



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE, FUNDING, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Administrative Office
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

*The Board of Directors conducted this meeting in accordance with
California Government Code section 54953.*

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair MacNiven called the meeting of the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Jed Cyr, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, and Margaret MacNiven

Members absent: None

Staff present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson, Governmental Affairs Specialist Joshua Hugg, Public Affairs Manager Korrine Skinner, Program Manager Deborah Hirst, and Senior Grants and Procurement Technician Samantha Powell

Chair MacNiven announced this meeting is being held in accordance with Government Code section 54953. The public has the opportunity to comment on the agenda, and the opportunity to listen to this meeting through the internet or via telephone. This information can be found on the meeting agenda, which was physically posted at the District's Administrative Office, and on the District website.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Kersteen-Tucker seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

1. Approve the August 29, 2023 Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Public comment opened at 2:01 p.m.

Ms. Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 2:01 p.m.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to approve the August 29, 2023 Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs committee meeting minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Draft 2024 Legislative Program (R-23-130)

Governmental Affairs Specialist Joshua Hugg provided the staff presentation and reviewed the Draft 2024 Legislative Program. Mr. Hugg stated that the District reviews numerous legislative proposals at the local, state and federal levels to identify opportunities that further the District mission, strategic goals, action plan priorities, and key projects.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired if there is a way to create legislation that would exempt the District from the County's subdivision process.

General Counsel Hilary Stevenson stated that the Subdivision Map Act currently has an exemption for certain transactions to or from a government agency. Each county and city adopt their own local subdivision code that enacts the state Subdivision Map Act. Ms. Stevenson said one idea is to clarify in the state Map Act how the exemption could be enacted or applied so it is not ambiguous when local agencies try to apply it. The difficulty is that every city and county have their own preferences to administer their own codes and may want to maintain their discretion in applying their own codes.

Director Kersteen-Tucker asked if the District would have to partner with other cities and counties or if there could be language specific to the District.

Ms. Stevenson highlighted the difficulty in determining if there is a specific need for specific projects in the District due to the exemption in state law. Staff have consulted with partner

agencies to understand their preferences, but no issues have been identified. They will continue discussions with counties, which may avoid the need to consider requesting legislation.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired whether the exempt conveyance will be included in the Legislative Program for next year.

Mr. Hugg stated that this is a placeholder as conversations are still ongoing. Should the need arise, the District may initiate state legislation.

Director Cyr commented that the other area where exempt conveyance may come up may be within local communities that are considering expanding housing into open space areas.

Ms. Stevenson explained that the Subdivision Map Act's application in urban-developed areas differs from rural areas, making it challenging to develop a legislative solution from a policy standpoint due to its location-specific application.

Chair MacNiven expressed her appreciation that tribal engagement and ADA access was added to the third goal, as well as for adding the maps of our state delegation to show their reach in the county.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested that goal three be rephrased to say, "Connect people to open space and a regional environmental protection vision for natural and working lands," to remind us that there are environmental benefits to the work the District does on our working lands. She further commented that this potential change should be addressed at the Board retreat.

Public comment opened at 2:36 p.m.

Ms. Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 2:36 p.m.

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Kersteen-Tucker seconded the motion to forward a recommendation, with any changes as requested by the committee, to the Board of Directors for approval of the 2024 Legislative Program.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Grant Awards for the 2023 Grantmaking Program (R-23-131)

Senior Grants and Procurement Technician Samantha Powell provided the staff presentation and reviewed the program purpose and the funding priorities outlined in the Board policy. The three funding priorities are Access, Interpretation and Education, Applied Science, and Network and Partnership Support. Ms. Powell explained the request for proposals process and the evaluation criteria.

Program Manager Deborah Hirst presented on the recommended awards for the 2023 grantmaking opportunity. She proposed awarding three grants for Access, Interpretation and Education and two for Network and Partnership Support. The three proposed organizations to receive an award for Access, Interpretation and Education are Canopy, Grassroots Ecology, and

Saved by Nature. Tamien Nation and Together Bay Area are proposed to receive award grants for Network and Partnership Support. Currently there are no proposals moving forward for applied science. The next steps are to present the recommended awards to the Board on December 13. The District is expected to execute the agreements in the spring of 2024.

Director Cyr inquired how many disadvantaged school districts would participate in the Canopy project.

Ms. Hirst confirmed that East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks will be the three high schools participating.

Director Kersteen-Tucker asked about Ms. Hirst's thoughts on replacing the applied science category as no proposals were advanced.

Ms. Hirst inquired about the Board's willingness to evaluate the Grantmaking Program to consolidate funding and reconsider priority focus areas, highlighting applied science as an important category and its past success in advancing excellent projects.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested revisiting funding priorities.

General Manager Ruiz responded that there are internal discussions for improvements to the Grants Program, which will be discussed in a study session next year.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested that due to the program's popularity, discussing additional funding and revisiting funding priorities with the Board could be part of a larger conversation.

General Manager Ruiz stated that staff will consider this feedback as a potential opportunity to discuss it with the Board.

Director Cyr noted the thoroughness and care of the evaluations to come to the suggested choices is impressive.

Chair MacNiven commented that increasing the number of awards with less funding appears less impactful to each individual organization. However, she expressed appreciation for how the funds were distributed throughout the proposals.

Public comment opened at 3:05 p.m.

Ms. Nelson reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 3:05 p.m.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to forward the list of recommended grant awards for the 2023 Grantmaking Program to the Board of Directors for approval with the addition of requesting a study session be introduced to the Board in the year 2024 to address funding priorities and amounts.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Chair MacNiven adjourned the meeting of the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee at 3:05 p.m.

Shaylynn Nelson
Deputy District Clerk