



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

March 4, 2021
Board Meeting 21-08

SPECIAL MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Thursday, March 4, 2021

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 Riffle called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 9:30 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, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Jennifer Woodworth, Public Affairs Manager Kori Skinner, Planning Manager Jane Mark, IST Manager Casey Hiatt, Budget & Analysis Manager Mike Bower, Management Analyst II Lupe Hernandez, Management Analyst II Elly Martinez, Real Property Manager Mike Williams, Land and Facilities Manager Brandon Stewart, Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight, Engineering & Construction Manager Jay Lin, Chief Ranger Matt Anderson, Natural Resources Manager Kirk Lenington, Finance Manager Andrew Taylor

President Riffle 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 Riffle described the process and protocols for the meeting.

*Approved by the Board of Directors on March 24, 2021

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

1. Fiscal Year 2021-22 and Fiscal Year 2022-23 Capital Improvement and Action Plan Review (R-21-33)

General Manager Ana Ruiz provided opening comments summarizing the agenda topics for the retreat. Additionally, staff proposes a true two-year capital improvement and action plan (CIAP), and staff hopes to transition to a three- or five-year action plan in coming years in order to better allocate staffing and funding resources and meet long-term project goals.

Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak reviewed the budget planning cycle. Mr. Jaskulak reviewed the preliminary fiscal year 2021-2022 (FY22) budget, including proposed expenditures and estimated revenues and reviewed the key themes and updates to the Strategic Goals and Objectives from the December 7, 2020 Board retreat.

Director Kishimoto requested information from the previous budget years be included in the Action Plan and Budget Committee report in order to allow the Committee to review any budget trends.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested including a benchmark tracking of Measure AA portfolio and project progress to help members of the public understand progress being made.

Mr. Jaskulak reported similar information is included in the Measure AA Annual Accountability Report.

Assistant General Manager Brian Malone reviewed the FY22-FY23 Capital Improvement and Action Plan (CIAP) priorities and Measure AA five-year list of projects and progress on each. Mr. Malone described the development of the proposed FY22-23 CIAP, including resource loading, application of the Board-approved Measure AA prioritization criteria, and the Vision Plan. Mr. Malone reviewed the grant and partnership funding secured for FY22 projects.

The Board reviewed the four programs of the draft CIAP, requested and received clarification regarding the projects included.

Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan reviewed the land acquisition and preservation program describing potential opportunities for new land acquisitions and land conservation, including the proposed Cloverdale Ranch and Johnston Ranch purchases and conservation projects in southern Santa Clara County, and potential trail and access easements to support trail connections.

Director Kishimoto inquired regarding the Cloverdale Ranch water system and requested a brief update on the project.

Ms. Chan reported staff provides annual updates on this project and stated staff continues to work with the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) to assess the Cloverdale water system.

Real Property Manager Mike Williams provided an update on the water system stating there have been project delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but work continues on this project.

Director Siemens expressed concern regarding the District administering the Cloverdale water system.

Ms. Chan reported staff will provide additional updates to the Board following the consultant's analysis of the Cloverdale water system, which is approximately 50% complete.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested there may be opportunity in the coming years for an agricultural and nature education center somewhere along the San Mateo Coast. It could potentially also act as a meeting location and demonstration garden to help promote the viable agricultural use of the land. Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested it could be located at Elkus Ranch, where an agricultural education center already exists and is at a potential junction of the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail.

Director Hassett expressed concern regarding the District administering the Cloverdale water system. Director Hassett agreed with Director Kersteen-Tucker's suggestion to work with Elkus Ranch for an education center.

President Riffle commented on the large magnitude of the Cloverdale Ranch projects and suggested more frequent staff updates may be needed as the project progresses.

Public comments opened at 11:04 a.m.

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

Shani Kleinhaus commented that public access should be considered with caution because it can further fragment continuous habitat for wildlife and native plant communities and can disrupt their behavior. Additional budget funds are needed to evaluate and monitor the impacts of human behavior on flora and fauna.

Daniel Olstein thanked the District for its ongoing collaboration and protection of coastal farms and ranches, including Johnston and South Cowell ranches.

Public comments closed at 11:08 a.m.

Mr. Malone reviewed projects associated with the natural resource protection and restoration program, including policy review and development (agricultural and mitigation policies and carbon storage study), badger and burrowing owl habitat assessment, Alma Bridge Road newt mortality and population study, Highway 17 wildlife crossing, Lehigh Quarry Reclamation Plan review, various restoration projects, and wildland fire resiliency program. Mr. Malone reported staff is requesting an additional position to support the wildfire resiliency program and fuel reduction work.

Director Holman inquired regarding potential gaps in the District's wildlife monitoring programs.

Mr. Malone reported that there are currently no gaps in the District's marbled murrelet monitoring program, and staff is helping support programs by other organizations to identify and support filling gaps in their programs. The District's Science Advisory Panel is also looking at the District's ability to manage and analyze data from its monitoring programs.

Director Kersteen-Tucker commented on the agricultural policy and the importance of local agriculture to support the food system.

President Riffle spoke in support of the agricultural policy moving forward in the coming fiscal year and in support of the mitigation policy and in favor of looking at mitigation on a Districtwide and regionwide scale.

Public comments opened at 11:46 a.m.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported no additional public comments were submitted.

Public comments closed at 11:46 a.m.

The Board recessed at 11:48 a.m. and reconvened at 12:10 p.m. with all directors present.

Ms. Chan reviewed projects in the public access, education, and outreach program, including Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and parking lot, Highway 35 multi-use trail crossing and parking, Alpine Road Regional Trail, Highway 17 crossing, regional trail connections, and increasing public access and La Honda Creek and Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserves (OSP). Additionally, projects supporting public access at the Hawthorns area, multimodal access to Rancho San Antonio and Purisima OSPs, e-bike policy evaluation, and ADA barrier removal continue to move forward.

Director Kishimoto inquired regarding potential staging areas for Long Ridge OSP.

Ms. Chan reported staff will be looking into potential parking improvements for this area in FY23.

Director Hassett inquired regarding potential use of the Driscoll Event Center parking lot for hikers.

Ms. Chan reported San Mateo County staff confirmed that the District's plan to allow permit-only hiking use of that parking lot is within the District's current use permit, and implementation is progressing with a proposed April 1 start date.

President Riffle commented on the potential use of the Driscoll Event Center for equestrian events and supported expanded use of the Event Center.

Director Hassett spoke in favor of working with Santa Clara County regarding parking options at Long Ridge OSP.

Public comments opened at 12:48 p.m.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported no additional public comments were submitted.

Public comments closed at 12:48 p.m.

Mr. Malone reviewed projects in the vehicles, equipment, facilities, and other program, including updates to Board policies and procedures, Bear Creek Stables operator request for proposals and lease, District facilities and structures maintenance, ward boundary redistricting, 50th anniversary planning, and radio system assessment and upgrade.

Director Kishimoto inquired regarding ongoing remote work for staff and future policy changes to expand telework and flexible schedules and potential implications on District office facilities.

Ms. Ruiz commented District staff is looking at options for increasing staff telework and flexibility and is discussing options for decreased needs for office space at the new administrative office.

Director Holman requested clarification regarding the historical structure inventory (project #97) and expressed concern this project is currently underfunded.

Planning Manager Jane Mark provided additional information regarding the project and stated it is currently an administrative project being completed by District staff.

Public comments opened at 1:44 p.m.

District Clerk Jennifer Woodworth reported no additional public comments were submitted.

Public comments closed at 1:44 p.m.

Mr. Malone reviewed CIAP projects to support various areas of interest, including agriculture and diversity.

President Riffle and the other Board members thanked staff for their efforts to prepare for the retreat and ongoing support for the District.

President Riffle suggested tracking grant funding to support District projects.

Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Kishimoto seconded the motion to affirm the proposed Fiscal Year 2021-22 and Fiscal Year 2022-23 Capital Improvement and Action Plan.

Director Holman commented project 97 is significantly underfunded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

2. Approval of a Two-Year, Limited Term Public Affairs Specialist II Position (R-21-33)

Public Affairs Manager Korrine Skinner provided the staff presentation explaining the need for an additional public affairs staff member and the expedited process due to the ongoing planning for the District’s 50th anniversary events. Ms. Skinner described the retooling of the District’s communication and outreach strategies and the impacts on public affairs staff workload. Ms. Skinner described the role of the proposed staff member and proposed projects they will support, Ms. Skinner described the fiscal impact of the potential staff position.

President Riffle commented the position may be needed beyond two years, which may help with recruitment efforts.

Ms. Skinner stated additional projects could move forward with the additional staff position and agreed position candidates were interested in a permanent position, if available.

Director Kersteen-Tucker spoke in favor of a permanent position because the communication and outreach needs continue to increase.

Directors Kishimoto and Holman expressed concern regarding a permanent position due the current economic climate.

Director Hassett stated the position could be hired on a two-year basis and reevaluating the position at that time.

Public comments opened at 2:20 p.m.

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

Public comments closed at 2:20 p.m.

Motion: Director Cyr moved, and Director Hassett seconded the motion to approve a two-year, limited term Public Affairs Specialist II position to quickly add in-house capacity for the planning, preparation, and implementation of year-long public facing activities, events, and gatherings to commemorate 50 years of public support that has led to 50 years of accomplishments in land conservation, natural resource restoration, public access, and support of local agriculture.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

ADJOURNMENT

President Riffle adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 2:23 p.m.

Jennifer Woodworth, MMC
District Clerk

