

SONOMA COUNTY OPEN SPACE FISCAL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS

Mike Sangiacomo (Sonoma)
Todd Mendoza (Petaluma)
Regina De La Cruz (Rohnert Park)

Bob Anderson (Healdsburg)
Eric Koenigshofer (Occidental)
Jeff Owen (Alternate)

Regular Meeting
747 Mendocino Avenue – Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401
February 8, 2018 5:00 pm

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order.**
2. **Election of Officers.** [Minute Order 16]
Minute Order approving election of officers
3. **Agenda Items to be Held or Taken Out of Order; Off-Agenda Items.**
4. **General Announcements Not Requiring Deliberation or Decision.**
5. **Public Comment.**
The Brown Act requires that time be set aside for public comment on items not agendized.
6. **Correspondence/Communication.**
7. **Approval of Commission Minutes.** [Attachment 1]
8. **Ad Hoc Committee Reports.**
 - Annual Report/Audit Report Review (Anderson, Owen)
 - Matching Grant Program (Owen)
 - Finances (Owen, Sangiacomo)
 - Review of County Services (Mendoza, Koenigshofer)
 - Management Review Recommendations (Anderson, Koenigshofer)
 - Stewardship (Mendoza, Sangiacomo)
9. **Creation of Ad Hoc Committees for 2018 and Assignment of Commissioners.**
10. **District's Role and Response to the 2017 Sonoma County Complex Fires.** [Attachment 2]
11. **Closed Session.**
Conference with Property Manager
Property: Lang & Guttman (Safari West)
Address: 3115 Porter Creek Road, Santa Rosa
APNs: 079-020-048 and 049
Address: 4000 Porter Creek Road, Santa Rosa

APN: 028-070-032, Santa Rosa

Owner: Safari West

Negotiating Parties:

Owners' Representative: Rob Schepergerdes,

District's Representative: William J. Keene, General Manager

Under Negotiation:

Acquisition of Interest in Real Property by the Open Space District. The Commission will give instruction to its negotiator(s) on the price. (*Government Code Section 54956.8*)

12. **Report on Closed Session.**

13. **Suggested Next Meeting.** March 8, 2018

14. **Adjournment.**

In compliance with Government Code §54954.2(a), the Sonoma County Open Space Fiscal Oversight Commission will, on request, make this agenda available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by Section 202 of the ADA of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §12132), and the Federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. Individuals who need this agenda in another format or need a disability-related modification or accommodation should contact Sue Jackson at 707.565.7346 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting to ensure arrangements for accommodation. Pursuant to Government Code § 54957.5, a copy of all documents related to an item on this agenda submitted to the Fiscal Oversight Commission may be obtained from the Fiscal Oversight Commission office, 747 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

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UNAPPROVED

Minutes for the Meeting of January 18, 2018

Commissioners Present: Mike Sangiacomo, (Chair Pro Tempore); Bob Anderson, Eric Koenigshofer, Jeff Owen (Alternate)

Staff Present: Bill Keene, General Manager; Mary Dodge, Administration and Fiscal Services Manager; Misti Arias, Acquisition Program Manager; Stuart Martin, Land Acquisition Specialist; Kathleen Marsh, Stewardship Coordinator; Robert Pittman, Assistant County Counsel; Sue Jackson, Deputy Clerk.

1. **Call to Order.**

Commissioner Sangiacomo called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

2. **Election of Officers.**

The item was held over to the February meeting.

3. **Agenda Items to be Held or Taken Out of Order; Off Agenda Items.**

There were none.

4. **General Announcements Not Requiring Deliberation or Decision.**

Mr. Keene made the following announcements:

- The District has adopted a new logo, designed to more accurately reflect its mission and the work we do on behalf of the community. We have abbreviated our name to make it simpler and easier to remember. Sonoma County Ag + Open Space (pronounced “Sonoma County Ag and Open Space”) is now our official shorthand name, and will soon appear on our communications. The new tagline – Land for Life – speaks to the value our protected lands bring to all living things in Sonoma County, as well as the perpetual nature of our land conservation work.
- On December 19, 2017, the Board of Supervisors/Board of Directors established the “Office of Recovery and Resiliency,” which will be charged with managing and coordinating post-fire recovery efforts as well as enhancing the County’s overall resiliency to meet future disasters. Staffing positions were allocated to the Office of Recovery and Resiliency. One position will be managed and funded equally by the District and the Sonoma County Water Agency. On January 16, 2018, a “Strategic Priorities Retreat” was held to address the

continuing recovery efforts. Commissioner Anderson was a participant in the retreat. On February 13, 2018, a workshop will be held to further define priorities and actions of the new Office of Recovery and Resiliency.

Notes:

Commissioner Anderson requested that the Commission be debriefed on the District's contribution to the fire recovery effort.

Commissioner Koenigshofer requested an assessment of the fire's impact on District properties and the impact on the District's portfolio.

Alternate Commissioner Owen requested an update on the fire's impact to the District's budget, related to specific line items, e.g., maintenance, service, supplies, etc.

Mr. Keene will ask Sheri Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager, to respond with an update to the Commission.

5. **Public Comment.**

There was none.

6. **Correspondence/Communication.**

There was none.

7. **Approval of Commission Minutes.**

On a motion by Commissioner Anderson and second by Alternate Commissioner Owen, the minutes were approved with one correction, i.e., 14. Adjournment – the time was corrected.

8. **Financial Report.**

Ms. Dodge reviewed the SCAPOSD Pooled Investment Program – First Quarter 2017-2018, and the Consolidated Financial Statements for September, October, and November 2017.

9. **Ad Hoc Committee Reports.**

- Annual Report/Audit Review (Anderson/Owen)
The committee met on October 23, 2017, and on November 1, 2017 to review the audit report. Ms. Dodge will provide detail at the February regular meeting.
- Finance/Investment (Sangiaco/Owen) – Nothing to report.
- Matching Grant Program (De La Cruz/Owen) – Nothing to report.
- District Office Location Scenarios (Anderson/Koenigshofer) - Nothing to report.

10. **Creation of Ad Hoc Committees for 2018 and Assignment of Commissioners.**

The item was held over to the February meeting.

11. **Closed Session.**

The Commission adjourned to Closed Session at 6:03 pm.

12. **Report on Closed Session.**

Resolution No. 2017-007

The Commission reconvened to Open Session at 7:10 pm. and reported that additional direction was given to staff.

13. **Suggested Next Meeting.** February 8, 2018

14. **Adjournment.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m. to February 8, 2018 at 5:000 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Jackson
Deputy Clerk



AG + OPEN SPACE
SONOMA COUNTY

Memorandum

Date: January 31, 2018 (Meeting date of February 8, 2018)
To: Fiscal Oversight Commission
From: Sheri J. Emerson, Stewardship Program Manager
Subject: District's Role and Response to the 2017 Sonoma County Complex Fires

The 2017 Sonoma County Complex Fires began on October 8, 2017. Overnight, 110,000 acres burned, over 7,000 structures were damaged or destroyed, and, most tragically, many lives were lost. Billions of dollars in damage was caused by the fires. Sonoma County continues to struggle to adapt to this new, post-fire reality.

District-protected natural and working lands were also affected by the fires. Fortunately, these areas already are showing signs of recovery. Nineteen District-held conservation easements (22 ownerships, over 4,609 acres) and eight open space easements (20 ownerships, over 532 acres) were affected by the fire. Six District-owned properties, totaling 2,176 acres, also burned.

District's Role in the Response

As a result of the fires, approximately half of the District's staff was displaced, and several sustained damage to their homes. Several schools were closed for weeks. The entire fabric of the community was affected by this disaster.

Communications were challenging at first. Text messaging worked best, as some staff had limited or no cell service. The District implemented a 'text' tree, with managers contacting each of their staff daily for updates on status, availability to work, and to relay any important information that needed to be shared. Updates and new information were then provided from each manager to the General Manager. Constant communications during the weeks immediately following the fires and regular communications from the District's General Manager to staff helped to ensure that all District staff was informed as conditions changed.

The structure of the coordinated local, state, and federal emergency response was established in the early days of the emergency. Beginning on October 9, 2017, many District staff members volunteered at shelters, and were assigned to various roles at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). District staff also worked as part of the GIS Unit of the EOC's Plans Section team during initial response to the Sonoma County Complex Fires. They were responsible for mapping evacuation routes, Code Red evacuation zones, CalFire repopulation zones, shelter location and status, and Commodity Points of Distribution. They also worked at the Large Animal Evacuation Center, the Public Information Center, CalFire Headquarters, as volunteer firefighters and at the Local Assistance Center. In total, District staff provided over 1100 hours of service.

The District continues to have a role in support of the City/County Watershed Task Force, as part of the Operations Section (as District-owned land was affected by the fires) and the Planning Section (including data collection and mapping). The District was asked to convene non-governmental organizations, watershed groups, and the Sonoma and Gold Ridge Resource Conservation Districts to ensure that these organizations were engaged as part of the County's watershed recovery efforts. This Watershed Collaborative included five working groups focused on various subject areas, and the resulting input was compiled by District staff into the *Living in a Fire Adapted Landscape: Priorities for Resilience* report.

Damage to District-protected property

The high winds of October 8th and 9th, in combination with the topography of the Mark West Springs/Porter Creek Road area resulted in the Tubbs fire being blown through very quickly, in a footprint very similar to 1964 Hanley fire. The Nuns fire, with an origination point very near to the District's Calabazas Creek Preserve property, burned within a footprint similar to the fire of the same name that occurred in 1964, simultaneous with the Hanley. In general, chaparral and ridgeline areas burned the most severely, with the grasslands and riparian areas burning less severely.

Within a few weeks of the start of the fires, the District had reached out to easement landowners, to check in on how they were doing, and to connect them with resources from the Local Assistance Center, CalFire, Resource Conservation Districts, National Resource Conservation Service, and others that could be helpful. In the months that followed, District staff began conducting monitoring visits to document post-fire condition of easement properties.

