



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Committee conducted this meeting in accordance with California Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20. All Board members and staff participated via teleconference.

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Director Kishimoto called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 1:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Karen Holman, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, and Yoriko Kishimoto

Members absent: None

Staff present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, General Counsel Hilary Stevenson, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Chief Financial Officer Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Planner I Melissa Borgesi

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth announced this meeting is being held in accordance with Governor Newsom's Executive Order allowing Committee members to participate remotely. The District has done its best to conduct a meeting where everyone has an opportunity to listen to the meeting and to provide comment. The public has the opportunity to comment on the agenda, and the opportunity to listen to this meeting through the internet or via telephone. This information can be found on the meeting agenda, which was physically posted at the District's Administrative Office, and on the District website. Ms. Woodworth described the process and protocols for the meeting.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported no public comments had been submitted.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to adopt the agenda, with a correction to Item 2 to reflect the correct committee title.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Select Committee Chair for Calendar Year 2020

Director Holman nominated, and Director Kersteen-Tucker seconded the motion to nominate Director Kishimoto to serve as Committee Chair for calendar year 2020.

Director Kishimoto accepted the nomination.

Public comment opened at 1:05 p.m.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported no public comments had been submitted.

Public comment closed at 1:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Approve the January 14, 2020 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to approve the January 14, 2020 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting minutes.

Public comment opened at 1:06 p.m.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported no public comments had been submitted.

Public comment closed at 1:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

3. Consideration of the La Honda Public Access Working Group Recommendations that address Board-approved Parking and Trailhead Access Goals at La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve (R-20-81)

General Manager Ana Ruiz provided opening comments thanking the La Honda Public Access Working Group (PAWG) and staff for their efforts on this multi-year project. Ms. Ruiz stated this is an important step in the project, and following Board consideration and action, the District will study the various sites to determine the feasibility and address the safety of the options and to meet project goals and objectives.

Senior Planner Tina Hugg provided the staff presentation describing the La Honda Open Space Preserve (OSP) and the creation and implementation to date of the La Honda Creek Master Plan adopted by the Board of Directors in 2012, including securing Measure AA funding, opening of the Sears Ranch Road parking lot, and formation of the PAWG. Ms. Hugg described the responsibilities and charge of the PAWG and the PAWG's process for studying, visiting, and deliberating on the various potential sites and suites of options. Ms. Hugg and Planner I Melissa Borgesi described the eleven site options considered by the PAWG, including the site locations, potential site uses, and site opportunities and challenges. Additionally, staff described various aspects of the sites that will require further study during the feasibility assessment.

The Committee members requested and received clarifying information regarding the various sites and potential uses.

Director Kishimoto suggested including a map showing the potential regional trail connections when the item is considered by the Board of Directors.

Director Holman suggested including photos of the views from the Red Barn in the Board meeting materials.

Director Kishimoto suggested the ranger residences near the Red Barn could potentially be repurposed to be an interpretive center or for other purposes.

Ms. Hugg described potential limited access and distribution of use options among several sites to help meet the project goals and objectives instead of locating all site uses at a single location.

Chair Kishimoto inquired regarding the Phase II trails for the La Honda Creek OSP and commented on the beauty of the area and maximizing public benefit and access.

Planning Manager Jane Mark described the proposed Phase II interior trails.

Ms. Hugg described the PAWG recommendations, which include a suite of sites with various limited access and site use options. Additionally, the PAWG made recommendations for near-term suggestions to expand public access to the preserve. Finally, Ms. Hugg presented the timeline and next steps for the project.

PAWG Chair Barbara Hooper described the work of the PAWG and thanked the District for creating its first working group of this kind. The District's staff and consultant worked well with staff and members of the PAWG to create a cooperative environment to keep all members informed. Ms. Hooper stated public participation was encouraged, including holding meetings on site and in the community. Ms. Hooper spoke in favor of keeping the Red Barn and surrounding area in its current state and thanked the committee members for visiting the sites.

PAWG Vice-Chair Denise Phillips thanked the District for convening and supporting the PAWG with time and resources. Ms. Phillips stated creation and the work of the PAWG demonstrates the District's commitment to its Good Neighbor Policy by encouraging public outreach. Ms. Phillips offered several suggestions for potential future working groups: advising the committee of the regional funding received by residents throughout the District earlier in the process; reminding the committee of their charge and role more often throughout the process; keeping the voting membership more equitable related to the number of representatives from a specific

geographic area or community; requiring committee members to complete meeting homework to provide for productive discussion; and allowing time for candidate statements before selecting the Chair and Vice-Chair at the beginning of the process.

Director Kersteen-Tucker recommended incorporating the various suggestions from the PAWG Vice-Chair into future working groups with the public and inquired how this can be accomplished.

Ms. Hugg stated staff compiled a list of “lessons learned” throughout the process from formation through the current state of the project. Staff also plans to debrief with all project team members to discuss what went well and areas for improvement.

Public comment opened at 2:49 p.m.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth read the submitted comments into the record.

Ross Heitkamp supported opening the middle area of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve to public access to provide additional options for the public and extend the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Mr. Heitkamp is in favor of bicycle access and direct access to the area from Highway 35. Finally, the Red Barn vista point is nice but not a significant concern.

Laurie McLean stated the only safe area to add parking to the central area of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve is an expansion of the Sears Ranch Road parking lot. Ms. McLean opposes adding additional parking along Highway 84 due to the high number of traffic accidents on Highway 84.

Patty Mayall thanked the La Honda Public Access Working Group for their time and dedication to the project. Ms. Mayall supports only allowing docent-led visitors in the Red Barn area to minimize negative impacts on the preserve. Ms. Mayall opposes additional parking along Highway 84 because the additional traffic will increase fire danger and traffic accidents in the area.

Cindy Crowe-Urgo opposes an additional parking lot and access to the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve via Highway 84 because it will create a traffic safety issue. Ms. Crowe-Urgo supports expanding parking at the Sears Ranch Road parking lot or a new lot in the Driscoll Ranch area.

Carole Corcoran Williams opposes any parking or access to the Red Barn property because it will be a hazard and liability for La Honda and Woodside residents and those who travel on Highway 84.

Ari Delay, chief of the La Honda Fire Brigade and member of the PAWG, expressed safety concerns regarding access to the Red Barn area and Gate LH07 from Highway 84. Mr. Delay opposes building a driveway and parking lot in front of the Red Barn.

Karl Lusebrink, member of the PAWG, stated his support for the final PAWG report and its well-reasoned analysis of the potential sites. Mr. Lusebrink supports a feasibility assessment of the PAWG recommendations to inform the District’s decisions to create safe and sustainable improvements and provide access to the public.

Alex Sabo, representing the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, stated the council's support for creating a multi-use regional trail connection and parking lot in the central and upper areas of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. A trail connection would also help complete the Bay Area Ridge Trail by closing a 5-mile gap and help Bay Area residents connect with nature.

Daniel Antonaccio stated his support for opening more of the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve to public access because access to open space is especially important during the current pandemic. Mr. Antonaccio thanked the District for keeping its preserves open throughout the pandemic to allow the public to have continued access to open space.

Sandy Sommer, member of the PAWG, stated her support for the consensus recommendations from the PAWG to study specific sites for feasibility and urged the Committee to consider options that will provide access to the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Matthew Sarna-Wojcicki inquired if bicycle access has been considered for the La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve and if it has not, inquired why. Mr. Sarna Wojcicki encouraged the District to consider bicycle access for this preserve.

Shani Kleinhaus asked that the District consider wildlife crossings for all new construction, including roads, parking and ADA trails, especially for newts and other small animals. Additionally, Ms. Kleinhaus asked that the District consider expanding riparian ecosystems wherever possible.

Public comment closed at 3:05 p.m.

Director Holman inquired regarding the timeline for potential expansion of uses at the Driscoll Event Center and how the deferment of expansion affected potential equestrian sites for the preserve.

Ms. Hugg stated the potential equestrian sites examined by the PAWG sought to provide equestrian access to the central area of the preserve; however, the Driscoll Event Center is located further south, and equestrians requested more centralized access, such as at Sears Ranch Road.

Director Holman suggested including in the Board materials a map that includes distances between the various sites being considered, and other details, such as the location of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Director Holman thanked the PAWG for its dedication and diligence in their work and deliberations. Finally, Director Holman stated that in response to the various site constraints, PAWG recommendations, community concerns, etc., the Board may need to reevaluate the project goals and objectives and whether all sites are recommended.

Directors Kersteen-Tucker and Kishimoto suggested that all of the sites be considered in the feasibility study, and following completion of the analysis, the Board can consider how to meet the project goals and objectives.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested including access at the Driscoll Event Center in the feasibility study to better understand potential vehicle access at the site. Director Kersteen-Tucker spoke in favor of the PAWG recommendations and stated the feasibility assessment will

provide the District with additional information to understand the various options for providing public access to the middle area of the preserve. Director Kersteen-Tucker spoke about the various sites and acknowledged the need to balance the traffic along Highway 84 with the need for public access.

Committee members provided their thoughts and comments regarding the potential impacts of the various sites on the area, such as on traffic, viewshed, natural resources, La Honda Elementary School, etc.

Chair Kishimoto applauded the PAWG process and offered her thoughts on the various site options and spoke in favor of permit parking over only docent parking near the Red Barn. Chair Kishimoto suggested providing additional information for dog and bicycle access on the Phase II trails.

Ms. Mark stated the La Honda Master Plan does call for expanding dog access, which will be further studied in a future project. Bicycle access will be considered in determining how to provide regional trail connections and trail connections within the preserve.

Chair Kishimoto requested staff provide additional information regarding the average number of vehicle accidents and fatalities in the area, if it is available. Additionally, Chair Kishimoto stated that the District should not let dangerous and reckless behavior and driving set the course for the District's mission to increase safe public access to open space on the Coast. Finally, Chair Kishimoto suggested exploring additional site options in the event the PAWG recommended sites are not feasible, such as at the current ranger residence or potential land acquisitions.

Director Kersteen-Tucker supported implementation of the various near-term solutions recommended by the PAWG. Additionally, Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested engaging with various stakeholders and partner agencies to address traffic safety along Highway 84 and seek opportunities for making Highway 84 safer for the community.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to forward the La Honda Public Access Working Group's recommendations to the full Board of Directors for consideration of approval and recommend that the Working Group be dissolved, and a recognition issued thanking the group for their contributions. Also, direct staff to engage with the California Highway Patrol and other stakeholders to make Highway 84 corridor safer, where and if possible

Friendly amendment: Director Holman offered a friendly amendment.

- Compile and forward the committee members' comments about the various sites to the Board of Directors
- Do not dissolve the PAWG yet in case it is needed later in the project
- Forward the near-term solutions as recommended by the PAWG for Board consideration

Director Kersteen-Tucker accepted the friendly amendments and enthusiastically thanked the PAWG and District staff for their efforts and recommendations on this project.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kishimoto adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at 3:57 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk