



SPECIAL MEETING

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

Monday, December 7, 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.

DRAFT MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING

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, Curt Riffle, and Pete Siemens

Members Absent: None

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, Controller Mike Foster, Budget & Analysis Manager Mike Bower, Finance Manager Andrew Taylor, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Chief Ranger/Visitor Services Manager Matt Anderson, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Land & Facilities Manager Brandon Stewart, 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

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth 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. Ms. Woodworth described the process and protocols for the meeting.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Woodworth read the submitted public comments into the record.

Michael Castro expressed opposition to the District's ban on electric bikes on District preserves and requested District information supporting its decision to ban e-bikes.

BOARD BUSINESS

1. Progress Update on the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Capital Improvement and Action Plan (R-20-114)

Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan provided the staff presentation summarizing progress made on the fiscal year 2020-21 (FY21) projects, describing delays to some projects due to COVID-19 and carryover of some projects to the following fiscal year. Projects to be carried into the next fiscal year include: Lone Madrone Ranch fence installation, Purisima Upland site clean-up and soil remediation assessment, Bear Creek Stables site plan implementation, and Hawthorns public access site plan.

Director Kishimoto requested clarification regarding the allocation of state funding for the Cloverdale acquisition.

Ms. Chan reported staff is meeting with newly elected officials in order to discuss this funding and potential for District use of these funds.

Members of the Board praised staff for continuing to move forward with District projects in the face of difficult challenges, including COVID-19, wildfires, etc.

Public comment opened at 9:29 a.m.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported no public comments were submitted for this item.

Public comment closed at 9:29 a.m.

No Board action required.

2. 2020 Environmental Scan and Fiscal Year 2021-22 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives (R-20-112)

Chief Financial Officer Stefan Jaskulak described the purpose and process used to develop the annual environmental scan. Mr. Jaskulak described key themes of the environmental scan, including the District's continued stable financial position, high preserve visitation levels, increased project complexity impacting project costs and timelines, climate change impacts, potential legislative policy shifts, and recruitment and retainment of employees. Mr. Jaskulak presented both internal and external strengths, challenges & barriers, and opportunities for the District.

Director Riffle commented on the financial stress partner organizations may be under and inquired if the District should potentially fund a larger share of joint partner projects.

Mr. Jaskulak commented staff has been discussing this topic and developing potential funding plans. The Board may want to continue this discussion in the future.

Director Riffle commented on the higher visitation rates since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic stating he does not think this visitation will lessen in the future. Director Riffle also commented on the impact of climate changes through wildfire, drought, and the impact on biodiversity stating the District should remain focused on all three areas and not just the most pressing. Finally, Director Riffle commented that the focus on diversity, inclusion and awareness should continue to be a key theme and focus at the District.

Director Kersteen-Tucker commented on the potential long-term impact of continued remote working leading to fatigue for employees and suggested the District may be able to adapt to a remote/in-office hybrid approach to work once staff returns to the office.

Mr. Jaskulak reported on some of the measures being taken by the District to combat employee fatigue and stated staff will be returning at a future meeting with options for incorporating lessons learned from remote working into the District's work culture.

Director Kishimoto suggested the District can help promote open space as a way to unite people of all backgrounds. Additionally, climate change continues to be a driving theme for the District and suggested it may need to be its own goal with associated objectives in the strategic plan.

Director Hassett inquired what areas and partners the District could consider supporting with District funding and assistance for partner projects. Director Hassett commented on the need to focus on fuel-reduction projects.

Mr. Jaskulak reported only preliminary conversations are occurring, and staff will report back to the Board to receive direction once options are developed.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone reported on various District projects which require partner funding, such as the Highway 17 crossings. Partner funding for this type of projects could potentially be delayed and impact project timelines.

Director Siemens commented on the need to increase the amount of parking for future projects in anticipation of higher visitor use. Director Siemens also suggested the new administrative office space may not all be needed for staff if more members of staff continue to work from home more than before, stating additional space could be leased.

Director Riffle suggested additional focus and attention is needed on promoting various means of accessing District preserves, including public transportation, bicycles, and virtual visitation. Director Riffle commented on the work of the La Honda Public Access Working Group and the large amount of staff time and support needed to support this effort. Increased engagement of the coastside areas is needed as a large number of upcoming District projects are located in that area.

General Manager Ana Ruiz commented on the impact of remote working on District staff and the need to be mindful of what new initiatives are added for the upcoming fiscal year. Ms. Ruiz also provided responses to District comments, including the need to examine parking capacity at and near District preserves, partnerships with the San Mateo County Farm Bureau and other District partnerships.

President Holman suggested the District may want to consider partnering or collaborating with corporate partners for potential parking areas for shuttles, ideas to address employee fatigue, etc. President Holman suggested holding a volunteer and docent charette to promote personal interaction among them and suggested socially distant, small group gatherings with docents at the preserves once it is safe to do so.

The members of the Board commented on the incredible job being done by staff in adapting to the remote and changed working environment. President Holman suggested the District should consider reducing the number of projects or initiatives in response to the current working environment.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested expanding the District's partnerships with the agricultural communities and partner organizations on the Coast.

Ms. Ruiz commented corporate partnerships will be considered as the District continues its work to expand multi-modal access to preserves and that coastside outreach would include the coastside residents and the broader agricultural community.

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

Public comment opened at 10:28 a.m.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth announced no public comments were submitted to be read into the record.

Public comment closed at 10:28 a.m.

The item was continued until after item 3.

The Board recessed at 10:35 a.m. and reconvened at 10:42 a.m. with all Directors present.

The Board returned to this agenda item at 1:47 p.m. after agenda item 3.

Mr. Malone reviewed the process used to develop the District's strategic plan which guides the development of each year's budget and action plan. Mr. Malone reviewed the draft FY22 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives and proposed edits.

The Board suggested edits to the FY22 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.

Motion: Director Siemens moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to approve the FY22 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives, as modified.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0**3. Potential Focus Areas for Fiscal Year 2021-22 (R-20-113)**

Ms. Chan, Mr. Jaskulak, and Mr. Malone described potential focus areas for fiscal year 2021-22 (FY22), including preparations for the new administrative office, post-COVID adjustments, adequate staff support and resources for wildfire resiliency efforts, management and response to higher preserve use, net-zero impacts and resource management priorities, evaluation of e-bike use, and fiftieth anniversary planning and activities.

Director Cyr inquired regarding the flexibility of the new administrative office to adjust with a potential shift toward greater levels of remote working by staff.

Ms. Ruiz reported staff is looking at options for increasing flexibility to maximize the amount of office space that may be leased and to maximize the efficiency of the District-allocated office space.

Director Kishimoto suggested the District may want to reconsider the options for public comment during virtual meetings to allow for live audio comment for the public.

Ms. Woodworth commented that at the beginning of the virtual meetings, staff and the Board were concerned with the security of the meetings and the potential for “Zoom-bombing,” which was prevalent in many public agency meetings. The virtual meeting technology allows for live audio comment if the Board would like to provide additional direction on this topic.

The Board directed staff to bring forward an agenda item on this topic to a future Board meeting.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired how the District was taking steps to retain current District employees.

Ms. Ruiz reported on wellness trainings offered by the District, adjustment of work schedules to fit employee schedules, reduction of employee work hours upon request, etc.

Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight commented on the District’s onboarding program to connect with new employees, ongoing retention of employees, and frequent communication with staff regarding changes due to COVID-19 to provide a sense of stability.

President Holman inquired regarding options for balancing additional staff to support wildfire resiliency against potentially delaying other District projects if current staff is reallocated to wildfire resiliency efforts.

Mr. Malone commented on potential options, including additional staff to oversee fuel management projects, additional grant funding, shifting project priorities away from Measure AA projects, etc.

Director Siemens suggested additional staff may be needed soon in order to support fuel management and wildfire resiliency projects rather than wait to hire them later.

The Board recessed at 11:55 a.m. and reconvened at 12:42 p.m. with Directors Cyr, Hassett, Holman, Kersteen-Tucker, and Riffle present.

Director Siemens joined the meeting at 12:52 p.m.

Director Kishimoto joined the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

Public comment opened at 1:05 p.m.

Ms. Woodworth read the submitted public comments into the record.

Michael Ferreira with the Sierra Club opposed allowing e-bikes on District preserves because of the negative impact on natural resources.

Public comment closed at 1:06 p.m.

Director Cyr spoke in favor the District's measured approach to regulating and allowing e-bikes on District preserves.

Director Riffle commented on higher visitation rates and the impact of new preserve users on staff capacity to meet visitor needs. Director Riffle suggested a working group of various preserve users may be helpful in examining the topic of e-bike use at District preserves due to the various opinions of users and stated the public is eager to have additional guidance on this topic.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired regarding the report on the carrying capacity of preserves as studied by the Science Advisory Panel (SAP) will be presented.

Mr. Malone reported the SAP is studying the impact of public access and also the positive benefits of public access.

Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington reported staff plans to bring the information from the SAP in summer 2021.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested working with other organizations on the e-bike pilot program to help inform regional e-bike usage and to potentially shorten the timeline for the project. Additional data is needed to understand the impact on unpaved trails and supports allowing e-bikes on paved trails, which are often used as a commute route.

Director Siemens suggested prioritizing the e-bike pilot project to allow the District to give additional guidance on the topic sooner.

Director Hassett spoke regarding the impact of high visitation on preserve neighbors, including overflow parking negatively impacting neighbors. Director Hassett also spoke in favor of prioritizing the e-bike pilot project.

Director Kishimoto spoke in favor of taking a measured approach to e-bike regulations rather than prioritizing the pilot project over other District projects.

Directors Riffle and Kishimoto spoke in favor of focusing on the work at Lehigh Quarry including continuing the ad hoc committee.

President Holman spoke in favor of net zero impacts from District projects and stated impacts may need to be studied on a localized level and part of the focus should be avoiding impacts and raising consciousness regarding the impacts of projects.

Director Riffle suggested placing an item on an upcoming future Board meeting agenda regarding the timeline for the e-bike pilot program.

No Board action required.

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

- Development of a True Multi-Year Capital Improvement and Action Plan
- Progress Update on Measure AA Commitments

ADJOURNMENT

President Holman adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 3:08 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk