



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
July 28, 2022 | 5:00 pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Curt Nichols	Brian Barnacle	Don McEnhill	Jan McFarland
Michelle Whitman	Bill Smith	Cary Fargo	John Nagle
Paul Martin	Steve Rabinowitsh	Jesús Guzmán	Kristina Tierney

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Osvaldo Jimenez	Sue Conley	Wendy Eliot
Tawny Tesconi	Neysa Hinton	

STAFF PRESENT:

Misti Arias, General Manager; Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager; Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Manager; Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager; Mary Chambers, Agricultural Specialist; Stephanie Tavares-Buhler, Senior Acquisition Specialist; Marina Montes, Stewardship Technician ; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Ceara McKetchnie-Stanley, Administrative Aide; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk.

Call to Order

Chair Michelle Whitman called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

Chair Whitman took a roll call (this may change as people arrive late and will not reflect the actual members present):

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

Public Comment

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

Teri Shore, who is affiliated with environmental groups but speaking for herself, and as a long time Ag + Open Space advocate and supporter of the Sonoma Developmental Center open space, was interested in a committee and public update from staff on the protection of the SDC property.

Susan Kirks expressed concern about the Paula Lane property and the wildlife species living on the property. She would appreciate additional communication and assistance from staff on how to best support the land and habitat and would like to see the wildlife be restored.

Approval of Minutes from June 23, 2022

Chair Whitman asked for any comments or revisions regarding the June 23, 2022 minutes. There were none. Don McEnhill motioned for the minutes to be approved as is. Brian Barnacle seconded the motion. All in favor except Jan McFarland, John Nagle, Steve Rabinowitsh and Cary Fargo who abstained as they were not present at the June meeting.

General Manager's Report

- Misti Arias, General Manager, explained that some funding items are going to the Board on August 30, 2022 for the McClelland Dairy and the Climate Resiliency Project.
- Ms. Arias gave a Vegetation Management Grant Program update: 18 new grant agreements are fully executed and funds disbursed; 46 grant agreements for vegetations treatments—\$8.3 million throughout Sonoma County; moving forward with the Technical Advisory Committee and Future of Healthy Forests Ad Hoc Meeting. A preview will be brought to the Ag + Open Space Advisory Committee.
- Ms. Arias provided an update on the Sonoma Developmental Center: the State has a clear intent to transfer the open space on the core campus and are looking at options and considering proposals to move forward. They are very interested in protecting the open space.

Resolution of Appreciation for John Nagle

Ms. Arias presented John Nagle a resolution of appreciation and thanked him for his contributions to the Ag + Open Space Advisory Committee for the past thirteen years. Advisory Committee members, members of the public, and staff shared their appreciation.

New Member Appointment to Agricultural Subcommittee

Chair Whitman pointed out that with Mr. Nagle's retirement the Ag Subcommittee now has more vacancies that need to be filled and asked if there was anyone who would be interested. No one volunteered at this meeting, so Chair Whitman will ask absent Committee members if anyone would like to join the subcommittee at the September meeting.

Formation of Matching Grant Program Subcommittee

Amy Ricard, Community Resources Manager, recapped the Matching Grant Program cycle. The program is moving into the Community Resources program rather than the Acquisition program so now Amy will oversee the program and gave the update rather than Jennifer Kuszmar, Acquisition Manager. The cycle closed July 1, 2022 and only two applications were received. One in Santa Rosa for \$1.5 million for Colgan Creek Park and Restoration, and one for Earth Island Institute for \$450,000 for restoration at the Helen Putman Regional Park expansion. In the past, more applications have been received so it was surprising to only receive two. Lori MacNab ran the process this year and followed the same protocol and even increased outreach, but it did not



increase the applications received. Staff will do some research to learn more about why so few applications were received this cycle. The silver lining in receiving a smaller number of applications is that it makes the review and selection process easier, which is advantageous given that the agency is in the process of hiring a Grants Coordinator. It also allows time to revise the MGP guidelines, application, and criteria; and the funds may be able to roll over to the next cycle. Ms. Ricard explained that the new Matching Grant Program Subcommittee will form today to review the applications and make funding recommendations, and then review the guidelines and program for the next 1.5-2 years. There would be 1-3 meetings and a possible field visit or two, with four meetings in the next year. There is a recusal process and committee members will need to recuse themselves if there is a real or perceived conflict of interest with any given project.

Chair Whitman opened the meeting to form the MGP Subcommittee. Members discussed if they would be able to volunteer or need to recuse themselves. Two members, Michelle Whitman and Kristina Tierney, volunteered to join the subcommittee. Jesús Guzmán motioned approval of the formation of the subcommittee with the two volunteers, and Paul Martin seconded the motion. All in favor with no oppositions or abstentions.

Chair Whitman opened the meeting to the public, and the public had a discussion. Ms. Kirks and Ms. Shore both spoke and would like staff to extend the application process.

The discussion came back to the committee and another vote was taken. Brian Barnacle motioned for the subcommittee to move forward as is and Don McEnhill seconded the motion. All were in favor with no oppositions or abstentions.

Chair Whitman will ask absent Committee members if they want to join the MGP Subcommittee at the September meeting.

Farmland For All Presentation

Mary Chambers, Agricultural Specialist, gave a PowerPoint presentation discussing the Farmland for All program. Ms. Chambers discussed the different ideas for this program, and the next steps of getting feedback from the community via the Agricultural Subcommittee. The item will be taken to the Board at the end of September.

The meeting was opened to the committee members and members of the public and a discussion was had.

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

Projects in Negotiations

Ms. Kuszmar spoke about providing a different way to view the information on this spreadsheet. There will be a new structure that will help to show how properties are moving and will be updated as new projects come in.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

There were no announcements.



Adjournment

Chair Whitman adjourned the meeting at 6:58.

Next Meeting: September 22, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson
Advisory Committee Secretary

