



Attachment "A"

***SONOMA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND OPEN SPACE  
DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

***February 25, 2016 MINUTES***

5:02 pm Meeting convened at the District office, 747 Mendocino Avenue,  
Suite 100, Santa Rosa, California

**Members Present**

Cary Fargo	Sue Conley	Steve Rabinowitsh	John Azevedo
Jan McFarland	John Nagle	Kristin Thigpen	Laurie Gallian
Janet Orchard	John Dell'Osso	Don McEnhill	Curt Nichols

**Members Absent**

Doug Lipton	Jeffrey Holtzman
Bill Smith	Gary Wysocky

**Staff Present**

Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager; Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisition Program Manager; Alex Roa, Assistant Planner; Robert Pittman, County Counsel; Lisa Pheatt, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Chair Steve Rabinowitsh called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

**Public Comment**

Teri Shore from Greenbelt Alliance announced that community separators will be renewed in Sonoma County and there will be the first of several public meetings held on March 2, 2016 at PRMD County offices, 2550 Ventura Ave, Santa Rosa from 4:00 to 6:00 pm with a workshop following the presentation. Ms. Shore provided Homegrown Reports to the committee to be handed out that supplied further information. A notice of the public workshop was also handed out.

Joe Netter spoke in regards to the Young-Armos site and the District's site selection process, the expenditure of funds for the project before going to the Board of Directors, and that Young-Armos is a community separator and open space and that Measure A&C never intended the property to be a commercial venture. He commented that the incubator farm on Young-Armos would disrupt the flora and fauna and would change the natural conditions of the site. He also voiced concerns of the impacts on the adjoining neighborhood. There were two public meetings in February but no prior communication to the neighbors. Mr. Netter asked that he and the adjoining neighbors be informed in the

future before any decisions are made, and that alternatives sites be considered. Mr. Netter provided a petition from the homeowners and residents of the Young-Armos area.

Trish Tatarian spoke on the Roseland Nature Park. She provided a letter to the committee in response to the City of Santa Rosa proposal for a public gathering space and other venues in the Roseland Creek Nature Park. Several neighbors in the Roseland area do not support the proposal from the City and would like the park to remain a nature park. Ms. Tatarian requested that the committee and District staff uphold the conservation easement that is over the park to help prevent the City's proposal.

Fred Krueger also spoke on the Roseland Nature Park and reiterated that several neighbors are not in favor of the City's proposal to create a public gathering space and stated that there is no acknowledgement of the neighbor's wishes and the original purpose of the park to remain a nature park. Mr. Krueger also requested help from District staff and the committee to retain the park as a conservation area.

Mary Balcerak also commented on the Roseland Nature Park and stated that she agreed with Trish Tatarian and Fred Krueger's comments.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of December 10, 2015 were approved as submitted.

### **General Manager's Report**

Bill Keene, General Manager, was absent and Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager, spoke in his absence.

- A regional grant was awarded to the District in the amount of approximately \$8 million. \$5.2 million will go to the District, and the remainder will go to the local Resource Conservation Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, with matching funds being provided by the Sonoma County Water Agency, the District and the Pepperwood Foundation.
- There were two public meetings last week on the Young-Armos Incubator Farm Project. Neighbors attended both meetings and some voiced their concerns about the project. While many are supportive of the idea of an incubator farm, some are opposed to placing it on this site. There were other members of the community – including some farmers – that attended the second meeting and expressed support for the idea. A lot of information was gathered in both meetings and the District and partners will now think carefully about how to incorporate this input and next steps. A meeting with the City of Rohnert Park will occur at the end of March to find out how they feel about the project.

### **Advisory Committee Administration**

#### a) Election of Committee Officers

Chair Rabinowitsh asked if there were any nominations for Chair.

Laurie Gallian nominated Steve Rabinowitsh and Don McEnhill seconded the nomination.

There was a vote and all were in favor, no oppositions or abstentions. Steve Rabinowitsh accepted the nomination

Chair Rabinowitsh asked if there were any nominations for Vice Chair. Cary Fargo nominated Laurie Gallian as Vice Chair and Janet Orchard seconded the nomination. There was a vote and all were in favor, no oppositions or abstentions. Laurie Gallian accepted the nomination.

Chair Rabinowitsh asked if there were any nominations for Chair Pro Tem. Don McEnhill nominated Kristin Thigpen as Chair Pro Tem and Sue Conley seconded the nomination. There was a vote and all were in favor, no oppositions or abstentions. Kristin Thigpen accepted the nomination.

b) Advisory Committee Rules of Procedures

Chair Rabinowitsh asked for a review of the Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure. Don McEnhill motioned to approve the Rules of Procedure and Jan McFarland seconded the motion. There was a vote and all were in favor, no oppositions or abstentions.

c) Ad Hoc Subcommittee Assignments

The committee began the formation of a Matching Grant Project Subcommittee. Chair Rabinowitsh asked for volunteers. John Dell'Osso volunteered and two absent members from this evening's meeting, Bill Smith and Jeffrey Holtzman, had expressed interest via email. Chair Rabinowitsh will bring this item back to next month's meeting to confirm and ask if there will be anymore volunteers.

The current Ag Subcommittee will continue. Laurie Gallian motioned to keep the subcommittee as is and Kristin Thigpen seconded the motion. There was a vote and all were in favor, no oppositions or abstentions.

d) Committee Calendar and Roster

Chair Rabinowitsh asked the members to review the calendar dates for meetings in 2016. No changes were made at this time.

### **Sub-committee Report Outs**

Sue Conley reported out for the Ag Subcommittee. They would like to continue all of the current members and would like to continue the committee for at least another year. The committee has a multi-year work plan that includes the incubator farm, an artisan cheese study in collaboration with Marin Agricultural Land Trust, value added agricultural easement structures, the Matching Grant Project, and the Farm and Nature Center.

### **Healthy Lands & Healthy Economies: Multiple Benefits of Working Lands and Natural Areas**

Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Program Manager, gave a presentation on Healthy Lands and Healthy Economies, which is a three county initiative including Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Sonoma.

For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available at the District upon request or you can contact Karen Gaffney with any questions.

### **Overview of New Acquisition Projects: Donnell and Sonoma Developmental Center**

Misti Arias, Acquisition Program Manager, presented an overview of two new acquisition projects, Donnell and Sonoma Developmental Center.

Donnell is a an approximately 900 acre portion of 4,000 acres of family owned property that is a highly visible scenic gateway into the County near Sonoma. It is a wildlife linkage with oaks,

agricultural crops, diverse scenery and a greenbelt. It would be a private conservation easement that would be open to trails.

The Sonoma Developmental Center is property that is currently owned by State of California Department of General Services. General Services leases the property to the Department of Developmental Services for the Sonoma Developmental Center. However, in October of last year, the Governor called for the closure of the Developmental Center. There is great concern and local interest in how to ensure the residents are cared for but also in the nearly 900 acres of open space on the property. A coalition of agencies and organizations led by Susan Gorin are advocating for protection of the land and continued care for the residents. There will be no legislation related to the land anytime soon. The land may go to Regional Parks or State Parks. The land is important and is the only connection to the Mayacamas for wildlife and offers wide scale habitat connectivity. There is no active acquisition strategy at this point.

### **Projects in Negotiations**

There were no report outs for projects in negotiations.

### **Announcements From Advisory Committee Members**

#### **Janet Orchard**

Ms. Orchard made an announcement for an absent public member, Susan Kirks, that there is a presentation on March 3, 2016 from 7:00 to 8:30 at the Laguna Environmental Center in Santa Rosa on the True Nature of the American Badger. Ms. Orchard passed out flyers on the event.

#### **Steve Rabinowitsh**

The Bay Nature's Local Hero Awards Dinner is taking place on March 20, 2016 from 5:30 to 8:30 in San Francisco and the District has two tickets available to anyone on the committee who is interested in attending.

The Artisan Cheese Festival is taking place on March 19 and 20, 2016 and the District is sponsoring the event that will take place at the Sheridan. The District will have a booth there and Karen Gaffney asked if any of the committee members would like to help out at the event.

#### **Laurie Gallian**

The Mayors' and Councilmembers' has restructured their meetings and have decreased the number of meetings per year due to costs.

#### **Misti Arias**

The Sonoma County Food Forum will take place on March 17, 2016.

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**Adjournment:** 6:49 pm

Next scheduled meeting date: March 24, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson,  
Advisory Committee Secretary