

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday March 3, 2014
Veterans Memorial Center Game Room, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Rachel Aptekar, Helena Chung, Greg House, Patrick Huber, David Miller, Colleen Rossier

Commissioners Absent: Marc Hoshovsky, Roberta Millstein

Commission Liaisons: Rec and Park, Planning

Assigned Staff: Mitch Sears

Council Liaison: Lucas Frerichs

1. Agenda

Approved – Commissioners Miller and Rossier welcomed by the Commission.

2. Minutes

January 13, 2014 minutes approved.

3. Public Communications

George Hubert and Gail Wadsworth of the California Institute for Rural Studies summarized their proposal to the City Community Development Block Grant Program to develop a feasibility study and plan for low income and young farmer community farms.

4. Project Review – Paso Fino Place

City Wildlife Resource Specialist John McNerney and Project Planner Ike Njoku provided background information regarding the potential wildlife impacts associated with the project. Staff and the project applicant responded questions from community members related to potential impacts to wildlife, impact mitigation, and which trees will remain on site.

Following discussion, Commissioner Huber moved, and Commissioner Chung seconded the following motion:

Should the City Council choose to approve the proposed project in its current configuration, that the following mitigation measures be made of the project approval to address the potential Swainson hawk nest and habitat loss due to proposed removal of most trees on the subject site:

1. Preconstruction surveys for the presence of sensitive raptors shall be conducted by a qualified wildlife biologist. Project related disturbance shall not commence if Swainson's hawk breeding activity (or other protected raptor breeding activity) is documented on, or within a ¼ mile line-of-sight of the property. Project related disturbance may commence if no raptor breeding activity is documented during these surveys, and/ or if active nests that are observed within ¼ mile of the site are effectively shielded from view of the site by structures and/ or vegetation.
2. Suitable Swainson's hawk nest trees should be preserved on-site as feasible. If there are no feasible way to avoid removal of the potential Swainson's hawk nest trees, those trees shall not be removed during the breeding season (March 1 thru August 31, annually) or until a qualified wildlife biologist verifies that there is no current hawk activity at the site. The loss of such nest trees shall be mitigated in one of the following ways:
 - a. Acquisition of a habitat easement upon 1 acre of suitable Swainson's hawk foraging and/ or nesting habitat within a 10 mile radius, or;
 - b. Offset the loss of suitable nest trees (the tallest of the existing Canary Island pines) removed from the site by planting tree species suitable for urban nesting SWHA at a 2:1 ratio. Such plantings may be

included as mitigation as it relates to the city tree ordinance, as allowable and approved by the City Arborist. Ideal nest tree mitigation lands would be those within 1/2 mile of the project site, but no greater than 5 miles. Privately held mitigation lands shall have a habitat easement or other legal mechanism to protect the established mitigation nest trees in perpetuity. If mitigation tree planting is approved on City owned properties that have a park or open space land use designation, a habitat easement shall not be required. A three year establishment/maintenance contract shall be required to ensure a minimum 75% sapling establishment rate. Suitable Swainson's hawk nest tree species include Valley Oak, Sycamore, Black Walnut, and Cottonwood. Canary Island pine, redwood, and beefwood may also be used in the urban limits and where irrigation permits.

3. The developer, in consultation with City Staff, put in: (1) bat and owl boxes, and (2) habitat enhancements at tree planting sites with a focus on native species in greenbelts and parks. The focus should be in the Wildhorse area.

Motion passed 6-0

5. **City Council/Commission meeting – Discussion of joint meeting outline**

The Commission briefly discussed the outcomes of the December Joint meeting. The Commission provided general direction to continue discussion of draft work plan for public outreach, analysis of community farm site evaluation, and evaluation of existing acquisition priorities.

6. **Project/Program Updates**

- North Davis Riparian Greenbelt – Staff provided a brief update on progress of the project related to planting in the channel.
- Yolo Natural Heritage Program – Staff provided a brief update on the YNHP and the City's participation in recent Steering Committee meetings.

7. **Commission Goals 2013/14**

Working Group Reports

- No updates.

8. **Staff/Commission Communications**

- Commission Liaison reports – No reports were given.
- Easement Acquisition Update – No updates to report.
- Next meeting: April 7, 2014.

9. **Adjournment** Meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.