



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

La Honda Elementary School
450 Sears Ranch Rd.
La Honda, CA 94020

April 20, 2016

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Director Riffle called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 6:36 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Cecily Harris, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Steve Abbors, General Counsel Sheryl Schaffner, Assistant General Manager Kevin Woodhouse, Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Planner III Lisa Bankosh, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Resource Management Specialist Julie Andersen, Real Property Manager Mike Williams, Land and Facilities Manager Brian Malone, Senior Real Property Agent Elaina Cuzick, and District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Bob Mehan reported a meeting of the Cuesta La Honda Guild is being held on the same night and suggested the District try to avoid scheduling conflicts for future meetings.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 1. Selection of Committee Chair for Calendar Year 2016**

Director Cyr moved, and Director Riffle seconded the nomination of Director Harris as the Committee Chair for calendar year 2016.

Director Harris accepted the nomination with gratitude.

VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Approve the January 19, 2016 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Minutes

Motion: Director Riffle moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the January 19, 2016 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting.

VOTE: 3-0-0

3. La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Master Plan Phase I Implementation – Trails and Interim Parking in the Lower La Honda Creek Area (R-16-48)

General Manager Steve Abbors welcomed members of the public and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Mr. Abbors explained the meeting is to update the public on the progress to date regarding the opening the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (OSP)

Planner III Lisa Bankosh provided an overview of the format for the meeting including the informational tables set up throughout the room for members of the public to learn more about the La Honda Creek Master Plan, natural resources being restored in the preserve, and proposed trails for the preserve. Ms. Bankosh described progress to date in creating and implementing the Master Plan.

Committee recessed at 6:50 p.m. to allow members of the public to visit the informational tables and learn more about the projects. The meeting reconvened at 7:03 p.m. with all Committee members present.

Resource Management Specialist Julie Andersen described several resource management projects including pond repair to restore red legged frog habitats, conservation grazing, riparian fencing constructed to protect creeks, and Driscoll roads sediment reduction.

Real Property Manager Mike Williams provided information regarding past and recent property acquisitions that form La Honda Creek OSP. Mr. Williams described the purchase and management of the former Driscoll Ranch and Apple Orchard properties. Additionally, Mr. Williams described the recent purchase of the Cunha Trust property.

Land and Facilities Manager Brian Malone displayed a map of the proposed trails included in the Master Plan, and outlined the Phase I Trails Plan and interim parking lot on Sears Ranch Road. Mr. Malone also described an existing permit access equestrian parking lot at the Driscoll Event Center. Mr. Malone described work that must be completed prior to opening the preserve to public access, including installation of pedestrian gates, bridge replacement, and signs to alert visitors of allowable access areas. Mr. Malone provided a detailed description of the newly proposed Folger Loop Trail. Finally, Mr. Malone described the Phase II trails, including cycling and possible dog access trails.

Ms. Bankosh described the interim parking area at Sears Ranch Road and proposed permanent parking area expansion. Plans include a permanent restroom, accessible parking spaces, and fencing to exclude cattle. Ms. Bankosh described a proposed additional parking area at the Red Barn, which will be a larger parking area for public use. Finally, Ms. Bankosh described the next steps of the project, including approval of the Folger Loop Trail, road and trail improvements, and parking area construction.

Director Riffle inquired regarding proposed dog access near Sears Ranch Road.

Ms. Bankosh explained that staff will study the need for and provisions related to dog access before opening the area to dog access.

Director Riffle inquired regarding seasonal closures for agricultural uses.

Ms. Bankosh explained Alan Renz, the current grazing tenant, typically schedules cattle movement for days with minimal use of the preserves. Therefore, no seasonal closures are anticipated at this time.

Director Harris inquired regarding the permit only equestrian use trail near the Driscoll Event Center.

Ms. Bankosh explained that the parking at the location is very limited at this time. Staff has not yet completed site specific planning for the area and fear hiking use of the trail would lead to increased illegal parking along Highway 84.

Public comment opened at 7:47 p.m.

Bob Mehan submitted written comments inquiring if trails are planned for the Apple Orchard property and suggested a location for a future trail on the property.

Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz explained that currently the Master Plan does not include trails in the Apple Orchard property because the District did not own the property at the time the Master Plan was completed. If trails are proposed for the future, an additional public process would be needed to amend the Master Plan.

Aranja expressed her concerns regarding the proposed Phase II Trail 6 near La Honda Creek Trail and if the District's design considerations consider the privacy concerns of the nearby neighbors, especially concerning cyclists.

Ms. Ruiz explained the alignment for Trail 6 is only drawn in concept because it is a new trail construction and will be further studied before construction. The trail alignment and design will be a part of Phase II beginning after 2017 and can be designed in consultation with the neighboring property owners. Additionally, a buffer will be required for the neighboring properties.

A member of the public questions why bicycles are not being allowed for the Phase I trails.

Ms. Ruiz explained staff is following the approved Master Plan which plans to allow bicycles upon completion of the Phase II trails.

Additionally, Mr. Malone explained the Phase I trails are not designed for bicycle access.

A member of the public expressed concerns regarding the design of Highway 84 entrances and exits to allow for safe exits and entrances.

Ms. Bankosh explained staff studied this concern as part for the CEQA analysis and explained traffic engineers were used to design entrances and exits to maintain a line of sight to ensure safety according to state standards.

Public comment closed at 8:01 p.m.

Director Riffle inquired regarding current use of the Driscoll Event Center.

Senior Real Property Agent Elaina Cuzick described the current permitted uses of the event center and possible future uses by additional organizations.

Motion: Director Riffle moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to recommend forwarding to the full Board for review and approval an amendment to the Board-approved Master Plan to open one new mile of an existing ranch road as a hiking and equestrian trail to provide an early loop opportunity in the former Folger Ranch area.

VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Director Riffle adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 8:12 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk