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# Attachment "A"

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# SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 28, 2014 MINUTES

5:05 p.m. Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,

Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

 **Members Present**

Sue Conley John Nagle Cary Fargo Jeff Holtzman

John Dell’Osso Bill Smith Gary Wysocky

Kristin Thigpen Janet Orchard Shanti Edwards

Don McEnhill Laurie Gallian Steve Rabinowitsh

**Members Absent**

Curt Nichols

John Azevedo

Jan McFarland

Doug Lipton

**Staff Present** Bill Keene, General Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisitions Program Manager; Kristine Atkinson, Assistant Matching Grant Planner; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

**Public Comment**

Chair Laurie Gallian asked for public comments on items not listed on the agenda.

Duane DeWitt spoke about environmental planning and requested support from the Advisory Committee to look into using riparian corridors in creeks for retention basins during the drought. He explained that it is a resource that is not being used to its full potential and suggested the Advisory Committee work together and lead the way for the County.

**Approval of Minutes**

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

 on the minutes. Kristin Thigpen motioned for the approval of the minutes and Don McEnhill

 seconded the motion. There were two abstentions, and eleven in favor of approval of the minutes.

 **General Manager’s Report**

* The District Management Review was approved by the Board on August 19, 2014 with a 5-0 vote.
* The North Sonoma Mountain transfer to Regional Parks was also approved by the Board last week. There will be a joint celebration with Regional Parks and the District in the near future, sometime after the bridge has been replaced which is scheduled for September.
* The District was planning on taking the Advisory Committee on a field trip to North Sonoma Mountain next month on September 25. However, the bridge at North Slope is being replaced that week and the field trip will either need to be delayed or another site chosen. Mr. Keene suggested Montini in Sonoma or Taylor Mountain in Santa Rosa. The members decided to go next month to Montini instead of waiting to go to North Slope. Details will be sent out to members regarding location and time for meeting.
* The District was awarded a $300,000 grant for acquisition of an agricultural conservation easement through USDA's agricultural land easement program.
* An illegal marijuana garden was discovered on the Morelli Conservation Easement property near Petaluma and Rohnert Park. The District contacted law enforcement and two individuals were arrested. The property is currently being cleaned up and a restoration ecologist consultant is working with staff to evaluate the damage to the property; the District will ask him to propose some recommendations for required habitat restoration.
* A California Water Bond is on the ballot this November.. Much of the funding will be allocated to address the drought. $100 million is earmarked for the Coastal Conservancy and $285 million to Fish and Wildlife. There will be a future bond for Parks in 2016 that the District will be actively engaged in, working with legislators in the next year or two.

  **Proposal for Youth Engagement**

Bill Keene, General Manager, presented this item for Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager, who could not attend the meeting. Mr. Keene summarized the proposal: two youth representatives for one year terms; selection criteria developed by District staff and AC and approved by BOD’s; the recruitment and selection process will be conducted by the District with input from Health and Human Services; the outreach will extend to schools, green teams and student councils; the AC Executive Committee will be represented on the selection committee; the final recommended candidates will be approved by the BOD’s; propose to integrate the above into the upcoming Rules of Procedure update to the Board; the youth will be linked to a mentor on the Advisory Committee, and the mentor will commit to monthly meetings in advance of AC meetings and regular communication with the representative. The time line for the proposal is as follows: draft selection criteria to Advisory Committee at September AC meeting and finalize in October; the Rules of Procedure revisions will go to the Board in October; the recruitment will begin in October if approved by the Board; the selection would take place in November; the representatives would be approved by the Board in December, with the representatives in place by January 2015. There was discussion amongst the members, District staff and members of the public of the age group that would be considered. Ideas ranged from pre-teens, teens and early twenties. A vote was called for, and John Dell’Osso motioned and Gary Wysocky seconded the motion. Thirteen ayes, zero abstentions.

 **Management Review**

 Mr. Keene summarized the District Management Review that went to the Board and passed with a 5-0 vote last week. The consultants Moss Adams interviewed District staff, Advisory Committee members, Fiscal Oversight Commissioners, County Department Heads, and community stakeholders regarding the District and how it is performing by looking at all processes, procedures and activities. The review resulted in twenty recommendations. Some of these included better communication with the Board; public outreach; consolidating several plans that the District has already in place for more efficiency and effectiveness; and implementing a performance metrics system to measure the District’s work. Many of the recommendations were for actions that the District had already identified and begun work on. Next steps include developing an implementation plan for the recommendations and a time line over a number of years. There was discussion among the members.

