

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

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

Commissioners Absent: None

Commission Liaisons: Rec and Park (Dawn Einwalter), Planning (Rob Hoffman)

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds

Council Liaison: Lucas Frerichs

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**1. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

*February 2, 2015 minutes.* Commissioner Millstein said she did not think that the February minutes accurately reflected the language the Commission approved as part of its recommendation to the City Council to amend the guiding principles for evaluating innovation center development proposals. She made a motion to vote again on the proposed amendment language. There was no second to the motion. Following discussion, on a motion by Commissioner House, seconded by Commissioner Chung, the Commission voted 7-1 (with Commissioner Millstein opposing) to approve the February 2, 2015 minutes.

*March 2, 2015 minutes.* On a motion by Commissioner House, seconded by Commissioner Chung, the Commission voted 7-1 (with Commissioner Millstein abstaining) to approve the March 2, 2015 minutes.

**3. Public Communications**

Scott Volmer, a local landscape architect, informed the Commission of a new urban farm ordinance approved by the Sacramento City Council on March 24, 2015. He explained that the new ordinance enables city residents to grow and sell food directly from their properties and offers tax incentives to landowners who allow their properties, including vacant lots in residential, commercial, industrial and manufacturing zones, to be turned into mini-farms. The mini-farms can be as large as three acres.

**4. Commission 2015-16 Goals and Work Plan**

The Commission reviewed the revised work plan and working group assignments for 2015-16. A number of minor changes were made. Following discussion, on a motion by Commissioner Chung, seconded by Commissioner Aptekar, the Commission unanimously approved the work plan and working group assignments for 2015-16, as amended (See Attachment 1).

**5. City-owned 25-Acre Agricultural Parcel Near Mace Boulevard Curve – Community Farm**

Commissioner Hoshovsky summarized the staff report that was presented to the City Council at its meeting of March 3, 2015, and he also summarized his comments to the City Council that reflected the Commission's approved preferences for the future land uses for the 25-acre parcel. The Commission also discussed the Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") for the proposed Mace Boulevard innovation center, and expressed an interest in better understanding the development alternatives being analyzed under the EIR and the timing of its preparation and release.

Commissioner House informed the Commission that the Commission's working group on community farms (i.e., Commissioners House, Rossier and Chung) met to discuss the concept of a community farm network around the City of Davis, and were working to meet with City Councilmember Robb Davis to discuss implementation of this concept. Commissioner House also discussed incorporating public access/open space elements into community farms.

As requested by the Commission, Tracie Reynolds, the Commission's assigned staff, provided a summary of recent steps to establish a community farm at the Cannery development, as is required under the development agreement for that project. She informed the Commission that the Cannery's developer, The New Home Company, was working with the Center for Land-based Learning ("CLBL"), the designated farm operator, to (1) replace the soil at the farm site to ensure that the soil is suitable for a successful community farm over the long-term, and (2) plant appropriate cover crops and other plantings. She said that Mary Kimball, CLBL's Executive Director, would attend the Commission's May meeting to provide more details on this effort and how CLBL plans to operate a farm at the Cannery.

Commissioner House expressed an interest in having more input into the development of the community farm at the Cannery, and also into the development of the other open space and landscape elements at the Cannery. Staff suggested that a small group of Commissioners meet with City Planning staff to discuss the process and effort to implement the development agreement and landscape design guidelines for the project.

#### **6. Presentation by Friends of North Davis Pond**

The Commission heard a presentation by the Friends of North Davis Pond ("Friends of NDP") about a proposed project to convert about three acres of City-owned property at the corner of Anderson and F Streets into a native plant/pollinator garden. The Friends of North Davis Pond asked the Commission if Measure O funding was available to pay for the construction and on-going maintenance of the restoration project.

Commissioner House noted that the City would be reluctant to support any restoration project that required a significant amount of water and/or maintenance. He suggested that any proposal for a large native plant/pollinator garden at North Davis Pond should clearly address potential water and maintenance costs, and include elements to lower these costs, such as volunteer gardeners and low-maintenance designs. In addition, staff indicated that this site has been discussed as a possible landing site for a future bike tunnel under F Street.

The Commission advised the Friends of NDP to refine the details of their proposal and come back to the Commission in June with a more detailed phasing plan, project budget and financing plan, and maintenance plan. The Commission also advised the Friends of NDP to investigate other sources of grant monies that could be used to fund the project.

Following discussion, on a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Huber, the Commission voted 6-2 (with Commissioners Hoshovsky and Chung abstaining) to express their support for further exploring the Friends of NDP's proposed restoration project at North Davis Pond.

The discussion revealed the need for the Commission to have evaluation criteria for restoration projects, similar to the evaluation criteria the Commission adopted for acquisition projects. Toward that end, the Commission formed a working group comprised of Commissioners Hoshovsky, Millstein and Bone to prepare a draft of the evaluation criteria for the Commission's review and approval. Taryn Cadena, a conservation associate with the Yolo Land Trust, volunteered her time to help draft the evaluation criteria.

#### **7. Public Open Space Forum**

Commissioner Hoshovsky notified the Commission that the City, working in partnership with the Commission's public open space working group (i.e., Commissioners Hoshovsky, Huber and Bone), successfully submitted a grant application for \$30,000 to the State of California under the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation ("SALC") Program. The money ~~would~~ will be used to defray expenses associated with the public open space forum scheduled for this fall and to update the City's 2002 Acquisition and Management Plan. Commissioner Hoshovsky reported that the State hopes to select grant recipients by June or July.

**8. Project/Program Updates**

- North Davis Riparian Greenbelt – Staff provided a brief update on the two phases of this project. For Phase 1, staff reported that volunteers continue to perform maintenance, pull weeds, and monitor plantings, which seem to be doing well despite the lack of rain. Staff also reported that students from a 7th grade class at the Davis Waldorf School recently adopted a section of the corridor and have installed snowberry and California Pipevine. For Phase 2, staff reported that the interpretive gardens have been installed and the design and text for the interpretive panels are nearing completion and should be installed in May.

**9. Staff/Commission Communications**

- Commission Liaison reports – No reports were given.
- Easement acquisition updates – No updates to report.
- Development project updates – No other updates to report.
- Next meeting: May 4, 2015.

**10. Adjournment**

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

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Final Commission 2015-16 Goals and Work Plan