



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

December 6, 2018
Board Meeting 18-41

SPECIAL MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Lucie Stern Community Center – Fireside Room
1305 Middlefield Road #1
Palo Alto, 94301

Thursday, December 6, 2018

APPROVED MINUTES*

SPECIAL MEETING – BOARD RETREAT

President Cyr called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 9:05 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Larry Hassett, Yoriko Kishimoto, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: Nonette Hanko and Pete Siemens

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Controller Mike Foster, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Real Property Manager Mike Williams, Acting Land & Facilities Manager Michael Jurich, Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight, Information Systems & Technology Manager Garrett Dunwoody, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Budget & Analysis Manager Carmen Narayanan, Acting Public Affairs Manager Cydney Bieber, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Visitor Services Manager Matt Anderson, Engineering & Construction Manager Jason Lin, Finance Manager Andrew Taylor

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No speakers present.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth administered the oath of office to Zoe Kersteen-Tucker for the Ward 7 Director.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Hassett seconded the motion to adopt the agenda.

VOTE: 5-0-0 (Directors Hanko and Siemens absent)

BOARD BUSINESS

1. Annual Board of Director’s Retreat – Strategic Planning Meeting 1 (Environmental Scan, FOSM 5-Year Staffing Projections, and Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives Review) (R-18-147)

General Manager Ana Ruiz provided opening comments summarizing the agenda topics for the retreat.

Director Siemens arrived at 9:15 a.m.

Chief Financial Officer Stefan Jaskulak presented highlights of the Financial and Operational Sustainability Model (FOSM) implementation of recommendations to date, with 98% of the recommendations as completed or underway.

Directors Riffle and Kishimoto spoke in favor of updating the FOSM based on current conditions, such as staff levels, tax base, and land acquisitions.

Mr. Jaskulak reported similar studies are typically updated approximately every ten years, and staff will be presenting detailed staff projections for the next five years.

Public comments opened at 9:51 a.m.

Karen Holman commented on the need to look at the issues of fire safety and detection.

Mr. Jaskulak explained staff also identified this concern in the environmental scan, and staff recommends including an objective to the strategic plan related to fire protection.

Public comments closed at 9:54 a.m.

Mr. Jaskulak provided staffing projections for the next five years (Fiscal Years 2019-20 through 2023-24).

District Controller reported the FOSM is partially based on the work to be completed and proposed land acquisitions. Additionally, Mr. Foster noted that the FOSM’s fiscal sustainability is based on the tax base of the District, and recent tax income is larger than the projections used in the FOSM, so the proposed staff increases continue to be affordable.

Ms. Ruiz commented on the District’s efforts to retain staff, including alternative work schedules options, creation of an internal leadership program, and other professional development opportunities.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested the District track staff retention to see how it is trending over time.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone presented key elements and takeaways from this year's environmental scan, including increased project complexity and costs, staff recruitment and retention, and resilience. Mr. Malone presented both internal and external strengths, challenges & barriers, and opportunities for the District. Board members also made suggestions for additional strengths, challenges & barriers, and opportunities. Strengths include a growing and diversifying population to bring in diverse populations to the preserves, strengthening partnerships with partner organizations and agencies, and the District's role in regional resiliency.

Director Kishimoto inquired if staff is studying the potential need for staff commute options and clustering of staff, such as vanpools, carpooling incentives, etc.

Mr. Malone commented that the clustering of staff in part led to the location selected for the new South Area Office.

Director Hassett commented on the District's proposed work related to streamlining the permit process, which would allow District projects to move forward more smoothly and quickly.

Challenges & barriers include the impacts of changing technology, escalation of costs for capital projects, extreme weather patterns, and the cumulative impact of high preserve visitation. Additionally, Board members commented on the difficulty for the public to differentiate among various open space agency offerings, such as county parks, city parks, and parks maintained by other open space agencies.

Director Kishimoto commented on the cumulative and relative impacts of opening new areas to public access, such as in the coastal area, where even a small increase in visitation creates a relatively large impact on the community, which is already experiencing an increase in traffic and congestion.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested the District proactively act regarding visitors to the coast, such as collaborating with San Mateo County to study trail and transit opportunities.

Director Siemens commented on the growing number of wildlife interactions due to increased population.

Mr. Malone reported the District is working with District partners, including grazing tenants and other agencies, and the community at large to minimize the impact of wildlife encounters. The District is also operationally tracking and reacting to wildlife encounters.

Director Siemens commented on the potential challenges associated with the restoration forestry and prescribed fire programs related to public perception of the programs.

Director Kishimoto commented on the impact of a growing population on watershed and endangered species, suggesting the District should champion protection for these species, including potentially hosting a watershed summit. An additional challenge is how the District can accommodate visitors of all abilities.

Opportunities include building and strengthening regional partnerships, leveraging high visitation to engage new communities, maintaining a strong financial position, and increasing volunteer programs and educational opportunities.

Public comments opened at 10:50 a.m.

Karen Holman commented on the need to create parking and evacuation plans for the District's preserves in the event of a fire or other natural disaster.

Mr. Malone reported District staff is in the process of creating fire response plans for the preserves. A fire response plan is complete for La Honda Open Space Preserve, and staff is currently working on a fire response plan for Rancho San Antonio. The fire response plans include information for emergency personnel, such as water sources, access routes, and escape routes.

Public comments closed at 10:53 a.m.

The Board recessed at 11:11 a.m. and reconvened at 11:39 a.m. with Directors Cyr, Hassett, Kersteen-Tucker, Kishimoto, Riffle, and Siemens present.

Item 2 was heard prior to discussion of the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.

Mr. Malone reviewed the current goals and objectives included in the Strategic Plan.

The Board of Directors reviewed the Strategic Plan and made edits to the language of the goals and objectives.

Director Siemens left at 1:25 p.m.

Motion: Director Kishimoto moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to adopt the proposed changes to the Strategic Plan, as amended by the Board.

VOTE: 5-0-0 (Directors Hanko and Siemens absent)

2. Formation of a Science Advisory Panel (R-18-148)

Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington provided the staff report, using the District's work on sudden oak death, protection of the San Francisco garter snake, and watershed protection as case studies of how a science advisory panel could be used. District staff often contract for scientific expertise on District projects, but this is challenging for controversial topics or topics with emerging science. Mr. Lenington spoke regarding the San Francisco Estuary Institute and Point Blue Conservation Science, which could provide scientific expertise to the District on a contract basis. Mr. Lenington described the proposed process for working with a scientific advisory panel for creation of briefing papers and/or receiving project-specific feedback.

Director Riffle suggested the contract science advisory panel could be supplemented with other scientists from other organizations.

Director Riffle requested clarification of the science advisory panel since the recommendation relates to scientists working on a contract.

Mr. Lenington explained that the proposed science advisory panel, such as SFEI, would assemble a pool of experts to provide expertise on specific topics.

Director Riffle suggested most of proposed work seems District-directed and inquired whether the panel would be able to suggest areas of study.

Mr. Lenington stated the panel could potentially host a regular conference on scientific topics in order to bring forward emerging scientific topics.

Director Riffle suggested a potential scientific advisory panel could study grazing.

Director Kishimoto suggested the following topics could be studied by the potential scientific advisory panel: geology, impact of visitors and dogs on wildlife and other natural resources, fishery recovery, and the role of District open space in the regional water cycle.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested calling the proposed panel a scientific hub or collective since it is not a citizens committee and suggested partnering with regional agencies or organizations.

Mr. Lenington commented the District plans to collaborate with other organizations but not using the partners as the lead scientists on an issue. The scientific advisory panel will be more focused on academic research and synthesizing scientific studies into a recommended action.

Public comments opened at 12:31 p.m.

Karen Holman inquired regarding potential California Environmental Quality Act impacts.

Mr. Lenington stated the reports would likely not create a CEQA impact, and any CEQA impacts of any panel recommendations would be analyzed as the recommendations are incorporated into the planning process.

Public comments closed at 12:33 p.m.

No Board action required.

ADJOURNMENT

President Cyr adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 1:39 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk