



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

**December 9, 2019
Board Meeting 19-30**

SPECIAL MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Mountain View Community Center – Maple Room
201 S. Rengstorff Ave.
Mountain View, CA 94040

Monday, December 9, 2019

APPROVED MINUTES*

SPECIAL MEETING

Vice-President Holman called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Larry Hassett, Karen Holman, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Yoriko Kishimoto, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: Pete Siemens

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Budget & Analysis Manager Carmen Narayanan, Finance Manager Andrew Taylor, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Visitor Services Manager Matt Anderson, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Land & Facilities Manager Michael Jurich, Engineering & Construction Manager Jay Lin, Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight, Information Systems & Technology Manager Casey Hiatt, Public Affairs Manager Kori Skinner, Real Property Manager Mike Williams, Budget Analyst I Lupe Hernandez, and Budget Analyst I Elissa Martinez

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Paul Hansen representing the Arrowhead Co-op near Fremont Older spoke regarding the need for additional fire protection efforts in and near Fremont Older.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Siemens absent)

BOARD BUSINESS

1. Implementation Status of the Financial and Operational Sustainability Model (FOSM) Recommendations (R-19-162)

Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak provided the staff presentation and reviewed the implementation status of the Financial and Operational Sustainability Model Study (FOSM) recommendations, including the number of recommendations complete (53) and the remaining recommendations that are underway (7).

Director Riffle inquired whether staff has examined whether the recommendations are still relevant to the District and if staff is considering a second iteration of the FOSM.

General Manager Ana Ruiz reported staff is adapting the recommendations currently underway to the District's current needs. Ms. Ruiz reported staff is also looking at whether to complete a FOSM update in the coming fiscal year or next.

Mr. Jaskulak reviewed the projected increases to staff as outlined in the FOSM and how these were and are projected to be implemented based on current needs.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested additional staff may be needed in the General Manager's Office and Public Affairs Departments to help support increased community outreach.

Ms. Ruiz commented that some of the public outreach efforts are supported in other departments as well, and outside consultant assistance is also a consideration. Staff will monitor whether additional staff is needed.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone reported on two positions in Visitor Services that support public outreach, and Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan reported that the Planning Department is providing support to the La Honda Public Access Working Group.

Director Kishimoto spoke regarding the roles of ranger staff in patrolling preserves and supporting the education and interpretive elements of public access and suggested some of these roles and duties may need to be institutionalized in order to continue to provide similar services and information throughout the District and as the staff grows.

Vice-President Holman inquired about communications training for new staff members.

Ms. Ruiz reported that new staff do participate in a formal onboarding process and also in media training on a periodic basis.

Public comments opened at 9:40 a.m.

No speakers present.

Public comments closed at 9:40 a.m.

No Board action required.

2. Environmental Scan and Fiscal Year 2020-21 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives (R-19-163)

Ms. Ruiz described the purpose and process used to develop the annual environmental scan.

Ms. Chan described key themes of the environmental scan, including the District's continued strong financial position, a need to invest in cybersecurity, continued recruitment and retention challenges, increasing project complexity creating higher costs and longer timelines, and the impacts of increased public access. Ms. Chan presented both internal and external strengths, challenges & barriers, and opportunities for the District.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired regarding the benefits to the District of participating in cross-organizational activities.

Ms. Chan reported that as the District supports its partners, it builds relationships and can gain partner support for future District projects.

Vice-President Holman requested and received an update on mitigation measures related to the Highway 17 crossing projects. Vice-President Holman suggested staff provide a written update on this project at a future Board meeting.

Vice-President Holman suggested partnering with other agencies related to transportation to help solve preserve parking issues and encourage public transit to access District preserves. Vice-President Holman also suggested increasing District familiarity with building codes related to historic buildings to assist with the management of District structures in the future.

Director Kishimoto suggested including real-time parking data on the District's website related to parking at District preserves, such as Rancho San Antonio.

Board members also made suggestions for additional strengths, challenges & barriers, and opportunities.

Challenges and barriers discussed included maintaining continuity of service as the District's administrative office is relocated; being responsive to the diverse and rapidly changing social and physical environment; being mindful about maintaining the rural nature of the coastal area as the bayside area becomes more urban; acting as a regional leader in addressing climate change impacts; continuing District work related to diversity, equity, and inclusivity; addressing project desires and concerns with local communities and neighbors; staff's ability to continue to live and work in the region related to housing and transportation; the impact of traffic on preserve visitors; and farmer and agricultural workforce housing.

Opportunities covered included regional leadership; working with healthcare partners to promote the benefits of open space; advocacy related to climate change; creating cost efficiencies by

working with other agencies; and being more proactive in strategic communications by setting context for District actions and policy changes when informing the public of those decisions.

Vice-President Holman suggested reducing the number of acronyms used by the District in its communications rather assuming members of the public know their meaning.

Public comments opened at 10:25 a.m.

Paul Hansen spoke in support of the District's mission and urged the District to maintain the infrastructure needed to support the District's land acquisitions, especially related to wildfire protection.

Daniel Olstein spoke in support of recent District projects, including Bear Creek Redwoods and Tunitas Creek Beach, and proposed projects, such as Johnston Ranch, Bay-to-Sea trail connections, and Cloverdale Ranch. Mr. Olstein spoke in support of wildlife connectivity through the Coyote Valley and along Highway 17.

Public comments closed at 10:31 a.m.

Mr. Jaskulak reviewed the current goals and objectives included in the Strategic Plan and outlined staff's proposal to realign the Strategic Plan around the District's mission statements and programs.

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

The Board recessed at 11:49 a.m. and reconvened at 12:06 p.m. with Directors Cyr, Hassett, Holman, Kersteen-Tucker, Kishimoto, and Riffle present.

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

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Hassett seconded the motion to adopt the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives, as amended.

VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Siemens absent)

3. Draft Questions for Benchmark Survey (R-19-164)

Public Affairs Manager Kori Skinner reviewed the purpose and process for the benchmark survey. The benchmark survey will provide a baseline measure and would be repeated in approximately eighteen months to two years.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested including Golden Gate Recreation Area as one of the other park areas listed in the survey to understand public recognition of the District and our partners.

Director Riffle suggested asking respondents about their priorities, why they value open space, whether the District is addressing issues they feel are appropriate, and whether it is necessary for the District to differentiate itself from other land preservation agencies.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired how information will be used to differentiate views between the different wards, if these exist.

Ms. Skinner reported that the responses will inform District communication as a whole and related to areas of the District but may not change messages for individual wards because the survey may not be able to give detailed information based on the ward boundaries.

Public comments opened at 1:30 p.m.

No speakers present.

Public comments closed at 1:30 p.m.

No Board action required.

4. Board Exploratory Topics (R-19-165)

Ms. Ruiz commented that the Board has raised several topics in the last few months for initial Board discussion before directing staff to research them further, with one topic being the potential pursuit of a private fundraising effort.

Ms. Ruiz reported a potential parks bond measure is being planned for the 2022 ballot by various open space and parks organizations, including East Bay Regional Parks District, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Santa Clara County Parks, San Mateo Resource Conservation District, etc.

Mr. Jaskulak provided a review of the District's experience with private fundraising and concerns raised by the District's consultant who provided training to the Board and staff related to private fundraising. Mr. Jaskulak raised several issues the Board will need to consider when deciding whether to pursue private fundraising, including lack of staff time and experience, whether private fundraising would be prioritized over project completion, competing for funds with partner organizations, etc.

Vice-President Holman stated that she did not view private fundraising as being in competition with Vision Plan or Measure AA projects and would provide individuals another option for supporting the District and its projects.

Director Riffle stated he does not feel private fundraising is a high priority for the District. If needed, a separate organization could be created for fundraising projects in partnership with the District.

Director Kersteen-Tucker stated she is not interested in the District committing staff time to private fundraising.

Director Kishimoto spoke in support of working with outside groups to support projects by cultivating "friends of" groups for projects, similar to the Friends of Bear Creek Stables or Umunhum Conservancy, where a memorandum of understanding could be negotiated to provide support for projects.

Director Cyr expressed reluctance to involving the District in private fundraising. Director Hassett expressed hesitancy related to District pursuit of private fundraising citing competition with other fundraising organizations and limitations placed on funds received from private fundraisers.

Ms. Ruiz suggested waiting on any pursuit of private fundraising until after a decision has been made related to a potential 2022 parks bond measure.

By consensus the Board decided not to pursue private fundraising options until resolution of a potential 2022 parks bond measure.

District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth reviewed previous training topics and training sessions held by the Board and suggested options for future training opportunities.

The Board members suggested various ideas for training topics, including those related to how to effectively communicate with other elected officials, science-based and ecological topics regarding natural resources and land management, and inviting POST President Walter Moore to come present on the District's partnership with that organization.

Ms. Woodworth reported she will poll the Board to get any other training suggestions and work with staff to include the Board in lunchtime "brown bag" presentations on topics of interest that are currently presented at the staff level.

Finally Ms. Ruiz commented on the many regional issues that affect District residents and the District's ability to successfully complete projects.

Vice-President Holman suggested working with POST or other organizations to hold a symposium to bring together organizations to discuss these topics on a larger scale and with a larger audience.

Director Kishimoto commented on work being done by the Bay Area Open Space Council to discuss regional issues and the ability for the District to be a regional player and bring the topic of open space into the conversation.

Director Kersteen-Tucker commented on issues that directly affect coastal residents and the need to be a positive and productive partner on the coast, including potential development of a Coastal Good Neighbor policy. Director Kersteen-Tucker spoke in favor of discussing issues unique to the coast that may arise as the District opens more coastal areas to public access.

Director Riffle spoke in favor of prioritizing regional topics for discussion and potential areas where the District can lead or participate in addressing regional issues in the next several years.

Director Kishimoto commented that the District can play a larger role in discussions along the coast as a county-led strategic plan is developed.

Vice-President Holman spoke in favor of holding further discussions at the Board level to ensure Board and staff members are all clear on the District's message related to regional topics.

Ms. Ruiz reported staff will work on this topic further and return to the Board with additional information for discussion at a future Board meeting.

Public comments opened at 3:00 p.m.

No speakers present.

Public comments closed at 3:00 p.m.

No Board action required.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-President Holman adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 3:01 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk