



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

October 21, 2020
Board Meeting 20-24

SPECIAL AND REGULAR MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

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

APPROVED MINUTES*

SPECIAL MEETING

President Holman called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Larry Hassett, Karen Holman, Yoriko Kishimoto, Curt Riffle, and Pete Siemens

Members Absent: Zoe Kersteen-Tucker

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, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Planner I Melissa Borgesi, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Senior Resource Management Specialist Coty Sifuentes-Winter

President Holman announced this meeting is being held in accordance with Governor Newsom's Executive Order allowing Board 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. President Holman described the process and protocols for the meeting.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: 6-0-0 (Director Kersteen-Tucker absent)

*Approved by the Board of Directors on November 18, 2020

BOARD BUSINESS**1. La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve Parking, Trailhead, and Public Access Recommendations to Forward into the Feasibility Study Phase (R-20-115)**

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 sites to determine the feasibility and address the safety of the options that have been identified by the PAWG for meeting the Board-approved 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 provided information regarding future trail work, distances between points of interest and access, and traffic collision data, as requested by the Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Director Kersteen-Tucker joined the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Director Riffle inquired regarding traffic collisions along Highway 35 and whether any involved District preserves.

Ms. Hugg reported staff was not provided with the location information for all of the collision data.

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.

Ms. Hugg presented a summary of the PAWG deliberations and recommendations. Additionally, Ms. Hugg described feedback received from the Planning and Natural Resources Committee. In order to expand public access while long-term solutions are studied, near-term solutions were suggested by the PAWG, such as docent-led hikes into the closed areas of the preserve, prioritization of new trail connections to existing parking lots, and interpretive signage for the Red Barn at the existing pullout on Highway 84. Finally, Ms. Hugg described the potential timeline for project development and implementation.

Director Riffle inquired if the District continues to explore potential acquisitions along Highway 84 for public access.

Ms. Hugg reported real property staff continually looks at potential acquisitions as they arise, but the topography of the area is challenging making it unlikely to find other areas of flat land for public access.

Director Siemens requested additional clarification for the size of the potential parking lots.

Ms. Hugg reported additional study will be needed to determine how many parking spots will be feasible in an area due to the landscape.

Director Hassett inquired regarding the uses for the Driscoll Event Center and suggested hiking access could be provided from the area and to seek a county permit for this use.

Planning Manager Jane Mark reported there is no current use permit for the site, which would be required through a county use permitting process.

Director Kersteen-Tucker supported expanding use of the Driscoll Event Center.

Director Kishimoto inquired regarding potential effects of a parking area on trees at the “E” locations.

Senior Resource Management Specialist Coty Sifuentes-Winter provided information regarding the process for studying the potential impact on trees in the area, which would occur based on the selected project options.

Public comment opened at 6:35 p.m.

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

Linda Rutherford stated additional paved trails are needed for older adults to be able to easily access and use the trails.

Barbara Hooper, the PAWG Chair, thanked the Board for responding to concerns raised by the La Honda Community related to public access to the La Honda Creek OSP. Ms. Hooper recommended implementation of the near-term options and preservation of the rural character of the Red Barn area.

Maryann Chwalek supported the near-term options and thanked the District for their attention to safety and traffic impacts when developing a public access plan.

Alex Sabo, on behalf of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council supported public access through the La Honda Creek OSP and the potential connections to the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Public comment closed at 6:38 p.m.

Director Kishimoto commended the PAWG and staff for their work on the project and thanked staff for responding to the requests for information by the Planning and Natural Resources Committee. Director Kishimoto also spoke about the need to balance protection of natural resources with public access. Additionally, Director Kishimoto commented on the redwoods at La Honda Creek OSP.

Director Riffle shared his thanks to the PAWG and District staff for the careful study of the project options and for the new and innovative options. Director Riffle expressed his appreciation for having PAWG members represent areas from throughout the District, which helped to create common interests between the coastside and bayside regions of the District.

Director Hassett thanked Ms. Hugg and Ms. Borgesi for their tremendous efforts in supporting the PAWG and thanked his fellow PAWG members for their thoughtful work and efforts on the project.

Director Kersteen-Tucker thanked the PAWG and the La Honda community for working well together on the project and thanked staff for their work to support the PAWG and this project.

Director Cyr thanked his representative to the PAWG for her service and to the entire PAWG and project team for their time and effort spent on the project.

Director Siemens thanked those who worked on the project and suggested increasing the number of parking spaces where possible due to the costs associated with highway improvements that will be required.

President Holman thanked all who worked on this project to help move it forward. President Holman suggested the feasibility study seek that there be no net impact to the resources as a result of this project.

Motion: Director Hassett moved, and Director Kersteen-Tucker seconded the motion to:

1. Direct the General Manager to proceed with feasibility studies of the parking, trailhead, and public access recommendations as presented by the La Honda Public Access Working Group, with any modifications requested by the Board of Directors.
2. Determine that the La Honda Public Access Working Group has fulfilled its charge and direct the General Manager to dissolve the group and issue a special recognition for their dedication and contributions, and keep members on the project notification list to solicit their individual input as part of future Committee and Board meetings on the project.
3. Approve the draft March 5, 2020 La Honda Public Access Working Group meeting summary since the Working Group will no longer meet as a body to approve their last meeting summary.

Amendment to the Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker offered an amendment to the motion to include hiking access at the Driscoll Event Center as part of the project feasibility study.

Ms. Hugg stated the Driscoll Event Center is a large site that may require its own planning process, which was one of the reasons it was not previously included in the PAWG study of public access to area.

Director Hassett stated the study of the Driscoll Event Center may need to be separated and focused on hiking access.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE MAIN MOTION: 7-0-0

Substitute Motion: Director Kishimoto moved to direct staff to work with CHP to discuss Highway 84 corridor safety, which would include the Driscoll Event Center area.

Substitute motion dies for lack of a second.

Substitute Motion: Director Siemens moved, and Director Cyr seconded the motion to direct staff to explore allowing public parking for hiking access at the Driscoll Event Center.

Director Riffle stated the PAWG and its recommendations focused on providing access to the central portion of the preserve, and the Driscoll Event Center could provide additional hiking access for the southern area for the preserve.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE SUBSTITUTE MOTION: 7-0-0

Director Kersteen-Tucker's amendment to the motion fails due to passage of Director Siemens's substitute motion.

ADJOURNMENT

President Holman adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 7:50 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk