



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, December 15, 2020

DRAFT MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kishimoto called the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee to order at 1:00 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, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Resource Management Specialist II Matt Sharp Chaney

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.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Approve the July 28, 2020, August 4, 2020, and September 22, 2020 Planning and Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes.

Motion: Director Holman moved, and Director Kersteen-Tucker seconded the motion to approve the July 28, 2020, August 4, 2020, and September 22, 2020 Planning and Natural Resources Committee meeting minutes.

Public comment opened at 1:04 p.m.

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

Public comment closed at 1:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

2. Amendments to the Grazing Management Policy Pertaining Specifically to Reimbursements for Cattle Predation and Research on Safe Livestock and Wildlife Protection Measures (R-20-149)

General Manager Ana Ruiz providing introductory comments describing the development of the proposed policy amendments, including public outreach and meetings, consulting agricultural and conservation partners, etc. Ms. Ruiz reviewed the various purposes of conservation grazing, including grassland management, wildfire prevention through fuel reduction, and support grassland biodiversity.

Resource Management Specialist II Matt Sharp Chaney summarized the various workshops, public meetings, and partner consultations used to develop the proposed grazing policy amendments and the outcomes of these discussions. Mr. Sharp Chaney described various options for managing grassland resources, such as mowing, prescribed fire, herbicide, and grazing, and provided information on why the District uses grazing for its grassland management, including effectiveness, low cost, etc. Mr. Sharp Chaney outlined the District's current reimbursement practice for compensating conservation grazing tenants for confirmed livestock losses to predators and described the various wildlife and livestock protection measures allowed by the District. Mr. Sharp Chaney detailed the proposed amendments to the grazing policy.

The committee requested and received clarification regarding how livestock taking due to predation is confirmed.

Mr. Sharp Chaney reported a carcass is examined by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to make the determination. Additionally, the types of wounds inflicted are studied and are indicative of the type of predator involved in the livestock taking.

Director Kersteen-Tucker inquired if scientific comparisons have been made between the biodiversity of grazed and ungrazed lands.

Mr. Sharp Chaney reported the recent scientific literature review by the Science Advisory Panel found that appropriately grazed lands can support native wildlife and biodiversity.

Resource Management Specialist II Lewis Reed reported most monitoring on District lands is for grazed sites and suggested the monitoring could be expanded to ungrazed sites, including fencing of specific areas of the landscape to compare the effects of grazing.

Senior Resources Management Specialist Julie Andersen reported the District monitors specific types of wildlife throughout the District, which helps staff understand biodiversity throughout the District, including any effects caused by conservation grazing.

Director Holman inquired regarding the difference between the District's two missions and whether they could be changed.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone reported the coastal mission was developed as part of the coastal annexation process and changing it would likely have larger implications.

Director Holman requested and received clarification regarding the purpose of fencing and penning on grazing lands.

Public comment opened at 2:39 p.m.

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

Ted Vomacka stated cattle losses should not be reimbursed and are the cost of doing business for livestock grazers.

Rea Freedom expressed concern regarding allowing cattle on public open space stating the cattle cause a negative impact on the land and wildlife by destroying small streams and wetlands and preventing wildlife, such as rabbits and deer, from being able to use the land.

Shani Kleinhaus shared comments in support of fencing during vulnerable times of the day and year and in support of diversionary feeding.

SCVAS commented that tension exists between a profitable grazing enterprise and conservation grazing and suggested the District have its own herd for conservation grazing.

Mohan Gurunathan shared comments in opposition to grazing on public lands stating taxpayer funds are subsidizing cattle ranching. Grazing is destructive to the natural landscape and a contributor to climate change.

Anushka Drescher supported the use of native grazers such as deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope, which could be reintroduced to the area.

Public comment closed at 2:43 p.m.

Mr. Sharp Chaney responded to the comments provided by the public, including the well-established cow-calf method of grazing utilized by the local economy, the high cost associated with the District having its own herd of cattle for conservation grazing, the unlikeliness that native tulle elk could replace conservation grazing due to various complications, which would make it difficult for continually managing the grasslands.

The Committee members made suggestions for various edits to the proposed grazing policy amendment.

Page one. Ungulate animals, which are now ~~mostly extinct~~ locally extirpated.

CLARIFY GM-3 Monitor water quality in ponds, **wetlands**, and **watercourses** with unrestricted livestock access. Does not allow cattle into any water source

GOAL GM- Where appropriate, manage district land with ~~livestock~~ conservation grazing

Update page 2 to read barbed wire instead of barbwire.

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

1. Forward a recommendation to the Board of Directors for approval consideration of the proposed Grazing Management Policy amendments with any additional changes requested by the Committee, including
2. Forward a recommendation to the full Board to authorize the General Manager to make amendments to existing grazing leases to implement the proposed Grazing Management Policy amendments.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 3-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kishimoto adjourned the meeting of the Planning and Natural Resources Committee at 3:00 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk