



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-25-81
Meeting 25-16
June 11, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 9

AGENDA ITEM

Formation of a new Hawthorns Historic Complex Ad Hoc Committee

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Form a new Hawthorns Historic Complex Ad Hoc Committee of the Board of Directors pursuant to Board Policy 1.04, *Board Committees*. Consistent with other recent Ad Hoc Committees of the Board, these meetings would be compensable.

SUMMARY

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) is planning for the future use and management of the Hawthorns Historic Complex (Historic Complex) in the Hawthorns Area of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve. At the May 28, 2025 study session ([R-25-68](#)), the Board of Directors (Board) reviewed the final results of the Lower Barn feasibility study which outlined the challenges of implementing the Lower Barn Project (a potential public-private partnership), discussed the limitations and constraints encountered regarding any future re-use of the structures in the Historic Complex, and reviewed options for next steps. After discussions concluded, the Board requested that staff return on June 11, 2025, with a recommendation of forming a new Board Ad Hoc Committee to work directly with the Town of Portola Valley (Town) and Woodside Fire Protection District (WFPD) elected officials and staff to further explore options for the Lower Barn project and other structures in the Historic Complex.

DISCUSSION

The Board previously formed a Historic Complex Ad Hoc Committee during the September 13, 2023 Board meeting ([R-23-103](#)) to review and guide the high-level development of preliminary use and management ideas for the Historic Complex. In response to an unanticipated and potentially valuable partnership opportunity related specifically to the Lower Barn, one of the structures in the complex, the Ad Hoc Committee shifted their focus in early 2024. The Ad Hoc Committee explored the barn's rehabilitation and re-use as programming space that would serve people with disabilities and be available to the broader public when not in use. To inform the viability of rehabilitation and re-use of the Lower Barn, a focused, high-level feasibility study was conducted in 2024, and preliminary results were presented to the Board on January 22, 2025 ([R-25-17](#)). Following the regular meeting of January 22, 2025, staff analyzed in greater detail the Town and Woodside Fire Protection District (WFPD) regulations related to permitted uses, access, and infrastructure and presented the findings at the May 28, 2025 Board study session. The feasibility study determined that re-use options are severely limited for the Lower Barn (or any other structure) because of the Conservation Easement and current zoning regulations, in particular road upgrades needed to fulfill WFPD code requirements that are prohibited under the

Conservation Easement. This problematic obstacle in turn makes it difficult to form financially viable partnerships for re-use of the historic structures, even when the re-use provides a tangible public benefit. Improvements to the buildings and site, regardless of public programming use, will be expensive and require ongoing maintenance costs, therefore the lack of partnership opportunities to help offset costs limits the District's options.

After receiving the information and public comments, the Board directed staff to return on June 11, 2025, with a recommendation to form a new Board Ad Hoc Committee. The General Manager recommends that the new Ad Hoc Committee accomplish the following tasks: 1) work directly with the Town and WFPD elected officials and staff to explore creative solutions to re-use the Lower Barn as programming space for adults with disabilities that is consistent with the Conservation Easement held by Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST); 2) work directly with the Town and WFPD elected officials and staff to explore the District's options for future use and management for the other structures in the Historic Complex that are consistent with the Conservation Easement; and 3) explore the feasibility of transferring ownership of the Historic Complex to a government or non-profit entity. The first task is the most time sensitive, given that potential partners will likely seek other opportunities if there is no apparent solution to the conflict between the Conservation Easement and Town/WFPD requirements. The Ad Hoc Committee would consist of three Board members appointed by the Board President with consent of the Board.

This Ad Hoc Committee would familiarize itself with the Conservation Easement, engage directly with elected officials and staff at the Town and at the WFPD to better understand the intent of the Residential Estate (R-E) Zoning District regulations and the Town's interest and input for the Historic Complex, and identify streamlined permitting strategies. The Ad Hoc Committee would also study other options available to the District for the other structures in the Historic Complex, including transfer of ownership, and return to the Board with a recommendation at a later date.

The success of the Ad Hoc Committee process depends on building strong relationships with the Town and WFPD. One of the Ad Hoc Committee's initial tasks would be to reach out to the Town to gauge their willingness to participate in collaborative discussions. If the Ad Hoc Committee, with support from the Town and WFPD, can identify a way to solve the constraints posed by the current zoning and permitting that would allow the Lower Barn project to move forward in alignment with the Conservation Easement, that would increase the chances of finding future partners for other structures within the Historic Complex. Without insight into internal Town processes and given the challenges District staff experienced in coordinating with staff from both the Town and WFPD over the past year, discussions are expected to take a minimum of one year.

