

**Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes**  
**Monday, November 1, 2021**  
**Remote Audio and Video Meeting Participation, 6:30 p.m.**

Commissioners Present: Lindsay Correa, Patrick Huber, Patricia Price, Carrie Shaw (Chair), Marc Vayssieres (Vice Chair), and Sara Geonczy (Alternate)

Vacant Positions: None

Commissioners Absent: Ramiro Cabanillas-Ledesma, Emma Torbert

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds, Manager, Open Space Program (Present)

Council Liaison: Will Arnold (Regular) (Absent), Lucas Frerichs (Alternate) (Absent)

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**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

Commissioner Shaw opened the meeting after a quorum was achieved and called roll call.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

On a motion by Commissioner Huber, which was seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commission voted 6-0-2-0 to approve the November 2021 regular meeting agenda (Ayes – Correa, Geonczy, Huber, Price, Shaw, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Torbert; Abstentions – None).

**3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commissioners, and City Council Liaisons**

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said the City had received 163 responses so far to its open space survey. She said the survey would be available to the public until November 15. She also asked the Commission to hold December 3 for a possible ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of new public accessibility improvements at South Fork Preserve. She also said that the Addendum to the Environmental Impact Report for the Davis Innovation and Sustainability Campus 2022 (“DISC”) would likely not be available until on or after December 1, which would be too late for a discussion at the Commission’s December meeting. She said Commissioners could either comment as individuals or hold a special meeting if the Commission wanted to discuss the Addendum before the DISC project went before the Planning Commission in late January 2022.

Commissioner Shaw informed the Commission of an email she sent to the City Council expressing her frustration with the review process for the DISC project. She said she expressed her concern that the process was too rushed and that having one more meeting would have been helpful. She said City Councilmember Dan Carson reached out to her on the phone to apologize and note that the Commission was the first commission to review the project so the review period was much shorter. She said she reiterated to Councilmember Carson some of the Commission’s concerns that did not make it into the formal recommendation, such as why the transit plaza was counted as open space, whether any development should occur on prime farmland, and whether there would be opportunities for residents to grow their own food.

Commissioner Correa noted that several governmental climate change efforts were open for public comments and she encouraged Commissioners and members of the public to provide input.

**4. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## 5. Consent Calendar

There was one item on the consent calendar: approval of the October 4, 2021 regular meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Huber, which was seconded by Commissioner Price, the Commission voted 6-0-2-0 to approve the October 2021 meeting minutes (Ayes – Correa, Geonczy, Huber, Price, Shaw, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Torbert; Abstentions – None).

## 6. Regular Items

### **Discussion Item – Introduction of new Commission member**

Commissioner Geonczy introduced herself to the Commission and summarized her background in soil science and soil ecology as a fourth-year graduate student. She said she was particularly interested in urban soils and their capacity to grow food and provide ecological services. She also said she wanted to prioritize social justice and environmental justice issues, and make sure these issues align with land use policy. All the other Commissioners also introduced themselves.

### **Action Item – Recommend that the City Council approve the selection of Fiery Ginger Farm to be the new tenant farmer of the Cannery Farm and authorize the negotiation of a lease agreement, concluding the Cannery Farm Request for Proposals process**

Ms. Reynolds gave a brief presentation on this topic that summarized the staff report. She summarized the Request for Proposals process and how the selection panel evaluated the submittal from Fiery Ginger Farm. She also summarized the proposal from Fiery Ginger Farm, including Fiery Ginger Farm's goals for the farm and its operational, community engagement, and business and marketing plans. She recommended that the Commission recommend that the City Council approve the selection of Fiery Ginger Farm to be the new tenant farmer of the Cannery Farm and authorize the negotiation of a lease agreement, concluding the Cannery Farm Request for Proposals process.

Commissioner Shaw asked if Commissioners had any clarifying questions. Commissioners asked for clarification on (1) whether the lease agreement would be based on other City agricultural leases, (2) whether Fiery Ginger Farm could expand its network of farms supplying it with agricultural products, and (3) whether the community-supported agriculture boxes would be affordable and available to a wide variety of target markets throughout Davis and the surrounding community.

Commissioner Shaw then took public comment. Ira Bray, a member of the Cannery homeowners' association and Cannery Farm working group, said he supported staff's recommendation and believed Fiery Ginger Farm was wonderfully qualified. He said he was excited to see something coming to fruition at the farm. He asked that any future soil reports be made available to the public as a way to build trust with the community. Vern Goehring, another member of the Cannery homeowners' association and Cannery Farm working group, thanked the City and the Commission for their work, and said he was excited to move forward despite the challenges at the farm. He said he looked forward to working collaboratively with the City and Fiery Ginger Farm.

Commissioner Shaw then closed public comment and the Commission discussed this item. Ms. Reynolds read an email sent by Commissioner Torbert since she was unable to attend the meeting. In her email, Commissioner Torbert, who was on the selection panel, said she supported the selection of Fiery Ginger Farm as the new tenant for the Cannery Farm. In her email, she wrote that she believed Fiery Ginger Farm's proposal was "very strong and met or exceeded the requirements of creating a community-oriented, environmentally focused farm at this location." Other topics

discussed included (1) Fiery Ginger Farm's qualifications and operational plan, (2) a concern that managing Fiery Ginger Farm and its subtenants might become a drain on the Open Space Program, (3) how the City's Parks Department is involved at the Cannery Farm, and (4) whether the lease would include provisions requiring the City to maintain the eastern hedgerow and make soil reports available to the public.

On a motion by Commissioner Shaw, which was seconded by Commissioner Vayssieres, the Commission voted 6-0-2-0 to approve the following motion (Ayes – Correa, Geonczy, Huber, Price, Shaw, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Torbert; Abstentions – None):

*"The Open Space and Habitat Commission recommends that the City Council approve the selection of Fiery Ginger Farm to be the new tenant farmer of the Cannery Farm and authorize Tracie Reynolds to negotiate a lease agreement."*

### **Discussion Item – Receive a presentation from staff and discuss the 2021 annual financial review of the City's Open Space Program budget**

The Commission received its annual presentation on this topic from staff. Ms. Reynolds discussed the budget and accomplishments from the last fiscal year, and the budget and goals for the next fiscal year. She said the program's 2021-22 budget is about \$600,000. Of those funds, 30% comes from the City's General Fund and 51% comes from the City's special open space protection parcel tax fund (Measure O), she said. That money will be spent on: personnel, including outside contractors (41%), maintenance supplies and equipment (22%), general overhead (5%), other miscellaneous expenses, such as permits (2%), and capital improvements (30%), she said. She also discussed restricted fund balances that are available for open space acquisitions, maintenance, and improvements.

She concluded her presentation by giving the Commission a detailed look at the revenues and expenses projected to flow into and out of the Measure O parcel tax fund (Fund 135) for the upcoming fiscal year. She said 26% of the total Measure O parcel taxes the City receives during fiscal year 2021-22 (estimated to be about \$685,000) would be spent on maintenance at the City's open space areas. She said 56% would be saved and the remaining 18% would be spent on capital improvements to the City's open space areas.

Commissioner Shaw asked if Commissioners had any clarifying questions. Commissioners asked for clarification on (1) how restricted fund balances have fluctuated over time, (2) what restricted fund balances could be spent on, and (3) if restricted fund balances had to be spent before a certain date.

Commissioner Shaw then took public comment on this item. There was no public comment. Commissioner Shaw then closed public comment and the Commission discussed this item. Topics discussed included (1) the City's pledge to spend no more than 33% of the Measure O parcel tax on maintenance and how that pledge could be maintained given cost increases over time, and (2) how public access increases the cost to maintain open space areas. No action was taken on this item.

## **7. Commission and Staff Communications**

### **Commission Work Plan**

The Commission work plan was not discussed.

### **Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items**

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, December 6. Possible agenda items discussed included (1) recommending a lease agreement with Fiery Ginger Farm for the Cannery Farm, and (2) discussing the impact of homeless camps on wildlife habitat within the City's open space areas.

### **Upcoming Events**

No upcoming events were mentioned.

### **Working Groups**

1. *Acquisitions*. No updates were reported.
2. *Habitat Restoration and Enhancement*. Commissioner Huber reported on efforts by the Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee and the Solano County Water Agency to remove barriers along the creek so that salmon are better able to swim upstream and spawn.
3. *Land and Resource Management*. No updates were reported.
4. *Public Access and Recreation*. No updates were reported.
5. *Financial and Program Accountability*. No updates were reported.
6. *Public Engagement and Partnerships*. No updates were reported.
7. *Ad-Hoc Working Group to Improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the City's Open Space Program*. Commissioner Price said this ad-hoc working group had met and completed a SWOT analysis (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). She said the ad-hoc working group planned to meet again in a couple of weeks. The group hopes to recommend to the Commission a set of goals and action items at an upcoming meeting.

### **Update on Cannery Farm**

The Cannery Farm was discussed during Regular Items.

### **Update on Climate Action and Adaptation Plan ("CAAP") Update**

Ms. Reynolds said the public will have an opportunity to comment on the draft proposed CAAP action items at a November 10 workshop at 6:30 p.m. She said those wishing to comment could go to the CAAP webpage for more information including the Zoom meeting link. She also directed people to a companion "community forum" website where residents can learn more about the prioritized draft action items and provide feedback/opinions there as well. She said if one plans to attend the November 10 workshop, one should visit the companion "community forum" website first.

### **8. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:08 p.m.