



AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPROVED MINUTES

**Virtual Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order
September 23, 2021 | 5:00 pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Steve Rabinowitsh	Jan McFarland	John Nagle	Don McEnhill
Michelle Whitman	Bill Smith	Ariel Kelley	
Paul Martin	Curt Nichols	Kristina Tierney	
Tawny Tesconi	Doug Lipton	Cary Fargo	

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Neysa Hinton	Brian Barnacle	Sue Conley
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STAFF PRESENT:

Misti Arias, General Manager; Julie Mefferd, Administrative & Fiscal Services Manager; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Manager; Kim Batchelder, Vegetation Management Coordinator; Amy Ricard, Community Relations Specialist; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel

Call to Order

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

Public Comment

Chair Whitman asked for any public comments on items not on the agenda. Susan Kirks had a public comment on Paula Lane, stating that the badger's habitat continues to be seriously impacted and they are being misplaced. Ms. Kirks is working with Ag + Open Space staff and the City of Petaluma about this situation.

Approval of Minutes from July 22, 2021

Chair Whitman asked for any comments or revisions regarding the July 22, 2021 minutes. There were none. Paul Martin motioned for the minutes to be approved as is. Curt Nichols seconded the motion. All were in favor except Don McEnhill and Kristina Tierney who were not present at the July meeting. There were no public comments on the minutes.

General Manager's Report

- Misti Arias, General Manager, reported that the Ag + Open Space Stewardship Coordinator, Kathleen Marsh, recently retired and Jacob Newell has been promoted to this position and will be overseeing the conservation easement program area and will be attending a future meeting.
- Kim Batchelder has been promoted to the Vegetation Management Coordinator position. He will be overseeing the vegetation management funds from the PG&E settlement. Mr. Batchelder has been involved with trail design, land management, vegetation and forestry management, and assisted communities in South America to develop sustainable forest management practices.
- As part of the RCPP program, the Denner Ranch conservation easement has officially been selected for funding by NRCS' Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), for \$2.363 million. We are currently negotiating the terms of the easement.
- On September 28, 2021 we are requesting authorization from the Board for the General Manager to extend IPAOM and Matching Grant Program projects on a case by case basis. These extensions are intended to allow our project partners additional time to complete projects as capacity may have been limited directly as a result of the pandemic. We requested similar Board authorization following the 2017 fires.
- On September 28, 2021, we are also requesting authorization from the Board to contract with Hanford Applied Restoration and Conservation to create a shaded fuel break and to complete forest thinning activities at the 960-acre Saddle Mountain Open Space Preserve near northeast Santa Rosa.
- We will be presenting two conservation easements to the Fiscal Oversight Commission at the October meeting. El Recreo in the Mayacamas Mountains facing the Valley of the Moon, and Paulin Meadow, or Parcel J, off Chanate Road in Santa Rosa, in partnership with General Services.

Resolution of Appreciation of Doug Lipton

Ms. Arias read the Resolution of Appreciation of Doug Lipton, who has been representative of the fourth district since 2014. Staff and members spoke fondly of Doug's participation on the committee and will miss him.

Budget Review

Julie Mefferd, Administrative & Fiscal Services Manager, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the recommended budget that was adopted by the Board in April 2021 for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request, or contact Ms. Mefferd at Ag + Open Space.



Projects in Negotiations

El Recreo is going to the FOC at their October meeting, and will be at the Board soon after (if the landowner accepts our offer).

Ag + Open Space staff are finalizing conservation terms on Denner, LaFranchi (Laguna) and Mark West/Wikiup.

The Armstrong-Woods Ayers project is one where we will be working with State Parks to accept an addition to Armstrong.

Ag + Open Space staff are currently working on a transfer on Harotounian North.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members

John Nagle

Mr. Nagle asked when the Ag Subcommittee will be meeting. Ms. Arias replied that there are no meetings scheduled yet. Mary Chambers, Ag + Open Space Agricultural Specialist, will be the lead and will reach out to people.

Tawny Tesconi

Ms. Tesconi asked a question regarding drought challenges for farmers and wondered if there was anything from conservation easements regarding water availability, especially concerning dairies. Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Manager, has not heard anything specifically, just in general that farmers are suffering to get through the season. Stewardship staff are reaching out to landowners via a survey to see what assistance would be helpful.

Paul Martin

Donors to the Marin Agricultural Land Trust supported improvements aimed at extending ability to enhance water capability. Ms. Arias said that Ag + Open Space will explore this and will bring to the Ag Subcommittee.

Adjournment

Chair Whitman adjourned the meeting at 5:45.

Next Meeting: October 28, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson
Advisory Committee Secretary

