Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Administrative Office
330 Distel Circle
Los Altos, CA 94022

Tuesday November 19, 2019
2:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kishimoto called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at to order at 2:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr and Yoriko Kishimoto

Members Absent: Karen Holman

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No speakers present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

VOTE: 2-0-0 (Director Holman absent)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve October 22, 2019 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes

Director Holman arrived at 2:02 p.m.

Director Holman requested the District Clerk amend the minutes to state she suggested staff should hold a meeting with the various stakeholders to seek ***consensus*** not *compromise* as stated.

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to approve the amended minutes.

VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Science Advisory Panel Topics (R-19-149)

Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington introduced the representatives of the Science Advisory Panel (SAP): Letitia Granier, Erica Spotswood, and Stephanie Panlasigui from the San Francisco Estuary Institute and Tom Gardali from Point Blue Conservation Science.

Director Holman requested clarification regarding the panel would be able to declare the research on a topic complete.

The panel members explained that the answer is different for each of the topics based on the research available for a topic, the work product to be produced, the level of information needed by the District, and other factors.

Mr. Lenington stated the suggested topics may be further refined based on the budget, amount of time needed to complete the project, etc.

Mr. Lenington presented the staff report describing the proposed process for the SAP, including topic selection, development of the scope and budget for topic study, research, and reporting back to District staff and Board of Directors.

Ms. Panlasigui presented the proposed topics for study describing the topic to be researched and an overview of the type and amount of research that would need to be completed.

Committee members requested and received clarification on the various proposed topics including the amount of research currently available for topics and whether topics would require field study.

Director Holman inquired how the additional questions were generated.

Mr. Lenington explained that the topics were generated through a staff brain-storming workshop and submitted by members of the Board of Directors.

Ms. Panlasigui described the criteria used to rank the various topics proposed for study.

Director Holman suggested combining study of fisheries and beavers as beavers could have a positive impact on fisheries restoration.

Mr. Lenington reported that the beaver topic is divergent because it would study the ecological role of beavers in aquatic systems of the Santa Cruz mountains, but the fisheries research would focus on prioritizing future restorations efforts by the District based on climate change impacts

and future conditions. Also, it is unlikely that beavers would be able to be reintroduced to the Santa Cruz mountains.

Mr. Gardali spoke in favor further refining the study topics, which may lead to combining some topics later in the process.

The Committee members provided feedback on their preferred topics for study and the SAP members described the relative amount of time necessary to complete research and study of the topics.

Mr. Lenington described the Science Panel Fit criteria as the feasibility and reasonability of the work being completed by the SAP as opposed to contracting with a consultant to complete field studies, especially as relates to the status of soils in various ecosystems.

Director Holman suggested redesigning this topic to focus it on developing the scope of a program to study the soils, and the District could use that information to develop a scope of work for study by a consultant.

The Committee members provided feedback on the various topics and their reasoning for supporting their individual choices and discussed which topics to recommend for Board approval.

General Manager Ana Ruiz suggested bringing back five topics for discussion by the Board of Directors with a more refined scope and description of the topics to be studied.

Director Holman suggested providing additional information related to the topic of grazing greenhouse gasses and planned staff work on the topic when the item is presented to the Board of Directors.

Director Holman suggested providing a list of second tier topics for the second year of study when the item is presented to the Board of Directors, such as fisheries restoration on the San Mateo Coast.

Public comments opened at 3:53 p.m.

No speakers present.

Public comments closed at 3:53 p.m.

Motion: Director Holman moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to forward to the full Board of Directors the following two topics as recommended for study by the Science Advisory Panel:

- How can the District effectively monitor changes in plant and animal populations at the landscape scale?
- What are the visitation and recreational use benefits and trade-offs to fulfilling District goals, including natural resource protection and ecologically-sensitive public enjoyment and education?

Additionally, staff is directed to bring additional information for Board discussion and review, including refined project descriptions, scopes of work, level of research needed, and estimated project timeline, for the following three topics:

- What are the benefits (biodiversity, ecosystem services, survival rate, mitigation effectiveness, etc.) and costs of restoration planting compared to seeding or other revegetation options? How does this vary by species?
- What is the status of the soils in the various ecosystems of the District (chaparral, oak woodland, redwoods, grazing, farm lands, wetlands, etc.,) and what steps can the District take to improve and/or maintain them?
- What is the net climate impact of cattle grazing (potential increase in soil carbon minus cattle methane emissions)? What are the District's options, such as grazing regimes or dietary additives, to reduce emissions from cattle grazing?

Finally, staff is directed to add another category to the evaluation criteria to reflect Committee interest in the topics. This criterion will be used for topic evaluation for the following year to demonstrate previous Committee interest in studying specific topics not selected for study in the first year of the SAP. The topics that received Committee interest are as follows:

- How can the District effectively monitor changes in plant and animal populations at the landscape scale?
- What are the benefits (biodiversity, ecosystem services, survival rate, mitigation effectiveness, etc.) and costs of restoration planting compared to seeding or other revegetation options? How does this vary by species?
- What is the status of the soils in the various ecosystems of the District (chaparral, oak woodland, redwoods, grazing, farm lands, wetlands, etc.,) and what steps can the District take to improve and/or maintain them? *(As modified by the committee)*
- What does a "sustainable" or "restorable" quarry operation and reclamation plan look like?
- What are the visitation and recreational use benefits and trade-offs to fulfilling District goals, including natural resource protection and ecologically-sensitive public enjoyment and education?
- Where on the San Mateo Coast should the District focus fisheries restoration efforts in light of climate change?
- What are land conservation and management options to enable climate change-induced species migration and minimize species loss?
- What is the net climate impact of cattle grazing (potential increase in soil carbon minus cattle methane emissions)? What are the District's options, such as grazing regimes or dietary additives, to reduce emissions from cattle grazing?

VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kishimoto adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 3:54 p.m.

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Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk