



AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Online Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order

August 27, 2020 | 5:00 pm

MEMBERS PLEASE CALL IF UNABLE TO ATTEND

In accordance with Executive Order N-29-20, the August 27, 2020 Advisory Committee meeting will be held virtually via Zoom.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC MAY NOT ATTEND THIS MEETING IN PERSON

***UPDATE REGARDING VIEWING AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN
AUGUST 27, 2020 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING***

The August 27, 2020 Advisory Committee Meeting will be held online through Zoom. There will be no option for attending in person. Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting using one of the following methods:

Join the Zoom meeting on your computer, tablet or smartphone by clicking:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/96710296691?pwd=V2JtVkZzSFRUWE93c2MySFhaN2pXZz09>

1. If you have the Zoom app or web client, join the meeting using the Password: 961285
2. Call-in and listen to the meeting: Dial 1 669 900 9128 Enter meeting ID: 967 1029 6691

PUBLIC COMMENT DURING THE MEETING: You may email public comment to Mariah.Robson@sonoma-county.org. All emailed public comments will be forwarded to all Committee Members and read aloud for the benefit of the public. Please include your name and the relevant agenda item number to which your comment refers. In addition, if you have joined as a member of the public through the Zoom link or by calling in, there will be specific points throughout the meeting during which live public comment may be made via Zoom and phone.

DISABLED ACCOMMODATION: If you have a disability which requires an accommodation or an alternative format to assist you in observing and commenting on this meeting, please contact Mariah Robson by email to Mariah.Robson@sonoma-county.org by 12pm Wednesday, August 26, 2020 to ensure arrangements for accommodation.

END OF UPDATE

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Public Comment**
Comments on items not listed on the agenda. Time is limited to 3 minutes per person/item.
3. **Approval of Minutes from June 25, 2020 Attachment A**
4. **General Manager's Report**
5. **Subcommittee Report Out**
Matching Grant Program
6. **Grazing Program**
Kathleen Marsh, Stewardship Supervisor
Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Manager
7. **Matching Grant Program ASAP Program Attachment B**
Misti Arias, Acquisition Manager
Jen Kuszmar, Matching Grant Coordinator
8. **Matching Grant Program ASAP Program Committee Designation**
Jen Kuszmar, Matching Grant Coordinator
9. **Projects in Negotiation Attachment C**
10. **Announcements from Advisory Committee Members**
11. **Adjournment**
Next Scheduled Meeting: September 24, 2020



*** FUTURE MEETING TOPICS**
(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

9/24/20

Update on Work with Agriculture
Vital Lands Initiative Next Steps

10/22/20

Vital Lands Initiative Update
Matching Grant Program ASAP Update

11/25/20

Thanksgiving Break – No November Meeting

12/10/20

Matching Grant Program Recommendations

1/28/21

Acquisition Update
Vital Lands Initiative Implementation Strategy
Fire and Fuel Loading

2/1/21

Admin Fiscal Update
Legislative Update





AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Virtual Meeting Due to Sonoma County's Shelter in Place Order
June 25, 2020 | 5:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Smith	Tawny Tesconi	Evan Wiig	Paul Martin	Don McEnhill
Curt Nichols	Taj Hittenberger	Jennielynn Holmes	Leah Gold	Neysa Hinton
John Dell'Osso	Cary Fargo	Michelle Whitman	John Nagle	Jan McFarland

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Austin Maners
Doug Lipton

STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Keene, General Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisition Manager; Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Manager; Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Manager; Kim Batchelder, Conservation Associate Planner; Allison Schichtel, Senior Conservation Planner; Sara Ortiz, Administrative Aide; Catherine Iantosca, Stewardship Technician; Taylor Acosta, Stewardship Technician; Aldo Mercado, County Counsel; Mariah Robson, Advisory Committee Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Dell'Osso called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Public Comment

Susan Kirks from the Paula Lane Network nonprofit organization requested assistance in communicating with the City of Petaluma regarding Paula Lane.

