



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, July 15, 2025

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

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Members present: Craig Gleason, Karen Holman, 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/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Stephanie Gross, Grants Program Manager Carol Schimke, Senior Grants Technician Caitlin Amarillas

Chair Gleason announced that 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.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Holman moved, and Director MacNiven seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Public comment opened at 2:01 p.m.

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

Public comment closed at 2:01 p.m.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the May 20, 2025 Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Public comment opened at 2:01 p.m.

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

Public comment closed at 2:01 p.m.

Director Holman requested that, on page two of the minutes, in the second to last paragraph, the phrase “for the employee” be revised to “by the employee” as the change alters the meaning of the sentence.

Chair Gleason requested that staff review the meeting recording and present revised minutes, if necessary, at the following Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC) meeting for approval.

2. Grantmaking Program Strategic Review and Recommendations (R-25-98)

Grants Program Manager Carol Schimke and Senior Grants Technician Caitlin Amarillas presented. General Manager Ana Ruiz and Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak assisted in answering questions.

Chair Gleason noted the change in full-time employment within the Grants Program and inquired about the impact of the Grantmaking Program review process on the organization.

Ms. Schimke responded that staff capacity outside of the Grants Program to support the Grantmaking Program is largely limited to the review period. During that time, staff from various departments are invited to participate, which has historically been an intense effort over several weeks. She noted that the goal moving forward is to distribute this work over a longer period to lessen the impact at any one time.

Chair Gleason inquired if the Grant Making Program is to be significantly expanded, will it be necessary to add additional staff not only in the Grants Program but also in other departments.

Ms. Schimke confirmed that additional staff would be needed.

Director MacNiven left the dais at 2:28 p.m. and returned at 2:30 p.m.

General Manager Ana Ruiz asked Ms. Schimke to track in detail the staff capacity required to run the Grantmaking Program, including the grants team and other staff who support the work. She noted that this information will provide a clearer understanding of whether there is available capacity to expand the program or if additional staff would be needed.

Director Holman suggested that in addition to increasing the funding, consideration should be given to setting a maximum number of grantees to make the program more manageable. She noted that focusing on fewer grantees may be more productive for both the District and the applicant.

Ms. Schimke responded that the applications increased by 90% from 2019 to 2023. To streamline the review process, staff is considering making the pre-proposal more robust for applicants applying for smaller Tier 1 grants, while requiring full proposals only for larger amounts. She noted that this approach would reduce the number of full proposals received.

Chair Gleason suggested that in the future, when the District has more staff capacity and can receive more grant applications, it would be beneficial to know how many grant awards would have been merited previously if sufficient staff capacity had been available.

Public comment opened at 3:10 p.m.

The following member of the public spoke in favor of the item:

- Stuart Weiss

Public comment closed at 3:14 p.m.

Chair Gleason commented that he supports the General Manager's recommendations, including having a focused impact statement. He noted that cities and other organizations are having challenges funding projects, and he believes there is an opportunity for the District to support projects outside District land and provide opportunities for the public to connect with nature close to their homes and schools. Additionally, he highlighted the potential to introduce a more diverse set of people to nature, encourage new experiences in the preserves, and to communicate the District's work. He clarified that he is not suggesting a specific timeline or scope but is interested in whether there is a forum for the Board to discuss this potential direction.

Ms. Ruiz responded that the proposal by Director Gleason requires a policy level discussion. She stated that an expansion would need to have a nexus to the District's mission and the work would need to fall within the District's jurisdiction. She added that aside from what is possible through the Grantmaking Program, the District can also pursue partnership agreements. She stated the idea could be presented at the next Board meeting if there is a committee consensus, and if the majority of the Board expresses interest, the topic could be discussed at the Board's annual strategic planning retreat in December.

Director Holman expressed her support for Chair Gleason's recommendation and mentioned that a nexus to the District's mission could be established through connectivity and migration routes.

Director MacNiven commented that she is not opposed to a discussion but also recognizes the policy considerations the District would face if the program were expanded.

Director Holman suggested that the District could serve as a strategic partner, as cities may not have the staff expertise to help educate the public on specific natural resource and land conservation topics, whether within the District's jurisdiction or beyond.

Chair Gleason commented that he would coordinate with Ms. Ruiz to present the item to the full Board to determine if there is interest in a Board discussion.

Director MacNiven suggested including 4-H and Future Farmers of America at Half Moon Bay High School in notifications for future Grantmaking opportunities, noting that a grant would provide significant support for these type of groups.

Motion: Director Holman moved, and Director MacNiven seconded the motion to:

1. Forward to the full Board of Directors for consideration and approval three recommended updates to Board Policy 3.10, *District Grantmaking Program*:
 - a. Increase the Grantmaking Program award budget from \$250,000 to \$300,000, with an increased grant award size in each tier: Tier 1 from \$25,000 to \$30,000 and Tier 2 to \$50,000 to \$60,000.
 - b. Limit the grantee reimbursement period to a maximum of two years to align with the biennial (every two years) Grantmaking Program cycle and the corresponding release of a new Request for Proposals.
 - c. Adopt the recommended Funding Priority descriptive updates.
2. Forward the Committee's selection of Option 2 below to the full Board of Directors for consideration and approval to establish a Grantmaking Program impact statement for inclusion in Board Policy 3.10, *District Grantmaking Program*
 - Option 2: Support Early-Stage and Grassroots Initiatives

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gleason adjourned the meeting of the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee at 3:29 p.m.

Stephanie Gross
Deputy District Clerk

Maria Soria
District Clerk