



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Los Gatos Adult Recreation Center
208 East Main Street
Los Gatos, CA 95030

October 6, 2016

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Director Harris called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at to order at 7:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Sheryl Schaffner, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Planner I Alicia Halpern, Visitor Services Manager Michael Newburn, and District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No speakers present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the July 11, 2016 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Minutes

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the July 11, 2016 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting.

VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Proposed Expansion of Dog Access on All Trails at El Sereno Open Space Preserve (R-16-122)

Assistant General Manager Ana Ruiz spoke regarding previous meetings and workshops related to opening all current trails in the El Sereno Open Space Preserve to on-leash dogs. The project was discussed as part of the District's Vision Plan process and included as a Measure AA project. Following Committee consideration of the proposal, the item will be considered by the Board of Directors.

Planner I Alicia Halpern provided an overview of the El Sereno Open Space Preserve, current limited and full dog access in the District's preserves, and the regulations included in the District's ordinance related to dogs. Ms. Halpern described the dog access site evaluation criteria, which guide when areas are opened to dog access, and applied these criteria to the trail system within the El Sereno trail system. All of the trails currently in El Sereno are proposed to be opened for on-leash dog access, except for San Jose Water Company property. At a recent neighborhood meeting, neighbors expressed concern regarding limited parking along Sheldon Rd. Since then, District staff has met with these neighbors and will continue to look for solutions. District staff has proposed additional signage to educate visitors regarding compliance with District regulations. Finally, Ms. Halpern discussed the next steps of the process, including environmental review, management plan amendment, and continuing negotiations with the San Jose Water Company.

Director Riffle asked if dog users are currently visiting the preserve, and whether the proposed change will create much of a change in use.

Ms. Halpern explained some dog users already visit the preserve, but staff does not anticipate a large increase of use due to limited parking and other regional dog access areas nearby.

Director Riffle inquired if additional trail use by dogs could lead to additional user conflict among the different user types, especially equestrians and dog owners.

Ms. Halpern explained the trails are wide, there is limited equestrian use of the preserves.

Director Riffle expressed concern regarding a lack of dog access on San Jose Water Company property.

Ms. Ruiz reported District staff is in the process of negotiating an agreement with San Jose Water Company to formalize access rights. For the time being, San Jose Water Company has requested that portion of the trail be removed from the District's map.

Director Harris inquired regarding the amount of time field staff spends patrolling and maintaining these trails and whether the time would increase based on allowing dog access.

Visitor Services Manager Michael Newburn reported El Sereno has limited use and as a result has few problems. If needed, patrol could be increased, especially if when any changes to permitted uses are made.

Public comment opened at 7:40 p.m.

Dave Abelson, resident of Montevina Road, spoke in favor of dog access at El Sereno and other nearby trails with dog access including possible regional trail connections.

Lindsay Eaton, resident of Montevina Road, spoke regarding limited use of the parking lot on that road.

Maria Ristow, resident of Los Gatos, spoke in favor of dog access at El Sereno.

Sue Cooney, resident of Sheldon Road, spoke in favor of dog access at El Sereno and explained there is no parking along Sheldon Road for non-residents due to the narrowness of the road.

Mr. Newburn reported the District has an access easement on Sheldon Rd. that allows access to preserve visitors during the hours the preserve is opened.

Public comment closed at 7:50 p.m.

Director Riffle spoke in favor of the General Manager's recommendation and regarding potential trail connections in the future.

Director Harris expressed her concerns regarding the level of resources needed for this project and spoke in favor of gaining access to San Jose Water Company property land.

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

1. Confirm and recommend Board approval of the proposed expansion of dog access on all existing El Sereno Open Space Preserve (Preserve) trails as the Project Description for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis.
2. Confirm and recommend Board approval of the above Project Description for a future Use and Management Plan Amendment for the Preserve, excluding trail segment over San Jose Water Company Property, pending formalized access rights.

VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Director Harris adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 7:55 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk