



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-23-127
Meeting 23-30
October 25, 2023

AGENDA ITEM 10

AGENDA ITEM

Proposals for Recognizing the Contributions and Significant Support of former Board members Larry Hassett and Pete Siemens

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

Approve the recommendations from the Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Committee to install a commemorative bench on the Grasshopper Loop Trail at the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve to recognize former Board member Larry Hassett and to name a Phase II trail at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve to recognize former Board member Pete Siemens for their years of service and significant support to the agency and its mission.

SUMMARY

In December 2022, Board members Larry Hassett and Pete Siemens concluded long tenures, 22 years and over 28 years respectively, on the Board of Directors (Board) of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District). Sadly, Pete Siemens passed away peacefully at home on April 6, 2023. To show appreciation for the significant impact both of these former Board members had on the District, the current Board has requested that proposals for recognizing their contributions be presented for consideration. Staff will present an overview of approaches that have been used in the past, along with options for consideration.

On June 27, 2023, the Board's Legislative, Finance and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC) received a presentation on potential recognition options and selected the following choices to recommend to the full Board:

- Pete Siemens – Trail naming of a Phase II trail at Bear Creek Redwoods (BCR) Open Space Preserve
- Larry Hassett – Bench installation on the Grasshopper Loop Trail at the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

The special recognition proposals for former Board members Larry Hassett and Pete Siemens are in accordance with Board Policy 5.01 – *Site Naming, Gift and Special Recognition* (Attachment 1) and will require minimal funding (cost of signage and/or bench with plaque). There are sufficient funds in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget to cover the cost of the recommendation.

DISCUSSION

Background

Past Board Members

In the past, retiring Board members have been recognized in a variety of ways based on the length of their tenure, impact on the District, ward location and specific interests.

- George Seager (1976-1977): Memorial grove (Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve (OSP))
- Dick Bishop (1977-1991): Dick Bishop Trail (Pulgas Ridge OSP)
- Betsy Crowder (1989-2000): Betsy Crowder Trail, bench and sign (Windy Hill OSP)
- Mary Davey (1994-2010): Mary Davey Loop Trail, bench and rock (Rancho San Antonio OSP)
- Nonette Hanco (1972-2018)*: Nonette Hanco San Andreas Fault Trail (Los Trancos OSP)
- Katherine (Kay) Duffy (1972-1992)*: Her artwork hangs at the District Administrative Office

* Living Board member honorees

Per past practice, common recognition options have therefore included:

1. Bench with plaque at scenic or peaceful location
2. Trail naming
3. Rock with plaque along a trail or near/at a staging area/trailhead
4. Facility naming
5. Dedication of a redwood tree or redwood glen

Accomplishments

In the January e-newsletter, the District published the article, “Thank you Pete Siemens and Larry Hassett,” capturing the successful Board tenures of both Pete Siemens and Larry Hassett (Attachment 2). Their many accomplishments include:

Pete Siemens

1. As a councilmember, helped initiate the first joint project between the Town of Los Gatos and the District to purchase and preserve St. Joseph’s Hill OSP
2. Advocated for a joint land purchase with the City of Saratoga to help make the Saratoga-to-the-Sea regional trail possible.
3. Volunteered for several projects, including restoration of the Grant Cabin at Rancho San Antonio OSP.
4. Was a driving force behind the opening of Bear Creek Redwoods OSP.

Larry Hassett

1. Served as an important voice for Coastside and Skyline communities, and in turn served as an important ambassador for the District in community conversations.
2. Drove the opening of lower La Honda Creek OSP.
3. Helped shepherd the development plans for the new administration office and the design the District’s new logo.
4. Helped improve procurement and contracting efficiencies for the District, including expanding the reach of solicitations for vendors/contractors/consultants.

Recognition Recommendations

On June 27, 2023, LFPAC received a presentation on potential recognition options for former Board members Hassett and Siemens, arriving at the following recommendations:

- Pete Siemens – Trail naming of a Phase II trail at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve
- Larry Hassett – Bench installation on the Grasshopper Loop Trail at the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve

As part of LFPAC's review, Board member Kersteen-Tucker reached out to former Board member Larry Hassett, who expressed a preferred interest and appreciation in LFPAC's recommended option. Staff also reached out to Diane Siemens, former Board member Siemens' spouse. She stated the Bear Creek Redwoods OPS trail naming option would be particularly meaningful.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are sufficient funds in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget to cover the cost of the recommendation.

PRIOR BOARD OR COMMITTEE REVIEW

This item was reviewed by LFPAC on June 27, 2023, who forwarded the recommendations presented in this report for Board consideration and approval ([R-23-70](#), [meeting minutes](#)).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. No additional notice is required.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Section 15304 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines exempts the minor alteration of existing public structures or facilities, involving negligible or no expansion of existing use. The trail naming and seating installation would be a minor alteration to an existing trail.

NEXT STEPS

If approved by the Board, staff will proceed as follows:

Larry Hassett

Order the signage and bench for installation in 2024. The bench design would be the standard recycled composite plastic/wood lumber that is long-lasting, durable, environmentally friendly and low maintenance, with an embedded bronze plaque. The language on the plaque would be developed in consultation with former Board member Hassett.

Pete Siemens

Include Pete Siemens' name in the BCR Phase II trail naming process, which will be presented to the Board for final approval in early 2024, with sign installation and new maps produced by summer 2024.

Each recognition will be accompanied by a recognition ceremony, as conditions permit.

Attachments:

1. Board Policy 5.01 – Site Naming, Gift and Special Recognition
2. District e-newsletter article “Thank you Pete Siemens and Larry Hasset” – 2023-01

Responsible Department Head:

Korrine Skinner, Public Affairs Manager

Prepared by:

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Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Board Policy Manual

Site Naming, Gift, and Special Recognition	Policy 5.01 Chapter 5 – Historical/Cultural
Effective Date: 8/25/93	Revised Date: 12/12/18
Prior Versions: 8/25/93, 9/14/94, 6/24/98, 9/12/01, 10/8/08, 1/13/10, 10/27/10, 11/13/13	

I. SITE NAMING

All District site names and signs should be kept as simple and functional as possible. When a property is acquired, either as an addition to an existing preserve or for the establishment of a new preserve, a name will be recommended in the Preliminary Use and Management Plan. In most cases, "open space preserve" is appropriate as part of the name; however, there may be circumstances when another designation may be used. In some cases, a temporary name may be retained until the next Comprehensive Use and Management Plan review.

A. Open Space Preserves

The name given to each open space preserve should be general enough to remain suitable if the site is enlarged, but specific enough to give its location some significance. Properties added to an open space preserve may not always be contiguous with that preserve.

1. Preserves shall be named after:
 - a) Geographical features of broad, general significance to the preserve;
 - b) Historical persons, cultural names, uses, or events broadly associated with the locale.
2. Preserves shall not be named after any individuals other than historical persons as noted above.

B. Preserve Areas, Trails, Site Improvements, Historic Sites and Unnamed Natural Features

This designation refers to specific locations, land formations, trails, natural and physical features, staging areas and other site improvements, and areas of significance within open space preserves. Recognition of significant land gifts, including "bargain" purchases, will be negotiated at the time of the gift or bargain purchase.

1. Preserve areas, trails, site improvements including benches and bridges, historic sites and previously unnamed natural features shall ordinarily be named

after:

- a) Geographical, botanical or zoological identification;
- b) Historical persons, uses, or events associated with the site, or persons and organizations listed in Section III: "Special Recognition".

2. Preserve areas, trails, site improvements, historic sites and unnamed natural features may in rare instances be named after a living individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the District, subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

II. GIFT RECOGNITION

The purpose of the gift recognition policy is to provide an opportunity for the District to recognize and commend individuals or groups that have made significant contributions of cash, equipment, materials, goods or professional services toward the enhancement of the District, its programs, and its facilities.

A. Unsolicited Cash Gifts:

Up to \$25	Postcard of thanks
\$26 to \$499	Letter signed by General Manager
\$500 to \$1,999	Letter signed by President of the Board
\$2,000 to \$4,999	Letter signed by President of the Board and District gift item (note cards, etc.)
\$5,000 to \$9,999	Letter signed by President of the Board and framed photograph of favorite District preserve
\$10,000 or more	Letter signed by President of the Board and Resolution and framed photograph of District preserve and mention in a District publication*

*These items will be provided only if desired by the donor.

III. SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC) shall be the committee designated to discuss all requests that meet the criteria of the policy for special recognition made by members of the Board of Directors, and after deliberation shall forward a recommendation to the full Board for a vote.

The General Manager or his/her designee will review constituent bench dedication requests to determine eligibility based on the policy guidelines outlined below in Section III D.

Constituent bench requests may be brought to LFPAC if there exists ambiguity regarding whether the request meets the requirements below.

The District places benches in its preserves for three distinct purposes:

A. District Rest Benches

These benches provide constituents with a place to rest. District staff places these benches without involving a District committee or the full Board. Regular benches must be either a backed or a backless standard bench as described in Section V below.

B. Constituent Bench Dedications

These are benches which have been requested by constituents in order to honor or memorialize a member of the public and are funded by the requestors who must pay \$5,000 for a 10-year term. Requests must be in reference to a significant supporter or a volunteer, as defined in Section III D below. The General Manager or his/her designee reviews requests to determine if they meet the eligibility definitions. Requests that are administratively declined because they do not meet the eligibility definitions may be appealed to the General Manager for a second review. Eligible requests will be administratively implemented.

a) Constituent bench dedications shall only be selected from and placed in locations that have been pre-determined by the District and/or approved by the Planning and Natural Resources Committee and/or by the full Board of Directors.

b) If a request for a constituent bench meets the eligibility requirements, the requestor(s) shall pay for the cost of constructing, installing and maintaining a bench and plaque by contributing \$5,000 to cover the 10-year dedication term of the bench.

c) Bench plaques will be 2 x 6 inches in size.

d) Benches must be one of the two District standard bench designs.

e) Constituent bench dedications will have a term limit of 10 years. After 10 years, the original donor will have the option to contribute an additional \$5,000 donation for each additional 10-year term. Should the original donor decline to renew an existing bench, the bench will be offered to the public for re-dedication.

C. District Bench Dedications

These are benches which are installed by the District in response to requests by members of the Board of Directors to honor "Founders," "Significant Supporters", and "Volunteers".

a) LFPAC can initiate a bench request and refer a decision to the full Board or individual Board members can initiate a bench request which will be referred to LFPAC for discussion before it is referred to the full Board for a final decision. Honorees must be "Founders", "Significant Supporters", and "Volunteers" (per policy Section III D below).

b) For these benches there are no design specification limits or limits on their location. The District will pay for the lifetime cost of the bench.

D. Founders, Significant Supporters, and Volunteers

"Founders", "Significant Supporters", and "Volunteers" are eligible for special recognition, including memorials.

"Founders" shall be defined as an individual or group of individuals who participated in the formation of the District, or were significant supporters of the formation of the District.

"Significant Supporters" shall be defined as individuals or group of individuals who have shown conspicuous or noteworthy support for the District through extraordinary contributions of time and effort to the advancement of the goals, philosophy and mission of the District.

"Volunteers" shall be defined as individuals or groups of individuals who donated a minimum of 250 volunteer hours and 5 years of service to the District by working for the District's docent or volunteer program.

IV. RECOGNITION OF HISTORIC SITES

A. A recognition monument, normally in plaque form, may be considered by the Board if it is in relation to a specific existing building or other remaining structure of significant historic value. In such cases, the plaque will be affixed or in close proximity to the structure itself. If there is no structure, then recognition may be considered for inclusion on District informational materials or trail signage. Such a site, in the absence of a building or structure, will ordinarily not be physically marked except as determined by the Board on a case-by-case basis as part of the Use and Management planning process for the corresponding open space preserve.

Any Board-approved memorial names shall be included in site brochures, maps, or other informational materials.

V. STANDARD BENCH DESIGN SPECIFICATION

A. District Rest Benches and Constituent Bench Dedications, described in III (A) and (B) above, are limited to either of the two following standard bench designs:

Backed bench:

Dumor - Bench 88, recycled plastic slates (color: CEDAR), steel leg supports (color: BLACK, IMBEDDED)
6' or 8' lengths

Backless bench:

Dumor - Bench 103, recycled plastic slates (color: CEDAR), steel leg supports (color: BLACK, IMBEDDED)
103-60PL 6' long, 3 supports
103-80PL 8' long, 3 supports

B. The General Manager or LFPAC can at any point bring designs to the Board that differ from the District's standard bench designs.

VI. PARTNER RECOGNITION SIGNBOARD

Partner recognition signboards provide an opportunity for the District to recognize and acknowledge significant partners who have made conspicuous or noteworthy contributions of cash, land, and/or time that were instrumental to the conservation, restoration, management,

and/or public opening of a preserve. Partners may include agencies, organizations, or individuals. Partner Recognition Signboards may also be used to satisfy recognition requirements specified in grant, purchase, or other funding agreements.

Excluding recognitions previously approved by the Board (e.g. recognitions required in Board-approved agreements and resolutions), LFPAC shall review and forward for Board approval the list of partner(s) to recognize on the Partner Recognition Signboard. Following Board approval, the General Manager or his/her designee will follow the guidelines and specifications listed below.

- a. Guidelines and Specifications:
 - a) Partner Recognition Signboards shall be standalone signboards that follow the same design specifications as the District's standard trailhead signboards to maintain District branding and visual cohesiveness.
 - b) Partner Recognition Signboards shall normally be placed directly adjacent to existing preserve signboards to consolidate trailhead information and signboard placement.
 - c) Recognition content shall include logos and/or names.
 - d) The District will review recognition content with each partner for accuracy and completeness.
 - e) The General Manager or his/her designee will approve the final recognition content.
 - f) Exceptions to these guidelines and specifications will be forwarded to LFPAC for review and to the full Board for consideration of approval.



In December, two long-time Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District board members retired after a combined 40 years of service.

Pete Siemens

Director Pete Siemens was first elected in 1994, winning a four candidate race to represent Ward 1, encompassing Cupertino, Lexington Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno and Saratoga.

Prior to joining the Midpen board, Siemens was a rocket test engineer and served the Town of Los Gatos as a councilmember and mayor and helped initiate the first joint project between the town and Midpen to purchase St. Joseph’s Hill Open Space Preserve. As a board member, he also advocated for a joint land purchase with Saratoga to help make



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the Saratoga-To-The-Sea trail possible. In addition, Siemens served on the Los Gatos Trails Committee and was a member on the Santa Clara County Transportation Commission for 10 years.

“I am happy to have helped chart the course of the District over the past 28 years and see it set on a firm foundation for the future,” Siemens said. “On a local level, it’s been rewarding to see the hills around my ward preserved and opened to the public, particularly Bear Creek Redwoods, St Joseph’s Hill, and the Saratoga-to-the-Sea trail.”

In addition to service on the board, Director Siemens volunteered for several projects, including restoration of the Grant Cabin at Rancho San Antonio and design and replacement of the sound system in the new boardroom. He and his wife Diane also welcomed visitors to the Daniels Nature Center and worked on redesigning a kid’s interactive pond display.

Director Siemens said he will miss the interactions with the Board and staff. “Working relationships have been cordial and productive, and the resulting friendships important to me,” he said. “Passing the torch along to my energetic successor will be satisfying and I will continue to follow Midpen progress with great interest.”

Larry Hassett

An active member of the Skyline community and former owner of several local hardware stores, Director Larry Hassett was first appointed to the Midpen board in 2000 to fill the unexpired term of Betsy Crowder to represent Ward 6, which includes the communities of Atherton, La Honda, Ladera, Loma Mar, Menlo Park, North Fair Oaks, Pescadero, Portola Valley, Redwood City, West Menlo Park and Woodside. In addition, Hassett has been involved with several other community organizations, including Achieve, a school for autistic children, Palo Alto Recreation Foundation, Museum of American



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Heritage, Leadership Mid-Peninsula, Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, South Skyline Association, South Skyline Volunteer Fire Department, Peninsula Conservation Center, and Rotary and Kiwanis clubs.

Director Hassett says he is particularly proud of being part of several accomplishments, such as opening Mount Umuhnum, opening La Honda Creek Preserve, Ravenswood Preserve, and Bear Creek Preserve. He's enjoyed shepherding the developmental plans for the new administration office and being part of several committees to design Midpen's new logo.

An experienced world traveler having been as far as Nepal, Machu Picchu and the Galápagos Islands, Larry is looking forward to traveling without committee meeting deadlines but says when he's home, he wants to remain close to Midpen lands. "I'm interested at tabling at different preserves when needed, visiting some new trails, watching the District grow, and seeing our grandchildren being introduced to the preserves," he said.

Bay Area Congresswoman Anna Eshoo recently entered tributes to directors Siemens and Hassett into the Congressional Record of the 117th U.S. Congress, recognizing their generous gifts of time to their communities through their service to Midpen and other organizations.,

We are grateful to both Pet and Larry for helping people, plants and animals thrive across the more than 70,000 acres (including the recently purchase of Cloverdale Ranch) of land Midpen cares for. Read the bios for Midpen's new board members for Ward 1 and Ward 6 (link each ward to bios when posted).

Midpen would like to convey our deep appreciation for Pete's 28 years of service to furthering the vision of caring for the land that cares for us.

Sign up for our newsletter to find out what's happening in your open space!



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