonoma County's parks. Regional Parks staff have been discussing with local leaders a one-eighth cent sales tax (0.125%) collected countywide over 10 years. This long-term investment would provide a stable source of funding, with significant opportunities to further leverage grant, private funding and state bonds (prop 68).

For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

#### Public Comment

Mr. DeWitt expressed support of the potential sales tax measure provided it meets certain criteria.

#### **Vital Lands Initiative**

Mr. Keene gave an update on the Vital Lands Initiative. Ag + Open Space is having discussions with the Ag Community and the Farm Bureau who have requested additional input about what will be specifically implemented in the initiative regarding agriculture. Results of these discussions will be brought to future Advisory Committee meetings for input from members and the public.

#### Public Comment

Mr. DeWitt complimented staff on work done to date on the VLI and raised several important topics for continued exploration by staff.

#### **Overview of Project Evaluation Process**

Mist Arias, Acquisition Program Manager, explained how Ag + Open Space evaluates projects. Ms. Arias said that due to limited resources, and the amount of land that stills needs protection, that Ag + Open Space has an approved ranking criteria for determining which properties have the most benefit to the County and are most closely aligned with the Expenditure Plan.

For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

#### **Projects in Negotiations**

Ag + Open space has protected over 113,000 acres of land that is 10% of Sonoma County in 28 years. Currently Ag + Open Space is working on acquiring Rips Redwoods, which would be an additional 1600 acres, McCullough, 259 acres, Cresta, 46 acres, and Wendle, 47 acres, which are all about to close. Mattos Diary, another 900 acres, will most likely close by the end of the year.

#### **Announcements from Advisory Committee Members and Members of the Public**

##### Bill Keene

Several dairies in Sonoma County have experienced a setback with the sale of Weleda Yoghurt to Danone Yoghurt who will be moving to Salt Lake City, Utah by the end of the year. Three dairies have reached out to the Ag + Open Space to explore their options for continued operations.

**Adjournment:** 6:50 pm.

Next scheduled meeting date: June 28, 2018

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson,  
Advisory Committee Secretary