Approval of Minutes

Michelle Whitman motioned to approve the minutes from May 28, 2020 as is, and Cary Fargo seconded the motion. All were in favor, with three abstentions from Jennielynn Holmes, Neysa Hinton, and Don McEnhill who were not in attendance at the May meeting.

General Manager's Report Out

- Renewal of the Ag + Open Space office building lease will go to the Board on July 14, 2020.
- The Board is holding budget workshops on July 27 and 28, 2020. The Ag + Open Space presentation will be on July 28, 2020 at 2:00 pm.

- The Torr acquisition with Regional Parks will go to the Board on September 22, 2020. This property is adjacent to Monti Rio above the school on Bohemian Highway.
- Since the last Advisory Committee meeting there have been several marches and protests. Ag + Open Space will be having internal Equity, Diversity and Inclusion discussions and actions. This will come to the Advisory Committee at a future date. The County of Sonoma has created and approved a new department for Equity and will hire an officer and staff. This will go to the Board on July 7, 2020 for final approval and should be up and running in the next couple of months. The Matching Grant Program is developing an equity lens which will be discussed in the Matching Grant Program Subcommittee meetings and then will be brought to a future full Advisory Committee meeting.
- Ag + Open Space is working with Dr. Robert Eyler, an economist from Sonoma State, on the COVID-19 effects on Sonoma County agriculture.
- The 2020 Matching Grant Program cycle is moving forward with an extended application deadline of August 31, 2020. We are recommending up to \$4 million in awards this cycle. The Matching Grant Program Subcommittee members for the 2020 MGP cycle will be selected at the September Advisory Committee and Fiscal Oversight Commission meetings, after all the MGP applications are received. Counsel will review financial and incompatible conflicts of interest as well as perceived conflicts. Staff will provide a list of the applicants for the 2020 MGP funding cycle so that AC and FOC members can disclose any conflicts they may have prior to selection of the Subcommittee. Tentative dates for the Subcommittee meetings are October 13, November 3, and December 15, 2020. Subcommittee members will work with staff to develop preliminary funding recommendations that will be presented at meetings of the full AC and FOC and ultimately to the Board.
- On July 14, 2020 Ag + Open Space is taking an item to the Board in response to Board member requests during our update in May. In response to the impacts of COVID-19 on Sonoma County Agricultural producers, Ag + Open Space proposes to offer an emergency grant program targeted at protecting agricultural lands and operations at-risk of land conversion to non-agricultural uses. If approved, we will allocate up to \$1 million in emergency grant funding to support farmers and ranchers. These grant funds will go toward ensuring agricultural lands remain productive so they can continue to provide access to locally grown food and fiber, contribute to our local economy, and keep farming and ranching viable in Sonoma County. Funds awarded through this program will be targeted to stabilize conditions created by the COVID-19 crisis that imperil local farms by offering direct aid to farmers or landowners who can show the assistance will keep their agricultural land in production. Since the start of our local shelter in place orders, staff have been in regular communication with local agricultural groups including the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Community Alliance for Family Farmers, the Farmer's Guild, and FEED Sonoma. This emergency grant program will draw upon local expertise to understand the problems facing local farmers due to the pandemic. If the program is approved by the Board, staff will move quickly to launch the program and will conduct additional outreach to Sonoma County farmers and ranchers notifying them of this emergency funding opportunity.



- Ag + Open Space offices will be open starting July 7, 2020 for 20 hours a week from 9:00 to 1:00 Monday through Friday. There are new safeguards including an intercom to have outside visitors check in and answer questions and take their temperature before entering in order to have control of entrance to the building.

Subcommittee Report Out

The Advisory Committee currently has one active subcommittee, the Matching Grant Program. The subcommittee has not met since the last Advisory Committee meeting and will reconstitute once the Matching Grant Program applications are received after August 31, 2020.

County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Karen Gaffney, Conservation Planning Manager, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the County Hazard Mitigation Plan. She explained Ag + Open Space's role, implication, intent and purpose. Committee members asked questions and made comments after the presentation. For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request, or contact Ms. Gaffney.

Carrington Ranch Transfer

Misti Arias, Acquisition Manager, introduced the Carrington Ranch Transfer PowerPoint presentation. Carrington Ranch is in process of being transferred to Regional Parks. Catherine Iantosca, Stewardship Technician, presented the PowerPoint presentation. Carrington Ranch was purchased in 2003 by Ag + Open Space and was originally slated to be transferred to State Parks prior to their financial problems. Regional Parks stepped up to take it and it has just been approved and will be transferred by September 2020. For more information, the PowerPoint presentation is available upon request, or contact Ms. Iantosca.

Projects in Negotiation

Two projects will go to the Fiscal Oversight Commission in July 2020, and then to the Board: Mattos Dairy and Joseph Camozzi Dairy. These are projects that Ag + Open Space has been working on for a long time.

Announcements from Advisory Committee Members and Members of the Public

No announcements.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 pm.

Next Meeting: August 27, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Robson
Advisory Committee Secretary





COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/14/2020

To: Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Staff Name and Phone Number: Misti Arias, 565-7264
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Agricultural Support and Protection Emergency Grant Program

Recommended Action:

Direct Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District staff to develop and implement an emergency matching grant program to ensure that local farmers and ranchers can continue productive use of Sonoma County's agricultural lands through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Executive Summary:

In response to the impacts of COVID-19 on the Sonoma County agricultural community, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Ag+ Open Space) proposes to offer a \$1 million Agricultural Support and Protection (ASAP) Emergency Matching Grant Program. The ASAP Emergency Matching Grant Program will be targeted at protecting agricultural lands at-risk of land conversion to non-agricultural uses by supporting existing operations that are vulnerable to failure as a direct result of the pandemic.

Discussion:

COVID-19 has affected nearly all aspects of life in Sonoma County. Our local agricultural community has suffered direct economic impacts as a result. Disruptions in the food system, including the supply chain, processing and storage capacity are testing the operational limits of local farmers, ranchers, and producers.

In response to the Board's request that staff explore options to assist the Sonoma County agricultural community during this challenging time, Ag + Open Space staff propose that the Board 1) approve the creation of the ASAP Emergency Matching Grant Program and 2) allocate up to \$1 million toward the Program. If approved, the ASAP program will support farmers and ranchers who can demonstrate that, as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lands they farm or ranch may go fallow or be devoted to non-agricultural uses without the requested financial assistance. Funds awarded through the ASAP Emergency Matching Grant Program will go toward keeping agricultural lands productive to support continued access to locally grown food and fiber and keep farming and ranching viable in Sonoma County. Funds awarded through this program will be targeted to stabilize conditions created by the COVID-19 crisis that imperil local farms by offering direct aid to farmers or landowners who can show the assistance will keep their agricultural land in production.

Sonoma County farmers, ranchers, and producers whose agricultural operations have been acutely affected by the global pandemic are eligible to apply for funding. Applications from public agencies, nonprofits, and other agricultural associations that support local agriculture are also eligible but must demonstrate how funding would directly support continued agricultural operations. Applications that offer to protect agricultural lands through conservation easements and/or affirmative agricultural covenants will receive special consideration. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate how their agricultural operations have been negatively impacted as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and must show how emergency funding from Ag + Open Space will keep their operations going for the duration of the grant period. The goal of the program is to support a broad range of stakeholders who can commit to keeping the County's diverse agricultural lands in production. Specific conditions for recommended grants will be developed by staff in response to the variables presented by the diverse applicant pool, but the grant agreements will generally require accountability measures to ensure Ag + Open Space's funds directly support stable and productive uses of local farmland for the duration of the grant period. In order to ensure Ag + Open Space's investment of public funds results in the continuance of Sonoma County's vibrant agricultural community, grant recipients will receive reimbursement payments for qualified expenses only if they demonstrate continued agricultural production.

Since the start of local shelter in place orders, Ag + Open Space staff have been in regular communication with local agricultural groups, including but not limited to the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Community Alliance for Family Farmers, the Farmer's Guild, and F.E.E.D. Sonoma. The ASAP Emergency Matching Grant Program will draw upon local expertise to understand the problems facing local farmers due to the pandemic. Following the Board's approval of this item, staff will move quickly to develop selection criteria and application requirements. Staff will consider the best available data on the impacts of COVID-19 on Sonoma County agriculture and will work with our partners in agriculture, including the Agricultural Advisory Team, to inform the program. Further, staff will conduct targeted outreach to Sonoma County farmers, ranchers, and producers notifying them of this emergency funding opportunity.

It is anticipated that participants in our local agricultural economy have needs that far outweigh the funding Ag + Open Space is able to provide through this emergency funding. Staff will prioritize applications that provide the greatest community benefit, as measured by comparison to the remainder of the applicant pool. Further, staff will continue to work with willing landowners to protect agricultural lands throughout Sonoma County, especially those most at risk for conversion to non-agricultural uses, as Ag + Open Space has done for nearly 30 years.

This item requests the Board to direct Ag + Open Space staff to initiate the implementation of a \$1 million ASAP Emergency Matching Grant Program and to develop program materials, including application and evaluation criteria. The request for grant applications and the evaluation process will be accelerated due to the nature of this program. Recommendations for grant awards will be presented to your Board for approval as soon as possible.

Ag + Open Space Expenditure Plan

The ASAP Emergency Grant Program is consistent with Paragraphs 3 and 5 of the Ag + Open Space Expenditure Plan. Paragraph 3 authorizes expenditures to protect “agriculturally productive lands,” defined to include “working farms and ranches, and other lands used for the production of food, fiber and plant materials and the raising and maintaining of livestock and farm animals.” Paragraph 5 authorizes expenditures to undertake a potentially broad range of “other open space projects” through matching grants. Although the Matching Grant Program is usually applied to fund urban open space and recreation projects within and near incorporated or urbanized areas, staff propose a limited one-time expansion of the program to preserve agricultural land uses as “other open space projects” in this unique emergency circumstance.

Connecting Communities and the Land

The proposed ASAP Emergency Funding Program advances goals established by the planning document *Connecting Communities and the Land*, which includes the following goals objectives, and policies:

- Support the economic vitality of working farms to preserve the agricultural heritage and diversity of the county.
- Protect the diverse agricultural character and heritage of Sonoma County.
- Support the continued viability of farms and ranches.
- Provide incentives for farmers and ranchers to remain in agriculture.
- Facilitate the continued agricultural use of farms and ranches.

Vital Lands Initiative

Though not yet formally adopted, Ag + Open Space’s draft long-range plan, The Vital Lands Initiative, has a primary goal and associated objectives that also support the creation of this program, including the following:

- Protect lands that support diverse, sustainable, and productive agriculture
- Support access to land for farmers and ranchers.
- Support agricultural use on Ag + Open Space protected lands.

Strategic Plan Alignment

- The ASAP Emergency Grant Program most closely aligns with the Strategic Priority to “Secure Our Safety Net.” Though not necessarily anticipated at the time these priorities were set, COVID-19 has shaken the foundation of our community and economy, including our valuable agricultural community.

Prior Board Actions:

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		1,000,000	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		1,000,000	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		1,000,000	
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources		1,000,000	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This amount is appropriated in the proposed FY 20-21 budget for capital acquisition. It will not impact projects expected to close in FY 20-21 and will not come from the \$4 million dollars allocated to the Matching Grant Program.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Attachments:

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

Project Status Chart
8/21/2020

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

PROJECT	Acreage (approximate)	Supervisory District	Acquisition Plan Category	Project Design	Appraisal Process	Approvals/Baseline	Escrow	Comments
Arrowhead Ranch (Maas)	245	2	Farms & Ranches	x				On hold at request of owner
El Recreo	289	1	Greenbelts & Scenic Hillside	x	x			Appraisal process
Joseph Camozzi Dairy	403	2	Farms & Ranches	x	x			SALCP grant.
LaFranchi (Oak Ridge Angus)	1,189	4	Farms & Ranches	x				CE under negotiation
Mattos Dairy	866	2	Farms & Ranches	x	x			Negotiating deal terms
McClelland Dairy	337	2	Farms & Ranches	x				CE under negotiation
McCormick	253	1	Water, Wildlife & Natural Areas	x	x			Appraisal process
Paulin Meadow (Parcel J)	10	1	Water, Wildlife & Natural Areas	x				CE under negotiation
Preston Farm	133	4	Farms & Ranches	x				CE under negotiation
Sonoma Developmental Center 5 (Transfor	945	1	Greenbelts & Scenic Hillside					Land protection proposal underway
Torr	316	5	Recreation & Education	x	x	x	x	BOD has approved acquisition.
Witt Home Ranch	395	2	Farms & Ranches	x	x	x	x	Initiating project

Total Acres: 5,381

Matching Grant Projects	Acreage (approximate)	Supervisory District	Location	Begin Grant Process	Appraisal Process	Approvals/Baseline	Escrow	Comments
AmeriCorps Trail	12	5	Sebastopol		n/a			Initiating project
Andy's Unity Park	4	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x				Escrow closed in 2017. Tracking match
Badger Park	20	4	Healdsburg					Initiating project
Bayer Farm Development***	6**	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	x	x	x	Reimbursement ongoing, Grant term extended
Colgan Creek Phase 3 MG***	7	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a	x	x	Extension granted to 10/14/21
Crane Creek Regional Trail*	6	1	East of Rohnert Park	x	n/a			Drafting documents. Grant extended to 12/6/21
Denman Reach	2	2	North Petaluma	x	n/a			Drafting documents
Falletti Ranch	4	2	Cotati	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
Forever Forestville***	4	5	Downtown Forestville	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
Graton Green	1	5	Downtown Graton	x	x	x		Escrow closed April 5, 2019. Tracking match.
Guerneville River Park Phase 2***	5	5	Central Guerneville	x	x	x		Initiating project; processing extension request
Helen Putnam Regional Park Extension	56	2	Petaluma					Initiating project
Maxwell Farms	79	1	Northwest of Sonoma	x	n/a			Drafting Documents
McNear Peninsula Addition	21	2	Petaluma					Drafting documents
Paula Lane Open Space Preserve	11	2	West Petaluma	x	x	x	x	Tracking match
River Lane***	1	5	West of Guerneville	x	x	x	x	Finalizing docs; Grant extended to 10/25/24
Riverfront Regional Park Recreation Impro	300**	4	West of Windsor	x	n/a			Initiating project; processing extension request
Roseland Creek Community Park - Phase 1	3	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	x			Drafting documents, appraisal review
Roseland Village Public Space***	1	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a			Drafting documents
Southeast Santa Rosa Greenway***	61	1	Southeast Santa Rosa	x		x		Initiating project; project extended to 10/25/24
SMART Pathway – Hearn to Bellevue*	6	5	Southwest Santa Rosa	x	n/a	x		Finalizing documents
SMART Pathway - Payran to S. Point	14	2	Petaluma	x	n/a			Documents to SMART for review
Steamer Landing Park Development (McNe	27**	2	Downtown Petaluma	x	n/a			Initiating project
Taylor Mtn ROSP - Cooper Creek Addition	54	3	Southeast Santa Rosa	x				Closed 4/1/20. Tracking match
Total Acres:	236							

* District approved a 2-year extension

** Restoration/Development Project on previous acquisition.