



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Administrative Office
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Director Kersteen-Tucker called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 1:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Curt Riffle and Zoe Kersteen-Tucker

Members absent: Yoriko Kishimoto

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 Stephanie Gross, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Planner II Mattea Ottoboni, Planner I Alyssa Cano, Resource Management Specialist II Matthew Sharp-Chaney, Capital Projects Field Manager Bryan Apple, and Skyline Area Superintendent Chris Barresi

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: 2-0-0 (Absent Director Kishimoto)

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Deputy District Clerk Stephanie Gross reported there were no public speakers for this item.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Select Committee Chair for 2025 Calendar Year

Director Kersteen-Tucker nominated Director Riffe to serve as the Committee Chair for calendar year 2025.

Director Riffe accepted the nomination.

Public comment opened at 1:02 p.m.

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

Public comment closed at 1:02 p.m.

Motion: Director Riffe moved, and Director Kersteen-Tucker seconded the motion to select Director Riffe as Committee Chair for Calendar Year 2025.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 2-0-0 (Absent Director Kishimoto)

2. Approve the January 8, 2025 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes.

Public comment opened at 1:03 p.m.

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

Public comment closed at 1:03 p.m.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Chair Riffe seconded the motion to approve the January 8, 2025 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting minutes.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 2-0-0 (Absent Director Kishimoto)

3. Selection of trail names and use designations for four La Honda Phase II trail segments in La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (R-25-47)

Planner II Mattea Ottoboni and Planner I Alyssa Cano presented. Planning Manager Jane Mark, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Resource Management Specialist II Matthew Sharp-Chaney, Capital Projects Field Manager Bryan Apple, and Skyline Area Superintendent Chris Barresi assisted in answering Committee questions.

Director Kersteen-Tucker commented that residents of the La Honda Creek area have expressed interest in more dog access trails and suggested that it would be helpful to articulate the reasons why dog access is limited and the impacts on wildlife.

Chair Riffe agreed and reiterated that this issue is not solely due to grazing.

Director Kersteen-Tucker noted that a public comment had been submitted pointing out there is already a trail named Meadowlark Trail in the City of Palo Alto's Arastradero Open Space Preserve and asked whether this might cause any confusion.

Skyline Area Superintendent Chris Barresi explained that because the trails are located in different counties, it is less of a safety concern, as separate emergency response dispatchers are involved.

Ms. Ottoboni suggested naming the trail the "Western" Meadowlark Trail to avoid any confusion noting that the name is both zoologically and geographically correct.

Director Kersteen-Tucker and Chair Riffle concurred adding "Western" to the Meadowlark Trail name.

Public comment opened at 1:46 p.m.

The following people provided comments:

- Mike Bushue
- Susan Dunn

Public comment closed at 1:55 p.m.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested that staff meet with Ms. Dunn to address her inquiry if the District would consider having a default trail use only policy rather than a default open space access policy and provide her with the District policies.

Planning Manager Jane Mark offered to meet with Ms. Dunn.

Director Kersteen-Tucker also emphasized the importance of explaining to the public the reason for restricting dog access due to the natural resource implications of the trail's design and the need to be mindful of the local wildlife.

Chair Riffle agreed with Director Kersteen-Tucker about the importance of the public understanding why dogs are not allowed and also explaining why there are no bikes allowed in Segment 2.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion as amended to approve the motion to forward the following recommendations to the full Board of Directors for their review and consideration:

1. Name new trail segments in La Honda with the following names:
 - Segment 1 – Lonely Forest Trail
 - Segment 2 – Lone Madrone Trail
 - Segment 3 – Western Meadowlark Trail
 - Segment 4 – Coho Vista Trail
2. Designate the following uses for the new trail segments:
 - Segment 1 – Multi-use, No Dogs
 - Segment 2 – Hikers and Equestrians, No Dogs
 - Segment 3 – Multi-use, No Dogs

- Segment 4 – Multi-use, No Dogs
- All trails – on-trail use only
- Redesignate an approximately 0.9-mile segment of Harrington Creek Trail between the Sears Ranch Parking Area and Segment 1 as Multi-Use

ROLL CALL VOTE: 2-0-0 (Absent Director Kishimoto)

3. Incorporation of a Legacy Road as a Trail, Approval of a New Trail Extension, and Renaming of an Existing Trail at Thornewood Open Space Preserve (R-25-48)

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone presented.

Director Kersteen-Tucker asked whether historical photos would be incorporated into the area, noting that the site's history is interesting.

Mr. Malone stated that the standard District signage format will be used for the trails signs but also interpretive signage to highlight the estate area.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested also adding QR codes to the signs to provide access to additional information.

Chair Riffle commented that his preference would be to allow equestrians to be able to use the trail all the way to the top of the trail, but understood that would mean the removal of the redwood trees over the trail.

Mr. Malone stated that it is the Board decision to opt to remove the fallen trees.

Public comment opened at 2:27 p.m.

Mr. Bushue requested the addition of a tie rack for horses before the area where there is not horse access to the top of the trail.

Public comment closed at 2:29 p.m.

Mr. Malone stated that staff could investigate adding a tie rack and make sure tied horses would not block access to hikers.

Chair Riffle suggested not putting the tie rack on the downhill side for the safety of the horses.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired whether the motion should be amended to incorporate the tie rack.

Mr. Malone responded that he would prefer to first confirm its feasibility.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to forward the following recommendations to the full Board of Directors for their review and consideration:

1. Add a 0.3-mile legacy road as part of the trail network at Thornewood Open Space Preserve, with access via a side use trail to a rock placed at the time of August Schilling's ownership inscribed with the phrase "memento mori", the former site of a "Redwood

Temple” and former site of a “Redwood Pergola” and designate the trail for hiking and dog on leash use and a portion of the trail for equestrian use, with the proposed trail name of the Rock of Ages Trail.

2. Approve a conceptual alignment of a new trail extension to connect the vista point to the “rock of ages” via a trail extension designed to meet trail standards.
3. Rename the Schilling Lake Trail to the Schilling Trail.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 2-0-0 (Absent Director Kishimoto)

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Riffle adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at 2:35 p.m.

Stephanie Gross
Deputy District Clerk