

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A P P R O V E D MINUTES

747 Mendocino Avenue – Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

June 25, 2026 | 5:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Hodges, Ladi Asgill, Thembi Borrás, Wendy Eliot, Michelle Whitman, John Shribbs, Alex DeCarli, Marjorie Morgenstern, Don McEnhill, Emily Albert, Steve Rabinowitsh*

*Virtual Attendance under SB 707:

Member Rabinowitsh attended the meeting virtually citing SB 707 due to a *contagious illness that prevents member from attending in person*.

STAFF PRESENT:

Misti Arias, General Manager; Aldo Mercado, Deputy County Counsel; Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager; Michelle Nozzari, Admin Aide

1. Call to Order

Chair Ladi Asgill called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

2. Public Comment

Chair Asgill opened comments on items not listed on the agenda.

- No public comment

3. Correspondence/Communications

No correspondence was received.

4. Approval of the Minutes from March 26, 2026.

Chair Asgill called for a roll call vote. Member Rabinowitsh abstained from voting.

Member Morgenstern motioned to approve the minutes. Member McEnhill seconded the motion. The vote to approve minutes passed.

5. Ag Advisory Subcommittee Report Out

Paul Martin, Advisory Committee Member

Chair Asgill opened item for public comment.

- No public comment.

6. General Managers Report

Misti Arias, General Manager

Acquisition

- Colgan Creek Phase 4 Community Space Project Closed -- This nearly 4-acre addition along with our and the City's other acquisitions facilitated realignment of Colgan Creek which will improve flow and reduce flooding and included extensive riparian habitat restoration work. It has also set the stage for Phase 5, which will be development of a community park along the creek.
- **Going to the Board**
- 7/14/2026: Tierra de Rosas Public Plaza Community Spaces Matching Grant Project
- 8/4/2026: Tom Schophflin Phase 2 Community Spaces Matching Grant Project; Geyserville Community Plaza Community Spaces Matching Grant Project; Diamond W Ranch Conservation Easement
- Community Resources
- Soda Springs Ranch Open Space Preserve opened! We purchased the CE for \$2.1M in Sept 2023 and provided \$962K in IPAOM funding.
- Grand Jury report is out.
- The Board declared an Agricultural Emergency and approved a workplan for us with very specific actions to support local agriculture.

Ag + Open Space Events

- Pacheco Dairy on 5/30 for Ag Heritage Day organized by Sonoma RCD
- Graton Town Square on 5/30 for a Sip & Stroll Fundraiser
- CAFF's Howl & Harvest Dinner on 5/31
- Sonoma County PRIDE on 6/6
- Soda Springs Open Space Preserve Grand Opening on 6/6
- Los Cien Puente y Ganas Awards Breakfast on 6/12
- Coming up...
 - Love of the Land – 7/9
 - Farm Fest – 7/19
 - Gravenstein Apple Fair – 8/1-2

General Items

Work Plan direction from the Board: The Board has expressed support for an Ag Park in Sonoma County

Chair Asgill opened public comment.

- Public Comment: Wendy Roberts, Member of Civil Grand Jury

7. Senate Bill 707 – Updated public meeting and teleconference requirements

Aldo Mercado, County Counsel

California Senate Bill (SB) 707 is a legislative update to the Ralph M. Brown Act that modernizes local government public meeting and teleconferencing rules. Introduced January 1, 2026, part of the updates include potentially permanent teleconferencing, disruptor muting, social media clarification, and public comment extension.

Action: The Committee will vote to approve applying these new guidelines to the Advisory Committee.

Chair Asgill opened item for public comment.

- Public comment: Susan Kirks

Chair Asgill called for a roll call vote. Member Shribbs motioned to approve. Member Eliot seconded the motion. The vote to approve minutes passed with a majority; eight members in favor and members Morgenstern, Borrás, and Albert against.

8. Overview of Recent Polling Results

Emily Goodman, Senior Principal, EMC Research Inc.

Ag + Open Space conducted preliminary polling to understand Sonoma County voters' awareness, priorities, and opinions regarding the agency and its mission, to help refine communications, and to examine current attitudes about taxes as they relate to investments in agriculture and open space preservation. The study provided early objective feedback on how voters may respond to a potential measure to reauthorize Sonoma County Ag + Open Space's quarter-cent sales tax but was not designed to provide a comprehensive picture of measure feasibility.

Discussion: The Committee will discuss the results of the poll and provide feedback on subsequent polling and related topics.

Chair Asgill opened item for public comment.

- No public comment.

9. Ag + Open Space and Proposition 4 Funding – How much and how fast?

Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager

Proposition 4 (the Climate Bond Act of 2024), passed by voters in November 2024, authorizes the state to borrow \$10 billion through general obligation bonds. This funding is dedicated to climate resilience, natural resources management, wildfire prevention, and safe drinking water initiatives across California. The question is: how much money is actually available and when, how can it be used, and how can Ag + Open Space access it?

Chair Asgill opened item for public comment.

- Susan Kirks

10. Projects in Negotiations

Chair Asgill opened public comment.

- No public comment

11. Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

12. Adjournment

Chair Asgill adjourned the meeting at 7:10 pm.