Staff Resources Supporting The Ad Hoc Process

The Board requested that staff provide information regarding the staff resources required to support the Board Ad Hoc Committee in fulfilling its charge and responsibilities. Four (4) key departments would be involved with the Ad Hoc Committee: (1) General Manager's Office for overall leadership guidance and Board engagement, (2) Planning Department for planning, policy and technical guidance and agency staff coordination, (3) Real Property Department for interpretation of property rights, and (4) Public Affairs Department for intergovernmental affairs coordination and communications. Other supporting departments such as Engineering &

Construction, Natural Resources, Information Systems & Technology (GIS), Visitor Services and Land Stewardship and Trails staff would be consulted intermittently as the Board Ad Hoc Committee evaluates options. As the Hawthorns Historic Complex project is an existing project on the Capital Improvement and Action Plan, staff resources from these departments have already been allocated to support the project. While the scope of the project will shift to supporting the Board Ad Hoc process, it has been determined that existing staff resource allocation is sufficient and no impact to other projects is anticipated. The new FY26 scope for the Hawthorns Historic Complex Partnership would be updated as follows:

FY26 Scope

Work with a new Board Ad Hoc Committee to explore and identify viable solutions with the Town and WFPD that facilitate re-use and rehabilitation of the historic structures, with a priority given to the Lower Barn. If feasibility ~~board approval~~ of the Lower Barn project is confirmed, conceptual plan development for Lower Barn partnership would be initiated.

~~Initiate public and stakeholder engagement.~~

The District has reassigned a Planner III, who has extensive municipal, land use and permitting experience, to take over project management responsibilities, work with the General Manager's Office in the formation of the Board Ad Hoc Committee, and provide support to the Ad Hoc Committee in their engagement with the Town and WFPD, in order for the current project manager, also a Planner III, to focus on the Skyline Field Office Rebuild project, which is a Board-approved Big Rock project. Senior Planner support will continue unchanged.

FISCAL IMPACT

Formation of a new compensable Ad Hoc Committee is not expected to result in a new fiscal impact. Per the current Board policy on *Meeting Compensation, Reimbursement of Authorized Necessary Expenses for Performance of Official Duties, and Adoption of Ethics Training Requirements Pursuant to Government Code Section 53232 et seq. (AB 1234)*, the maximum allowable total compensation per Board member at the current rate shall be one hundred and twenty-one dollars and twenty-eight cents (\$121.28) per day and seven hundred and twenty-seven dollars and sixty-eight cents (\$727.68) per calendar month, irrespective of the number of meetings attended each day or each month (Policy 6.06). The Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget does not include a specific allocation for the proposed new Ad Hoc Committee. However, the budget may be sufficient depending on the total number of compensable meetings that are scheduled during the fiscal year. Should there be insufficient funding over \$10,000, additional funds will be requested during the quarterly budget amendment process.

PRIOR BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

- March 23, 2022: Board reviewed and approved the Hawthorns Area vision and goals ([R-22-45, meeting minutes](#))
- September 13, 2023: Board formed an Ad Hoc Committee to explore ideas for the future use and management of the Historic Complex ([R-23-103, meeting minutes](#))
- April 10, 2024: FYI to the Board regarding a partnership opportunity for the Lower Barn ([April 10, 2024, meeting minutes](#))

- July 10, 2024: Board reviewed and commented on the Vision and Goals for the Hawthorns Historic Complex ([R-24-86](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- July 10, 2024: Board reviewed and approved the Interim Stabilization and Debris Removal Plan for the Historic Complex ([R-24-87](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- August 28, 2024: Board approved the Hawthorns Historic Complex Vision and Goals ([R-24-109](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- October 9, 2024: Board received an informational presentation on the Hawthorns Historic Complex Lower Barn Partnership feasibility work ([R-24-122](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- January 22, 2025: Board reviewed the feasibility work conducted to date on the Lower Barn and directed staff to pursue the Lower Barn partnership opportunity ([R-25-17](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- May 28, 2025: Board received an informal presentation on the results of the feasibility study and the limited next step options for the Historic Complex and directed staff to return to the Board with a recommendation to form a new Ad Hoc Committee to work directly with the Town ([R-25-68](#), attached meeting minutes)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval by the Board, the Board President will select Committee members in accordance with Board policy. The General Manager or designee will schedule a meeting as soon as practicable.

Attachment

1. Draft May 28, 2025 Board meeting minutes

Responsible Department Head:

Jane Mark, AICP, Planning Department

Prepared by:

Erica Strohmeier, Planner III, Planning Department

Contact person:

Erica Strohmeier, Planner III, Planning Department



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

ATTACHMENT 1

May 28, 2025
Board Meeting 25-15

SPECIAL AND REGULAR MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Wednesday, May 28, 2025

*The Board of Directors conducted this meeting in accordance with
California Government Code section 54953.*

DRAFT MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Vice President Gleason called the special meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 5:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Yoriko Kishimoto, Margaret MacNiven, and Curt Riffle

President Cyr announced that he is participating in the meeting via teleconference using the AB 2449 “just cause” exemption due to illness and disclosed that there are two adults, his wife and granddaughter, present in his remote location.

Members Absent: Karen Holman

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, Assistant General Counsel Egan Hill, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Stephanie Gross, Planning Manager Jane Mark, Planner III Galli Basson, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Planner III Erica Strohmeier, Senior Capital Project Manager Paul Kvam, and Senior Real Property Agent Kelly Hyland

Vice President Gleason announced that 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.

Director Holman arrived at 5:09 p.m.

1. Hawthorns Historic Complex Feasibility Study Results and Options (R-25-68)

Planner III Galli Basson presented. Planning Manager Jane Mark, Senior Planner Tina Hugg, Planner III Erica Strohmeier, Senior Capital Project Manager Paul Kvam, Senior Real Property Agent Kelly Hyland assisted in answering Board questions.

Director Riffle commented that the easement is old, constrained, and difficult to change, and asked if the easement holder would be willing to change the easement before even pursuing any changes.

Ms. Basson stated that Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) holds the conservation easement and takes that responsibility seriously, particularly when the easement terms were established by a donor. She noted that it is highly unlikely they will change the terms.

Director Holman asked whether discussions have taken place with POST regarding the easement and if the options presented today have been reviewed with them.

Ms. Basson remarked that POST has reviewed the proposals to ensure there is alignment with the conservation easement values.

General Manager Ana Ruiz stated that based on conversations with POST, the conservation easement was purposely made to be restrictive. Any changes would be counter to the reason why the easement was put in place and any changes would be very unlikely.

Director Holman commented that a conversation should be had with the originator of the covenant of the easement to determine whether the originator's perspective has changed and if the easement still aligns with their original intent.

Planning Manager Jane Mark stated that staff have been in discussion with POST since 2014 to explore any flexibility in the conservation easement. POST has been adamant that the conservation easement must be protected. She added that it would be rare that the conservation easement would be modified for a potential development proposal, and staff does not believe that POST would be willing to approach the Woods family to modify the conservation easement.

Director Holman acknowledged POST's legal and moral obligations as the holder of the conservation easement and clarified that she is not asking POST to violate those responsibilities. Rather, she suggested that POST consider approaching the Woods family to inform them of the current situation and determine whether their original intent still aligns with the existing easement.

Director Kersteen-Tucker asked if options 6 and 7 could be combined and suggested that if an ad hoc committee is convened, part of its discussion should include exploring potential partners such as non-profits or the county.

Ms. Basson responded that both options can be combined, and that the Board would determine the charge of the ad hoc committee and that it could include exploring potential partners.

Director MacNiven inquired why the cottage was not included on the list to consider for reuse as a single-family housing.

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Ms. Basson stated the cottage can be included as an option, but the garage was added because it is in better condition and requires fewer upgrades.

Director Kishimoto commented that viable options are Option 2, the reuse of the garage, or Option 3 restoration similar to the Alma College Culture landscape.

Public comment opened at 5:58 p.m.

Mary Huffy, Councilmember for the Town of Portola Valley and liaison to the District since January 2025, expressed her commitment to strengthening the partnership between the Town and the District. She highlighted that open space organizations are the Town's largest landholders which aligns with their values and general plan. She emphasized the importance of ongoing coordination and communication and an opportunity to discuss the skyline corridor, focusing on issues like road safety, fire preparedness, housing readiness, and responsible land management. She shared that she was not aware of discussions related to access to Alpine Road until last week. She clarified that she was not speaking on behalf of the full council but reaffirmed her commitment and deep care about the work and is ready to support a vibrant and responsible partnership between the District and the Town.

Director Kersteen-Tucker noted one of the options for the Board is to create an ad hoc committee and asked how Ms. Huffy would envision such a committee working with the Town council.

Ms. Huffy commented that the Town would entertain the idea but would need to attain the authorization of the council. She noted that the Town has reviewed 51 plots in the town and identified only four affordable housing sites, with the Hawthorns property being one of them. She added that the Town has an ad hoc committee focused on identifying housing sites.

Mike Bushue expressed opposition to destroying or mothballing the buildings.

Karen Askey, Chair of the Site Evaluation ad hoc committee working with Ms. Huffy, encouraged the Board to consider Option 7 and engage in further discussion with the Town.

Public comment closed at 6:10 p.m.

Director Kersteen-Tucker commented that she is in favor of Options 6 and 7.

Director Riffle asked how staff would like to proceed with Board input.

Ms. Basson responded that she is seeking Board input of the desired next steps. Once the Board decides on the direction, staff will return to the Board with more detailed information. She noted that the Board could pursue Options 1-5 or a combination of Options 6 and 7. If the Board is interested in partnering with the Whites on the lower barn, forming a Board ad hoc committee would be the appropriate next step.

Director Riffle noted that there can be many deviations of the proposed options and suggested that the Board could charge the ad hoc committee with returning to the Board with more realistic and feasible options.

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Ms. Basson agreed, stating that different permutations of each option is possible. The Board will need to provide a specific charge to the ad hoc committee.

Director Riffle expressed support for forming an ad hoc committee, noting the potential opportunities and the importance of the public-private partnership with the Whites. He acknowledged that the Whites may need to make a decision soon and suggested the ad hoc committee could be tasked specifically with determining what can or cannot be done to preserve the partnership. He added that other options could be explored later or, if necessary, inform the Whites that the partnership may not be able to proceed.

Ms. Ruiz stated that there is currently a viable and time-sensitive partnership with the Whites. She suggested that if the Board approves Option 7, the partnership should be pursued as the lead, while also engaging in conversations with the Town regarding the other structures due to their interest. She emphasized the need to move the lower barn project forward in an expedited manner, while concurrently exploring uses, partnerships, and funding for the rest of the site.

Director Kersteen-Tucker suggested that if the ad hoc committee is convened that it would be helpful to clarify with the Town if they are willing to work with District on something other than multifamily housing.

Director Holman commented that she is in favor of forming an ad hoc committee and combining Options 6 and 7.

Director Gleason emphasized the importance of preserving the value of the partnership with the Whites. He also supported combining Options 6 and 7, stating that if there is an opportunity to serve both the partnership and the Town's goals through discussion, it would be a fantastic outcome.

Director Riffle asked Director Kersteen-Tucker if she could elaborate in her thinking of Option 6.

Director Kersteen-Tucker responded that if the District were to pursue a multi-housing project, it would fall outside the District's area of expertise and would likely involve transferring ownership of the property. She also inquired whether there are any potential partnerships in addition to the Whites to transferring ownership for a portion of the property.

Director Riffle asked if she is suggesting that the ad hoc committee explore all the different options that the District might have, whether that involves working with the Whites, considering some form of multi-housing, and if the District is not able to pursue those options, then determine whether there is another entity that could figure it out, or identify a potential new owner.

Director Kersteen-Tucker stated she is fine with either approach and noted that it could be a fairly quick conversation to determine whether there is any interest from the County, the Whites, or the Town.

Senior Planner Tina Hugg stated that one of the first tasks for the ad hoc committee will be to fully immerse the committee in the details. Staff will review all the constraints, the zoning code,

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the conservation easement, the Woodside Fire discussions, to ensure the committee understands the complex environment that staff has been working within over the past two years.

Ms. Ruiz suggested that the most helpful step would be for the Board to define the ad hoc committee's charge in broader terms, specifically to work with staff, Woodside Fire, and the Town Council to identify and explore opportunities for reuse or rehabilitation at the historic complex, prioritizing the lower barn. She emphasized keeping the charge broad enough to allow the committee to collaborate with these entities in reviewing codes, regulations, and requirements, with the goal of uncovering new possibilities not previously identified. This approach would allow conversations to emerge around potential uses and the interests of each entity, leading to exploration of viable options.

Director Riffle asked about the tradeoffs, including cost and staff time.

Ms. Ruiz responded that staff will return at the next Board meeting with information on the implications to the action plan and other priorities that the Board has already set.

Ms. Mark stated that staff is considering bringing in additional staff to assist with a more comprehensive assessment of the other structures, as the focus has expanded beyond the lower barn to include the garage, carriage house, and other structures that are contributing to the historic district significance. She noted this is a multi-pronged effort requiring support from the senior planner. She also expressed concern about the Town's capacity to engage, noting previous challenges in coordinating on just the lower barn, and hesitated to assume the Town's staff availability for broader discussions.

Director Kersteen-Tucker expressed concern about the feasibility of coordinating multiple stakeholders and noted that such collaboration takes significant time. She suggested that before the item returns to the Board, staff provide an assessment of how realistic it is to find partners that are willing to participate in collaborative discussions, along with an estimate of the potential cost in staff time and resources.

Ms. Ruiz responded that staff will use their best judgment in assessing time and implications, noting that this process is being approached as a last resort. She explained that the District has reached the end of what it can explore internally and emphasized the need for conversations with the Town and Woodside Fire to identify solutions for the site. While the partnership with the Whites may or may not remain viable, she stressed that the District must still determine what is possible in order to deliver the best public benefit.

Director MacNiven commented that on the coast, she frequently receives questions about whether the District would allow housing, and if the District allows housing in Portola Valley, it could set a precedent, raising expectations that similar actions could be taken on the coast. She clarified that she is not opposed to the idea, but emphasized the importance of considering the potential precedents being set.

Director Riffle clarified if the next step is for staff to come back to the Board with a recommendation based on tonight's discussion, and then the Board will decide how to proceed from there.

Ms. Basson confirmed that the General Manager's recommendation would be to form an ad hoc committee and that staff will work on defining the committee's charge, and will return to the Board on June 11.

No Board action was required.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Gleason adjourned the special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District at 6:42 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Vice President Gleason called the regular meeting of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jed Cyr, Craig Gleason, Karen Holman, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Yoriko Kishimoto, Margaret MacNiven, and Curt Riffle

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: General Manager Ana Ruiz, Assistant General Counsel Egan Hill, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, Assistant General Manager Brian Malone, Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, District Clerk/Assistant to the General Manager Maria Soria, Executive Assistant/Deputy District Clerk Stephanie Gross, Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight, Human Resources Supervisor Rebecca Wolfe, and District Controller Michael Foster

President Cyr announced that he is participating in the meeting via teleconference using the AB 2449 "just cause" exemption due to illness and disclosed that his granddaughter is present at his remote location.

Vice President Gleason announced that 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.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Public comment opened at 7:01 p.m.

District Clerk Maria Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 7:01 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDA

Public comment opened at 7:04 p.m.

Mike Bushue spoke in favor of the Bear Creek Redwoods North Parking Area Project – 65% Design. He also spoke on the Lone Madrone Corral Replacement Project and expressed concern about grazing cattle having access to the plastic fence and that staff has reassured him that the manufacturer will confirm it is rated for cattle.

Public comment closed at 7:06 p.m.

- Science and Stewardship Symposium Update
- Bear Creek Redwoods North Parking Area Project - 65% Design
- Lone Madrone Corral Replacement Project

CONSENT CALENDAR

Public comment opened at 7:06 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 7:06 p.m.

Motion: Director Riffle moved, and Director Kersteen-Tucker seconded the motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

1. **Approve the May 14, 2025 Board meeting minutes**
2. **Approve Claims Report**
3. **Award of Contract for Engineering Design and Construction Support Services for the Purisima Creek Trail Slide & Bridge Repair Project at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve (R-25-69)**

General Manager's Recommendations:

1. Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with Herrera Environmental Consultants to provide engineering design and construction support services for the Purisima Creek Trail Slide & Bridge Repair Project at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve for a not-to-exceed base contract amount of \$952,616

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2. Authorize an allowance in the amount of \$95,262 to cover additional technical studies or permit support that may be required during the engineering design development phase.
3. Authorize a 15% contingency in the amount of \$142,892 to cover unforeseen tasks or construction support beyond the current scope, bringing the total not-to-exceed contract amount to \$1,190,770.

4. Award of a Construction Contract for the Big Dipper Culvert Repair Project in Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve (R-25-70)General Manager's Recommendations:

1. Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with Old La Honda General Engineering of La Honda, CA for a not-to-exceed base contract amount of \$86,893.
2. Authorize a contingency of 15% in the amount of \$13,034 to be reserved for unanticipated issues, bringing the total not-to-exceed contract to \$99,927.

BOARD BUSINESS**5. Public Hearing to Comply with New Legal Obligation to Report on Vacancies and Recruitment and Retention Efforts (Assembly Bill 2561/Government Code Section 3502.3) (R-25-71)**

Human Resources Manager Candice Basnight and Human Resources Supervisor Rebecca Wolfe presented.

Director Kersteen-Tucker commented that through the Conservation Career Fair there is a great opportunity to let people know that the District offers competitive pay and benefits.

Vice-President Gleason commented that he is looking forward to hearing more about the Conservation Career Fair and asked if the District tracks the conversion rates from interns to full-time staffers.

Ms. Basnight responded that it has not been tracked, but staff can start tracking that information.

Public hearing opened at 7:24 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no comments for the public hearing.

Public hearing closed at 7:24 p.m.

No formal Board action was required.

6. Public Hearing on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget and Three-Year Capital Improvement and Action Plan Public Hearing (R-25-72)

Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administrative Services Stefan Jaskulak, Assistant General Manager Susanna Chan, and Assistant General Manager Brian Malone presented.

Director Kishimoto commented on the Bear Creek Stables project, noting that while it is not a big rock project, it is projected to cost \$8M over the next three years. She acknowledged that

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although the majority of the Board has previously supported the project and many staff are working on it, now is the appropriate time to evaluate it in the context of comparing it against other project and priorities. She added that she personally does not support the widening of the road and asked her colleagues if the project should continue.

Mr. Malone provided a detailed update on the project, including the phasing of work, and the responsibilities of the Friends of Bear Creek.

Director MacNiven remarked that she did not realize that the cost would be so expensive.

Director Gleason spoke about the value of smaller projects that are initiated by staff. He noted that while large projects are important, they are often complex and vulnerable to delays. In contrast, smaller projects have filled in space between big rock projects such as the Fog Drift Vista trail at Russian Ridge, the Thornewood Rock of Ages trail, and the Thimbleberry trail. He asked if this type of strategy should be adopted.

Ms. Chan responded that the Bear Creek Redwoods trail project moved quickly because a master plan and environmental clearances were already in place, enabling rapid implementation. She emphasized that such planning work is essential to allow projects to proceed efficiently. Additionally, she added that staff continually look for ways to streamline processes and use resources effectively. When larger projects are delayed or paused, available staff capacity can be redirected to smaller projects, allowing continued progress and productivity.

Director Gleason acknowledged the importance of the significant groundwork required before project implementation and expressed appreciation for the creativity and initiative involved in both large and smaller stand-alone projects. He raised the idea of developing a broader strategy to ensure the District maximizes value from projects already underway.

Public hearing opened at 9:00 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no comments for the public hearing.

Public hearing closed at 9:00 p.m.

Motion: Director Riffle moved, and Director Holman seconded the motion to direct the General Manager to present the proposed FY26 Budget and Action Plan to the Board of Directors for adoption at their regular meeting on June 11, 2025.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

7. Controller's Report on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget (R-25-73)

District Controller Michael Foster presented.

Public comment opened at 9:26 p.m.

Ms. Soria reported there were no public speakers for this item.

Public comment closed at 9:26 p.m.

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Motion: Director Kersteen-Tucker moved, and Director Riffle seconded the motion to accept the Controller's Report on the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 7-0-0

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**A. Committee Reports**

Director Gleason provided an update of the Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Meeting held on May 20, 2025.

B. Staff Reports

Assistant General Counsel Egan Hill reported that an announcement pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.1(a)(3)(B) that the Board had previously approved terms of a settlement agreement, which has now been fully executed. Therefore, it can now be reported that on February 26, 2025, the Board voted 7-0 to authorize a settlement agreement with Susan Cretekos. The substance of the agreement was payment of a settlement to resolve pending litigation regarding a claim of right of possession of District land. The litigation is Santa Clara County Superior Court case number 25CV461186. A copy of the agreement is available by request in the General Counsel's office.

C. Director Reports

Director Kersteen-Tucker reported that she and Director Kishimoto attended the May 20, 2025 Board Briefing for the Hawthorns Historic Complex.

Director Kishimoto reported that she attended a Bay Conservation and Development Commission meeting on May 15. She also shared that Alice Hanko contacted her to inquire whether the District would be holding a celebration of life for Jay Thorwaldson, who passed away in March, as he was instrumental in the formation of the District. She left the matter for staff and Board's consideration.

Director MacNiven reported that she attended the opening of the new LEAD San Mateo County building on May 15, and attended the 125-anniversary celebration of the Sempervirens Fund on May 18, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Gleason adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District meeting at 9:34 p.m.

Maria Soria
District Clerk