Within a few days of the start of the fires, a handful of District staff had visited the Mark West properties. Access to burned areas was restricted, as many roads were blocked or otherwise impassable. Two District-owned structures were lost in the Tubbs fire, including a barn at the Cresta Ranch property and an old house site at the McCullough property. Many trees were damaged or had fallen on District-owned properties, with additional trees at risk of falling. As

time passed, additional damage to the properties was discovered, including multiple plastic culverts that had melted on the Mark West Creek properties, causing or threatening to cause road failures.

District staff completed a rapid assessment of damage and burn severity on the District-owned properties, and identified and began implementation of necessary work and repairs. Most urgent was the securing of the burned structure sites so that no runoff could reach nearby streams (including a tributary to Porter Creek on Cresta, and the main stem of Mark West Creek on McCullough). Erosion control blankets and biodegradable wattles were placed where needed to prevent additional sediment from entering the streams.

Also urgent was the replacement of the melted culverts. District staff consulted with adjacent landowners and contracted with consultant staff to design an initial series of culvert replacements, and then secured emergency regulatory permits from natural resource agency staff. The District is currently in the design process for a second series of culvert replacements.

Hazard tree removal was completed by CalFire crews along Calabazas Creek, and contractors on the Mark West Creek properties. The District will continue to remove hazard trees as needed to keep roads and trails passable on the properties.

District staff will be continuing to work with County and state and federal agency staff on the monitoring of steep slopes through this and the next few rainy seasons. The risk of debris flows and flooding, especially in the Mark West Creek area and below Hood Mountain, is of major concern. The District has been coordinating with the County's Joint Information Center on an early warning system for landowners and residents living within and downstream of these areas.

Vegetation monitoring will be conducted in the coming months and years to track recovery on District-owned properties. The natural areas are already showing signs of recovery, with grass returning, sprouts growing from bases of chaparral species, and oaks and other trees starting to show new growth.

The District is focusing on addressing invasive species as soon as possible this coming spring, to take advantage of the opportunity presented within the burned areas towards gaining control of these populations. Target species include yellow star thistle at Calabazas, Himalayan blackberry along Mark West Creek, and Harding grass at the Dogbane preserve. Fire suppression activities at the District's Keegan-Coppin property resulted in disturbed soil, which may end up causing more invasive species to take hold. This property will be monitored through the coming months.

Reimbursement of costs

District employees were requested by the County to work in various emergency response capacities. Therefore, the District, a separate legal entity from the County of Sonoma, entered into a mutual aid agreement with the County. This action allowed the District to qualify for reimbursement via the FEMA Public Assistance Program. These emergency response activities are not included in the Expenditure Plan funding limitations. Additionally, the District is in process of filing a request with FEMA for reimbursement of costs associated with damage to District-owned property. Removal of burned structure debris is covered by property insurance, but erosion control, culvert replacement, tree removal, is not. These costs should be reimbursable under FEMA public assistance program. The estimated amount of labor costs to be reimbursed through the mutual aid agreement is between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The estimated project work eligible for FEMA reimbursement is anticipated to be between \$150,000 and \$200,000. The costs of work done by the District during and after the fire are covered under current budget appropriations.

The District is also looking at some larger initiatives, in collaboration with other organizations that could be funded through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Constraints include not starting the work until grant award (approximately 9 months from application date) and the work must be completed 36 months from the award date.

Moving forward

Looking forward, the District will have a priority focus on fuels reduction activities at all District properties (primarily Saddle Mountain, Paulin Creek, potentially others). Most District-owned properties already have grazing operations in place to manage vegetation.

The District is actively working with partners on improving the information available to support future response and overall resiliency to wildfires. For example, the District is providing access to District-owned properties for installation of rain and stream gages by USGS and SCWA, to help with more accurate rainfall data to inform flood and debris flow warning systems. The District will also collaborate with County ISD and Sonoma County Water Agency to obtain updated aerial imagery, and anticipates a final product in March or April of 2018. The District will also work with collaborators to use the fine scale vegetation and habitat map and LiDAR data to evaluate the correlation between burn severity/intensity and land cover/land management, the response of vegetation communities to the fire, and loss of carbon associated with the fire. The District and its partners were recently awarded \$90,000 in grant funding from NASA to implement this project.

The District is also providing support to the County's Office of Fire Recovery and Resiliency, funding half of the Natural Resources/Watershed Recovery Coordinator position for a term of two years. The Coordinator will be dedicated to working on efforts tied to agricultural and open

space lands, and the protection and resilience of the County's critical water and species resources. In addition to tracking state and federal legislative activity and communication strategies related to disaster recovery and resilience, the Coordinator will work on the integration of existing plans, such as the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District's *Vital Lands Initiative* and the Watershed Collaborative's *Living in a Fire Adapted Landscape* report, into the County's Recovery and Resilience Plan; will actively collaborate with other County agencies in the development of the recovery and resiliency plan; and will seek and incorporate input from the Watershed Collaborative.

Information gathered during the 2017 Sonoma County Complex Fires and the following months, and years, is being incorporated into the District's Vital Lands Initiative work products. In addition, the District's Emergency Response Action Plan is currently being updated by the District's Safety Committee, so that lessons learned during this disaster can be applied towards enhancing the District's response and resilience to the next.