

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, November 4, 2019
Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Erin Gooch, Stephanie Holstege, Patrick Huber (Chair), Joy Klineberg, Roberta Millstein, Garrett Allen (Alternate)

Vacant Positions: None

Commissioners Absent: Carrie Shaw (Vice Chair), Marc Vayssieres

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds, Manager, Open Space Program

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

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Huber opened the meeting after a quorum was achieved. Commissioners Gooch and Klineberg arrived during Regular Items. Commissioner Gooch left the meeting before the vote on Item #6A was taken.

2. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Allen, seconded by Commissioner Holstege, the Commission voted 4-0-4-0 to approve the November 2019 agenda. (Ayes – Allen, Holstege, Huber, Millstein; Noes – none; Absent – Gooch, Klineberg, Shaw, Vayssieres; Abstentions – none).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, mentioned two upcoming volunteer events at the North Davis Upland Habitat Area at the corner of F Street and Anderson Road, which is undergoing a habitat restoration project spearheaded by the Friends of North Davis Ponds. The events, which will focus on building the new trail at the City's newest open space area, will be held November 7 and November 9, she said. The first event is being sponsored by the Putah Creek Council and the second event is being sponsored by Tree Davis, she said.

4. Public Comment

Jean Jackman, the president of the Friends of North Davis Ponds ("FONDP"), said that she was "uncomfortable" with the way work parties have been set up at the North Davis Upland Habitat Area and requested that FONDP be notified in advance of all future work days and be asked to bring volunteer workers to these future work days. She also requested that FONDP be the sponsors or co-sponsors of one or more future work days. Jonathan Bayless, a member of FONDP, expressed similar sentiments.

5. Consent Calendar

There was only one item on the consent calendar: approval of the October 7, 2019 regular meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Allen, seconded by Commissioner Holstege, the Commission voted 4-0-4-0 to approve the October 7, 2019 regular meeting minutes. (Ayes – Allen, Holstege, Huber, Millstein; Noes – none; Absent – Gooch, Klineberg, Shaw, Vayssieres; Abstentions – none).

6. Regular Items

Action Item -- Approve the list of open space and habitat elements that the Commission recommends be included in the "baseline project features" for the Aggie Research Campus development proposal located near Mace Boulevard and Interstate 80

Matt Keasling and Gene Endicott, who represent the developer of the proposed Aggie Research Campus development, gave the Commission a presentation about the project in general and about the project's open space and habitat features, including the agricultural buffer (including its location on a portion of the City's adjacent 25 acres located on Mace Boulevard, known as the "Mace 25"), native plantings, and the east-west drainage channel. Mr. Keasling also addressed each of the Commission's open space and habitat preferences for new development projects, which the Commission approved in April 2019. Mr. Keasling also outlined the timeline for when the project might go before the City Council and Davis voters for approval.

After much discussion, on a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Klineberg, the Commission voted 5-0-3-0 to approve the following motion (Ayes – Allen, Holstege, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein; Noes – none; Absent – Gooch, Shaw, Vayssieres; Abstentions – none): “The Open Space and Habitat Commission recommends that, if the City Council approves the Aggie Research Campus project, the following project features should be included in the project’s “Baseline Project Features” and/or Development Agreement:

1. The agricultural mitigation land should be located within the Davis Planning Area;
2. The east side of the east-west channel should be natural like the rest of the channel;
3. Native plants should predominate the channel and agricultural buffer;
4. Burrowing owl habitat should be on the northwest segment of the agricultural buffer, pending confirmation from the City’s wildlife biologist;
5. The agricultural buffer and east-west channel should be managed for habitat;
6. The east-west channel must have a public access easement;
7. Trees and pollinator habitat should be disbursed throughout the site, including in parking areas; and
8. If the agricultural buffer remains on the “Mace 25” site, the agricultural buffer should be wider.

In addition, the Open Space and Habitat Commission recommends that (1) one of the project’s “Conditions of Approval” should be that the project come back to the Open Space and Habitat Commission before approval of appropriate final entitlements, and (2) environmental documents should come back to the Open Space and Habitat Commission during the 90-day comment period and after the Response to Comments period.”

Discussion Item -- Discuss ideas for interpretive panels for South Fork Preserve

Ms. Reynolds discussed some draft ideas for interpretive panels for South Fork Preserve. Draft ideas include discussing the different ways humans have impacted the area, Native American land management practices, the beautiful and colorful shapes of oak galls, the different uses for tule reeds, and the return of salmon along Putah Creek. The Commission agreed to continue the discussion at future meetings and help to research some of these topics.

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Commission Work Plan

The work plan was not discussed.

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The Commission’s next meeting is December 2. Possible agenda items discussed include (1) a discussion about interpretive panel ideas for South Fork Preserve, (2) a discussion of agricultural issues with Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza, (3) a discussion of how development projects go through the City’s approval process, and how the Commission can be better informed, and (4) the agricultural mitigation proposal for the Bretton Woods development project.

Upcoming Events

Commissioner Millstein mentioned an item related to the Aggie Research Campus development proposal that was on the City Council agenda for Tuesday, November 5.

Working Groups

1. *Acquisitions*. No updates were reported.
2. *Habitat Restoration and Enhancement*. No updates were reported.
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.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.