

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday February 2, 2015
Community Chambers Conference Room 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Rachel Aptekar, Jason Bone, Helena Chung, Marc Hoshovsky, Greg House, Patrick Huber, Roberta Millstein, Colleen Rossier

Commissioners Absent: None

Commission Liaisons: Rec and Park, Planning

Assigned Staff: Mitch Sears

Council Liaison: Lucas Frerichs

1. Agenda

Approved with addition of update on Mace 25 City owned property (item 5 below). Commissioner Jason Bone (Alt), was introduced.

2. Minutes

January 5, 2015 minutes approved.

November 3, 2014 minutes were discussed and Commissioners requested clarification related to Agenda Item 4: **Project Proposals – Consideration of guiding principles for community evaluation of proposed innovation centers.** The Commission unanimously amended the November 3, 2014 minutes to add the following and delay approval of the minutes until the March meeting:

- The inherent values of land as open space should be considered as an important factor in evaluating innovation center proposals. These values include Urban Fringe, Community Separator, Agriculture, Biological and Natural Resources, and Scenic Resources as identified in the City Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan (Adopted 2002).

Commissioner Rossier also requested that the City Council include the site selection guidance factors included in the 2002 City of Davis Acquisition and Management Plan as important factors in evaluating innovation center proposals. These factors are attached to the February 2 minutes as Attachment A.

Note: this clarification of the Commission’s discussion should be included under Guiding Principle 2 (Sustainability), Agricultural Land Conservation/Open Space section.

3. Public Communications

None.

4. Project Proposals – Consideration of guiding principles for community evaluation of proposed innovation centers.

As a continuation of the discussion that began at its previous meeting regarding the November 3, 2014 minutes, the Commission discussed the incorporation of its input into the Guiding Principles. Specifically, the Commission did not believe the Guiding Principles accurately captured its intent regarding the need to evaluate the potential innovation center sites for their open space value as part of the baseline condition.

Following discussion, on a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Huber, the Commission took the following action:

The Commission recommends that the City Council amend the Guiding Principles to include the following in Guiding Principle 2 under the Agricultural Land Conservation/Open Space section:

The inherent values of land as open space should be considered as an important factor in evaluating innovation center proposals. These values include Urban Fringe, Community Separator, Agriculture, Biological and Natural Resources, and Scenic Resources as identified in the City Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan (Adopted 2002).

Motion passed 7-0

5. Update on City Owned 25-Acre Agricultural Parcel Near Mace Boulevard Curve (item added 7-0)

The Commission discussed the potential uses of the 25-acre parcel and, at the request of staff, authorized their Chair to attend the City Council meeting and participate in a Council discussion on the 25 acre parcel.

Following discussion, on a motion by Commissioner Aptekar, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission provided the following guidance for its Chair and requested that the City Council first consider developing a community farm (existing OSHC recommendation) on the 25-acre parcel, but if that was not possible, the City Council should investigate other options, such as:

- Open space but not community farm (City retains parcel)
- Swap parcel for another equivalent or superior parcel for community farm (City owns new parcel)
- City sells property and retains conservation easement (similar to remainder of Leland Ranch)

Motion passed 7-0.

6. Public Open Space Forum – Continued discussion of planning Open Space Forum meeting

The Commission continued discussion of planning for the Open Space Forum. The Commission requested that the City provide resources for facilitation of the forum and processing of public input received from a forum. The Commission identified the need for a meeting facilitator, funding to host the forum, and formation of a Commission working group to assist with the planning effort.

Following discussion, on a motion by Commissioner Aptekar, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission approved the formation of the Public Forum working group comprised of Commissioners Hoshovsky, Huber, and Rossier to work with staff to plan and organize the forum.

Motion passed 6-1 (Chung).

7. Project/Program Updates

- North Davis Riparian Greenbelt – Staff provided a brief update on progress of the project related to planting in the channel and interpretive work.
- Yolo Natural Heritage Program – Second Administrative draft due to be released in Spring 2015.

8. Commission Goals 2013/14

- Pollinators – Grant has been submitted for turf removal and pollinator habitat.

9. Staff/Commission Communications

- Commission Liaison reports – No reports were given.
- Easement acquisition update – No updates to report.
- Development project updates – Councilmember Frerichs updated the Commission on the Paso Fino project. Commission requested that the Cannery developer return to Commission to report on incorporations of OSHC recommendations into “as build” project.
- Next meeting: March 2, 2015.

10. Adjournment Meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Excerpt from 2002 Davis Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan

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Attachment A

Excerpt from 2002 Davis Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan

6.6 Selection Guidance Factors

As described above, the City will employ a number of tools to evaluate and select projects. The foundation for these tools are the goals and policies established in this plan. Though not a comprehensive list, the following examples of factors that may be considered during the acquisition decision process illustrate under what circumstances the City may act to protect open space. Consistency with one or all these factors is not necessarily required for the City to choose to proceed (or not proceed) with a project.

Factors:

- Strategic location of the proposed acquisition (protection of land is key to protecting other open space land in the same area).
- Project size and what effect it may have on whether the land type or resource can be maintained over time.
- Viability of agricultural use in the long-term.
- Connectivity to intact or relatively intact natural area(s).
- Adjacency to protected lands.
- Ecological value (unique habitat, species diversity, protection of listed species or species in local decline, etc.).
- High risk of loss of exceptional open space resource(s) without participation by the City.
- Outstanding scenic values (views of significant local or regional landmarks, community gateways, etc.).
- High recreational value that is consistent with the City's open space protection goals and provides opportunities for unmet recreational needs (e.g. wildlife viewing, hiking, etc.).

- Landowner commitment to perpetuation of conservation values (sustainable farming practices, voluntary protection of sensitive natural resources, etc.).
- Land or conservation easement can be acquired with reasonable effort in relation to its cost.
- Landowner insists on provisions in an easement, which would diminish the property's conservation values.
- City effort required to enforce and/or monitor an easement.
- Potential impacts of adjacent properties on the conservation value of the protected land or resource.
- Consideration of destructive trespass, dumping, or other activities that may have a negative impact on conservation values.
- Title issues, boundary disputes, or pending legal actions associated with the land or easement.

These factors are not intended to limit the discussion of the positive or negative attributes of a proposed acquisition by the City. Instead, they should be used to assist in the analysis of whether a particular parcel or resource should be protected by the City. These factors should not be considered static and should be modified to address changing conditions and unique circumstances.