



Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District

May 14, 2025  
Board Meeting 25-14

## **REGULAR MEETING**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

**Wednesday, May 14, 2025**

#### **DRAFT MINUTES**

### **REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

President Cyr called the regular meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 7:01 p.m.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Karen Holman, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Yoriko Kishimoto, Margaret MacNiven, and Curt Riffle

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/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Shaylynn Nelson, Senior Resource Management Specialist Coty Sifuentes-Winters, Real Property Agent II Jasmine Leong, Senior Resource Management Specialist David Liefert, and Real Property Manager Allen Ishibashi

President Cyr announced that this meeting is held in person only. This information can be found on the meeting agenda, which was physically posted at the District's Administrative Office, the Senior Coastsiders, and on the District website.

#### **REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION**

President Cyr reported that the Board met in closed session on April 30, and no reportable action was taken.

#### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Public comment opened at 7:02 p.m.

Kerry Burke expressed appreciation for the Board's presence on the coastside. She shared that Director MacNiven has attended the recent Farm Bureau meetings, but that it can be burdensome for only one director to hear all of the local concerns. She suggested the Board of Directors to consider holding quarterly meetings on the coastside, given the significant land holdings and ongoing land management and acquisitions in the coastal area.

BJ Burns, President of the Farm Bureau expressed appreciation that the Board held the meeting on the coast and encouraged the Board to meet more frequently on the coast regarding agricultural items. He voiced concern about the recent grazing lease process, describing it as unfair to ranchers, and requested that the award of leases be postponed. He noted that a list of questions was provided during a recent meeting of the Farm Bureau to Director MacNiven and requested responses. He also asked to meet with the Board President and other Directors to discuss the situation and work towards a resolution.

Jim Sullivan encouraged the Board to consider allowing dog walking access at the Johnston house property, noting that many visiting families, particularly on the weekends, have dogs. He also urged the District to explore acquisition opportunities from willing sellers north of Highway 92, including unincorporated properties north of McNee Ranch that deserve the District's attention. Additionally, he highlighted the 240-acre Shamrock Ranch property, noting it has the potential for staff housing and equipment storage.

Public comment closed at 7:10 p.m.

### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Motion:** Director Kishimoto moved, and Director MacNiven seconded the motion to adopt the agenda with the amendment to hear Agenda Item #10 before Agenda Item #9.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**        7-0-0

### **INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDA**

- Pulgas Ridge - Los Vientos Way Trail Access

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Directors Kersteen-Tucker commented on Agenda Item #4, acknowledging the supportive messages received regarding the trail loop that is proposed to be named for Lennie Roberts. She highlighted Ms. Robert's key role as one of the founding members of the District and her efforts extending the District into San Mateo County, stating the recognition is well deserved. Directors Riffle, Holman, and MacNiven echoed her comments.

Director MacNiven commented on Agenda Item #6, reminding staff that the electric utility company must clean up after themselves.

Director Holman commented on Agenda Item #5, inquiring whether the work performed pertains to archaeological or architectural cultural resources. She expressed concern with the last two consultants listed if the work performed is for cultural architectural resources. She also noted that in the past, the Board received more detailed information on contracts, including consultant

background, the scope of work, bid details, and suggested that providing more context would be helpful.

Senior Resource Management Specialist Coty Sifuentes-Winters responded that the work is for archaeological work.

Director Holman commented that the Board report does not clearly indicate the work is for archaeological purposes and asked if it should be clarified when the Board votes on the consent calendar.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone reported that staff has been using more on-call contracts for better efficiency. He stated that while additional information on the consultants could be potentially added, detailed scopes of work for on-call contracts are developed at the time of issuing specific work orders, not during the initial contract approval. He acknowledged the request for additional information to be added to future reports.

Public comment opened at 7:26 p.m.

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

Public comment closed at 7:26 p.m.

**Motion:** Director Riffle moved, and Director Gleason seconded the motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

**ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0**

- 1. Approve the April 23, 2025 Board meeting minutes**
- 2. Approve Claims Report**
- 3. Contract Amendment for Construction Services with SAE Consulting Engineering of San Jose, California for the Sierra Azul Ranger Housing Project (R-25-59)**

General Manager's Recommendation: Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract amendment with SAE Consulting Engineering of San Jose, California to provide additional construction services at the Sierra Azul Ranger Housing Project in the amount of \$21,693, bringing the total contract to a not to exceed amount of \$772,581.

- 4. Proposed Naming of a Planned Loop Trail within the Johnston Ranch Uplands area of Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve as the Lennie Roberts Trail (R-25-60)**

General Manager's Recommendations:

1. Approve the naming of a planned loop trail within the Johnston Ranch Uplands area of Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve as the Lennie Roberts Trail as supported by the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee.
2. Approve an amendment to the Use and Management Plan to include the new trail name.
- 5. Award of Contracts for On-Call Cultural Resources Services (R-25-61)**

General Manager's Recommendation: Authorize the General Manager to award contracts to eight (8) consultants for On-Call Cultural Resources Services, each contract with a term of four (4) years and a total not-to-exceed amount of \$200,000.

**6. Approve an Agreement to Exchange Interests in Real Property between City of Palo Alto (City) and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) related to utility easements. City to quitclaim to District its existing overhead utility easements over a portion of Montebello Road within Monte Bello and Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserves (Santa Clara County APNs 351-25-014, 351-06-025, 351-09-002 and 351-12-069) in exchange for District granting City an underground utility easement along Montebello Road within Monte Bello and Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserves (Santa Clara County APNs 351-25-014, 351-06-025, and 351-09-002). (R-25-62)**

General Manager's Recommendations:

1. By a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, adopt a resolution authorizing the General Manager or other appropriate officer to execute the Agreement to Exchange Interests in Real Property between the District and City and all real property documents referenced therein.
2. Amend the Use and Management Plans for Monte Bello and Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserves to include the exchanged interests in real property.
3. Withhold dedication of the exchanged property interests as public open space at this time.

**7. Award of Contract to MIG, Inc., for California Environmental Quality Act Services for the American Disabilities Act (ADA) Path and Service Road Project at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve (R-25-63)**

General Manager's Recommendations:

1. Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with MIG Inc., to provide environmental review services for the ADA Path and Service Road Project at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve for a base contract amount not to exceed \$98,244.
2. Authorize a 15% contingency in the amount of \$14,737 to cover unforeseen circumstances.
3. Authorize a \$75,269 contract allowance for additional hydraulic and/or cultural resource studies that may be required for the project, bringing the total not-to-exceed contract amount to \$188,250.

**8. 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-25-64)**

General Manager's Recommendations:

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 that reaches the following historic landscape features: (1) a rock placed at the time of August Schilling's ownership inscribed with the phrase "memento mori", (2) the former site of a "Redwood Temple", and (3) the former site of a "Redwood Pergola", and designate the trail for hiking and dogs-on-leash use and a portion of the trail for equestrian use, with the proposed trail name of Rock of Ages Trail.
2. Approve the addition of a new, 200-foot trail spur to connect the "Rock of Ages Trail" to a vista point and designate as open to hiking and dogs-on-leash.
3. Rename the Schilling Lake Trail to the Schilling Trail to reflect the natural meadow and forest succession of the former human-made lake that lies at the end of the trail.

**BOARD BUSINESS**

Agenda Item #9 was heard after Agenda Item #10.

**9. Proposed Purchase of the 273.5-acre Pratt Trust Property located in San Mateo County (APN: 080-360-010) as an addition to Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve (R-25-65)**

Real Property Agent II Jasmine Leong presented, and Real Property Manager Allen Ishibashi assisted in answering Board questions.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested that it would be beneficial to add cattle grazing to this land and noted that it could be expanded from the current grazing operation at Mindego.

Public comment opened at 8:56 p.m.

- Bridget Jett supports the project with a recommendation to allow the adjacent tenant to use the site to hold their bulls.

Public comment closed at 8:58 p.m.

Director MacNiven inquired whether staff consider allowing the Baird Brothers to use the land, in connection with their existing lease with the District, to place their bulls in this area as suggested by the public commentor.

Mr. Malone responded that Conservation Grazing Program Manager Matthew Shapero has already discussed the idea with the Baird Brothers. He noted that the main consideration is the level of investment required, but confirmed that it can be a possibility, and that discussion can take place to determine if it is worthwhile.

**Motion:** Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion with the provision that staff work the Baird Brothers, to create additional capacity for them on the property for their bulls.

1. Determined that the recommended actions are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as set out in the staff report.
2. Adopt a Resolution authorizing the purchase of the Pratt Trust Property for \$4,375,000 with a corresponding authorization for a Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget increase in the same amount.
3. Adopt a Preliminary Use and Management Plan, as set out in the staff report.
4. Withhold dedication of the Pratt Trust Property as public open space at this time.

**ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0**

**10. Partnership Agreement for the Johnston Ranch Habitat and Agricultural Water Supply Improvement Project (R-25-66)**

Agenda Item #10 was heard before Agenda Item # 9.

Senior Resource Management Specialist David Liefert presented, and Mr. Malone assisted in answering Board questions.

Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) Farmland Senior Project Manager Laura O’Leary and San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) Board President Barbara Kossy expressed support for the project.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested that it would be valuable to have a presentation from the RCD on the coastside salmon population, noting the significant amount of work that has been done by the RCD in the area.

Public comment opened at 8:24 p.m.

- BJ Burns raised concerns about the cost of the project and suggested moving the pond to the farmed flat area to expand its size and increase the amount of productive land it can support.
- Peter Marchi provided an anecdotal understanding of the history of the site.

Public comment closed at 8:28 p.m.

Director Kersteen-Tucker expressed strong support for the project and commented that the project is the future of agriculture on the coast, where the District partners with farmers and agencies such as the RCD and POST, combining expertise to work together towards the mutual goals of protecting and conserving natural resources. She stated, “It is not fish versus farms anymore, it is fish plus farms”. She thanked staff for their work and to the Giusti family for their continued partnership.

**Motion:** Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director MacNiven seconded the motion to authorize the General Manager to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District for the completion of a habitat restoration and agricultural water supply improvement project on Miramontes Ridge Open Space Preserve with a monetary contribution of \$287,270 to complete design and permitting.

**ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0**

President Cyr called for a recess at 8:35 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 8:45 p.m. All Board members present. He continued with Agenda Item #9.

### **INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**

#### **A. Committee Reports**

Director Kersteen-Tucker provided an update on the Action Plan & Budget Committee meetings held on May 6 and 13, 2025.

Director Riffle provided an update on the Planning & Natural Resources Committee meeting held on April 29, 2025.

#### **B. Staff Reports**

No reports.

**C. Director Reports**

Director MacNiven reported that she attended the May 7 Staff Recognition Event (SRE) and the May 14 Ranger Badging ceremony.

Director Kishimoto commented that the Independent Special District Selection Committee (ISDSC) held a meeting on May 14, and she was appointed to another 4-year term to the Santa Clara Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

Director Cyr reported that he attended the May 14, ISDSC meeting and it was a delight to nominate Director Kishimoto for the LAFCO position. In addition, he attended the SRE and the Ranger Badging ceremony.

Director Riffle reported that he attended the April 25 remembrance event for former District General Manager Herb Grench. He attended the SRE and tabled at The Forum Rancho San Antonio.

Director Kersteen-Tucker reported that she participated via Zoom in the Basic Policy Workshop held by the District on April 24.

Director Gleason reported that he attended the SRE, he attended the first day of the Spotlight Stewardship, he and Director Kersteen-Tucker hiked at Rancho San Antonio and dropped by the Foothills Field Office to see staff and rangers. Additionally, he thanked staff who is involved in organizing the Volunteer Trail Program.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Cyr adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District meeting at 9:07 p.m.

Maria Soria, MMC  
District Clerk