**MGP Project Recommendations**

Chair Gallian summarized the process for this item: overview by presenter; Q&A’s with AC members; open to public comment; close public comment and back to AC members for more discussion, vote. She noted that there would be some recusals of members for certain projects.

Kristine Atkinson, Assistant Planner, Matching Grant Program, informed the Committee on the MGP Project Recommendations by providing a PowerPoint presentation. The District was authorized by Sonoma County voters via the District’s Expenditure Plan to administer a competitive matching grant program for the protection of urban open space in cities and other urban areas of the county. Since 1994 the program has awarded over $30 million in funding. The program cycles every two years and this year had a budget allocation of $3 million. The District received seven applications, requesting a little over $3.6 million. Ms. Atkinson and District staff met with the Advisory Committee Subcommittee two times to evaluate the applications and determine appropriate funding recommendations. Five projects have been recommended to receive full funding and two projects for partial funding. Ms. Atkinson provided an overview each project. The next steps include presentations to the Fiscal Oversight Commission on October 2nd and the Board on October 14th.

Chair Gallian opened up the meeting to the Advisory Committee for questions and answers. Many members had positive remarks on the program.

Chair Gallian opened up the meeting for public comments limiting each comment to three minutes. Many members of the public spoke of the projects that they were directly involved with or supportive of and had many positive remarks about the program as well.

Chair Gallian brought the meeting back to the Advisory Committee for further discussion. Chair Gallian and Mr. Keene agreed that the Committee could vote on all the projects at once and then each member who needed to be recused from a project would identify it.

Janet Orchard motioned to vote on the recommendations, and the motion was seconded by Gary Wysocky. All in favor, no oppositions. There were three abstentions: Laurie Gallian abstained from Nathanson Creek, Steve Rabinowitsh abstained from SMART and Lower Colgan Creek Phase 3 (“Colgan Creek”), and Gary Wysocky abstained from all city of Santa Rosa projects, including Colgan Creek.

Members were encouraged to attend the Board of Directors Meeting on October 14, 2014 in support of the Matching Grant Project Recommendations.

Members recommended that staff develop a strategy for allocating the approximate $400,000 left in the budget for this cycle to the two projects that received partial funding recommendations—Colgan Creek and Moorland Park. A suggestion for Colgan Creek included the possibility of increasing funding for the project if the City of Santa Rosa was able to secure additional matching funds. The members and District staff will evaluate the feasibility of increasing partial funding recommendations and how to bring this suggestion to the Board.

**Projects in Negotiations**

* Mr. Keene announced that the Board appointed Doug Lipton from Healdsburg as the second person to represent the fourth District and he will be in attendance at next month’s meeting. All 17 positions on the Advisory Committee are now filled.
* Colgan Creek second project is going to the Board for approval and then staff will move onto the third project.
* Sonoma Garden Park was approved by the Board
* The District is making offers to Jones Dairy and Foppiano Vineyards with the help of the USDA grant.
* Curreri is intended to close at the end of September.

 **Announcements From Advisory Committee Members**

 Steve Rabinowitsh

Southeast Greenway has turned a corner and Caltrans has rescinded the freeway plans. Southeast Greenway is in partnership with the City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Regional Parks and LandPaths. They are moving forward now to acquire the property from Caltrans.

The 5th Annual Creek Week celebration in Santa Rosa is taking place September 20-28. On the 27th there will be a tour through the underground culvert that runs under downtown Santa Rosa, from 10:00 to 11:00 if anyone wants to join Steve.

Kristin Thigpen

There is a District funded guided hike on September 13th at Tolay Lake Regional Park in Petaluma from 9:00 to 12:00. The tour will focus on the agricultural activities that have taken place at Tolay for the past 150 years. This is a park that is a good example of how recreation and agricultural work can benefit each other.

Shanti Edwards

There has been a lot of interest from the public to hike the newly acquired Pole Mountain by Sonoma Land Trust that is connected to Jenner. If anyone is interested in hiking Pole Mountain let Shanti know as the scheduled hikes are filling up quickly.

Don McEnhill

There is Russian River cleanup day on Saturday, September 27th starting at 8:30 am and involves picking up trash along the river. The deadline to register is September 21st.

 **Adjournment:** 6:58 pm

Next scheduled meeting date: September 25, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

 Mariah Robson,

Advisory Committee Secretary