



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
May 26, 2022 | 5:00 pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Steve Rabinowitsh	Neysa Hinton	Curt Nichols	Kristina Tierney
Michelle Whitman	Bill Smith	Cary Fargo	Wendy Eliot
Paul Martin	Jan McFarland	Sue Conley	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Oswaldo Jimenez	Jesús Guzmán	Don McEnhill
Brian Barnacle	Tawny Tesconi	John Nagle

STAFF PRESENT:

Misti Arias, General Manager; Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager; Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager; Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner; Cieara McKetchnie-Stanley, Administrative Aide; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel

Call to Order

Chair Michelle Whitman called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

Chair Whitman took a roll call:

Steve Rabinowitsh, yes; Don McEnhill, no; Tawny Tesconi, no; Curt Nichols, yes; Brian Barnacle, no; Bill Smith, yes; John Nagle, no; Cary Fargo, yes; Paul Martin, no; Jan McFarland, no; Sue Conley, no; Neysa Hinton, yes; Kristina Tierney, yes; Oswaldo Jimenez, no; Jesús Guzmán, no; Wendy Eliot, yes.

Public Comment

Chair Whitman asked for any public comments on items not on the agenda.

Susan Kirks spoke and suggested that for Advisory Meetings that only have one or two public participants to allow the public to speak for three minutes instead of two as it is standard in other public meeting and would be a great public service.

Ms. Kirks also spoke about Peter Warner, a botanist who leads walks on protected lands and is a conservationist. He recently did a presentation at the Madrone Audubon Society and spoke about natural features, rather than natural resources, and Ms. Kirks suggested the Ag + Open Space

consider using that term in place of resources, especially in conservation easements as it sounds more protective than resources. Ms. Kirks also said that it has been a year since the City of Petaluma, in her opinion, destroyed habitat and displaced the American badger at the Paula Lane property and asked that Ag + Open Space consider helping to restore this property and help the American badger habitat in this area.

Approval of Minutes from April 28, 2022

Chair Whitman asked for any comments or revisions regarding the April 28, 2022, minutes. There were none. Curt Nichols motioned for the minutes to be approved as is. Bill Smith seconded the motion. All in favor except Michelle Whitman, Kristina Tierney and Wendy Eliot who abstained as they were not present at the April meeting.

General Manager's Report

- Misti Arias, General Manager, announced several staffing updates at Ag + Open Space including the following: Amy Ricard has been promoted from Community Relations Specialist to Community Resources Manager; Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist, has accepted a position at the State Coastal Conservancy and will be leaving Ag + Open Space in mid-June 2022; the Acquisition Specialist position is still open and now we will be hiring two people since Ms. Morris is moving on. If anyone knows of someone who is interested and qualified, please direct them to the Ag + Open Space website to apply.
- Ag + Open Space participated recently in Governor Newsom's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force meeting that was held locally in May 2022 and staffed three different stations focusing on creating fire safe communities, local vegetation management projects, and data and remote sensing. We also co-hosted a tour with members of the Sonoma Valley Wildlands Collaborative.
- New Ag + Open Space brochures are printed, updated and ready to go. Let Ms. Ricard know if you would like to pick some up and share with others. They are being used at tabling events like the Wildfire and Forest Resiliency Task Force, California Artisan Cheese Festival, and North Bay Science Discovery Day.
- Matching Grant Program applications are due July 1, 2022.
- Ag + Open Space is working with county staff on the Climate Resilient Lands Strategy and the draft will be available for public comment soon.
- Administrative staff have installed an owl camera in our conference room in preparation for future in-person hybrid meetings that will allow participants who would like to attend online to be able to do that.

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

Proactive Conservation of High Priority Areas

Ms. Arias and Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager, introduced the Proactive Conservation of High Priority Areas presentation and Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner, presented the PowerPoint. The Vital Lands Initiative strategies include proactive conservation efforts, messaging to the community about the importance of land conservation, and transparency about our process. The goal for proactive conservation efforts is to identify areas for land conservation, and then take a recommendation to the Board of Directors in the fall of 2022.



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. Arias, Ms. Kuszmar or Ms. Schichtel at Ag + Open Space. The PowerPoint presentation is available upon request.

Projects in Negotiations

Ms. Kuszmar answered a public comment regarding the Projects in Negotiations spreadsheet and a property along Llano Road that was submitted before the meeting: The Acquisition program staff updates the list monthly and Ms. Kuszmar is not aware of any project on Llano Road. There may be an application that has been submitted but a project has not been activated. Once a project is activated, it will appear on the Projects in Negotiations list.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

Chair Whitman attended the Los Cien event and sat at the table sponsored by Ag + Open Space, and it was great to interact with staff members.

Adjournment

Chair Whitman adjourned the meeting at 6:40.

Next Meeting: June 23, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson
Advisory Committee Secretary

