

**Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes**  
**Monday, May 4, 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 Hofmann)

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds

Council Liaison: Lucas Frerichs

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**1. Approval of Agenda**

On a motion by Commissioner Aptekar, seconded by Commissioner Bone, the Commission voted 8-0 to approve the agenda.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

*April 6, 2015 minutes.* Commissioner Aptekar requested that the word “will” be replaced with the word “would” in the second sentence of the section discussing Item #7, Public Open Space Forum, so that the sentence read: “The money would 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.” On a motion by Commissioner House, seconded by Commissioner Chung, the Commission voted 8-0 to approve the April 6, 2015 minutes, as amended by Commissioner Aptekar’s requested change.

**3. Public Communications**

Jean Jackman of the Friends of North Davis Pond requested that no further commitments of Measure O funds be made until the public has a clear picture of all the revenues and expenses that have flowed into and out of the fund since its inception in 2000. She cited an upcoming item before the City Council (i.e., a conditional funding commitment of up to \$200,000 a year in Measure O funds to support the implementation of the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan, or HCP/NCCP) and she said she hoped the Commission would support her request to not commit these funds until Measure O budget figures are available. [She said that she and other members of the public believed the City was going to use Measure O funds to purchase land close to the urbanized edge of the City and that hasn’t happened.](#)

Lucas Frerichs, the City Council’s liaison to the Commission, said that the Commission’s current work to develop evaluation criteria for the funding of restoration projects with Measure O funds will be very valuable and helpful to the City Council.

**4. Presentation on the Cannery Farm**

Mary Kimball, the Executive Director of the Center for Land-Based Learning, gave the Commission a presentation on where things stand with developing a 7.4-acre community farm at the Cannery development. She said the community farm at the Cannery will be a “graduate” opportunity for two or more of CLBL’s beginning farmers who have completed CLBL’s seven-month farmer training program and have spent some time working an “incubator” farm on CLBL’s property. She said the Cannery developer is putting in the infrastructure for the farm, which will have a drip irrigation system, and is replacing three feet of soil at the farm because early tests of the soil weren’t satisfactory. The new soil, from a farmer in South Davis, will be slowly integrated with the existing soil and soil amendments. She said she plans to review the planting plan with the developer this week, which will include a variety of crops and orchards. She expected the grand opening to occur on July 23, 2015.

She said the land will be deeded to the City of Davis, and then leased to CLBL. CLBL will then sublease the land to two or more graduate farmers. Commissioner House expressed an interest in having the community farm working group advise on the City’s lease with CLBL. CLBL’s leased premises will include the barn but not the

farmhouse. The farmhouse will be deeded to the City at a later date, after the Cannery developer is done using it for marketing purposes. Staff suggested the working group develop a summary of key points the working group would like to see in the City's lease with CLBL.

Commissioner House also asked about CLBL's community outreach efforts. Ms. Kimball said that CLBL plans to offer Community Supported Agricultural ("CSA") boxes, monthly workshops, and community engagement days, but that these will vary depending on what the farmers are able to do. She said that the subleases with the farmers will outline this public interaction. Commissioner Millstein said that some kind of community interaction was important at the site and that she wanted the subleases to include language requiring it. She said she expected to execute the first sublease with a farmer early next year. Commissioner Chung asked where the public would park during public events at the farm, and Ms. Kimball said parking would be across the street in the mixed-use/commercial area of the development.

Commissioner Hoshovsky requested that Ms. Kimball come back to the Commission on a regular basis to provide regular updates on the community farm at the Cannery.

#### **5. Presentation on the Yolo Natural Heritage Program**

John McNerney, the City of Davis' Wildlife Resource Specialist, gave the Commission a presentation on the Second Administrative Draft of the HCP/NCCP, which has been prepared by the HCP/NCCP Joint Powers Agency, or JPA. He said the HCP/NCCP looks at county-wide development patterns, the operation and maintenance of public and private utilities, and population growth over the next 50 years. He said it seeks to conserve the natural open space and agricultural landscapes that provide habitat for many special status and at-risk species found within the habitats and natural communities within the more than 650,000 acres that comprise Yolo County. He said the HCP/NCCP also seeks to preserve Yolo County's agricultural character and promote economic development, as well as enhance opportunities for recreation in natural areas.

Instead of trying to mitigate impacts to biological resources on a project-by-project basis, which is often piecemeal and ineffective, Mr. McNerney said the HCP/NCCP seeks to mitigate impacts in a comprehensive way looking decades into the future. To do this, he said the HCP/NCCP focuses on three primary conservation measures: (1) it establishes an ecological reserve system of more than 28,000 acres throughout Yolo County (secured through conservation easements and other mechanisms, including outright purchases of land), (2) it restores almost 1,000 acres of existing natural lands, and (3) it establishes policies and protocols for managing and enhancing the lands within the ecological reserve system.

In addition to these environmental benefits, he said the HCP/NCCP will provide (1) a countywide framework for natural resource conservation, (2) a streamlined permitting and mitigation process for appropriate urban growth and public infrastructure projects (thereby reducing risk, cost and uncertainty in the development process), (3) a mechanism for leveraging state and federal grant dollars, and (4) comprehensive regulatory coverage for currently listed endangered species and those that may be listed in the future.

Mr. McNerney said the JPA estimates that the total cost to implement the conservation plan contained in the HCP/NCCP over the 50-year duration of the permits would be about \$318.8 million. He said this figure includes costs associated with (1) establishing the reserve system, (2) restoring natural communities, (3) managing and enhancing easement and reserve lands, (4) monitoring, research, and scientific review, (5) administration and contingency expenses, and (6) endowment contributions and requirements. To fund this cost, he said the JPA has developed a financing plan that draws from a variety of different sources, including development fees, local sources (including Measure O funds from the City of Davis), state and federal sources, and investment income. He said the JPA has asked the City of Davis to contribute up to \$200,000 a year, on average, over the 50-year duration of the permits under the HCP/NCCP. That contribution would equal about 1.8% of the JPA's total funding. All local sources would equal about 11.2% of the JPA's total funding, he said.

The First Administrative Draft of the HCP/NCCP, which covered 32 species of endangered plants and animals, was released on June 28, 2013. The Second Administrative Draft, which covers 12 species of endangered plants and animals, was released to limited parties on March 31, 2015. Mr. McNerney said it is currently being reviewed by the JPA's Board of Directors, the member agencies (including the City of Davis), and other advisory parties of the plan. Although the Second Administrative Draft is not open to direct public comment, he said City residents and interested parties with interests in the incorporated cities of Yolo County are allowed to provide comment on the draft as long as those comments are approved by the member agency's decision-making body. Commissioners were encouraged to submit additional comments to staff as soon as possible.

**6. Environmental Impact Report ("EIR")– Mace Boulevard Innovation Center Proposal**

In response to Commissioner questions at the April Commission meeting, Commissioner Hoshovsky summarized a meeting he had with Heidi Tschudin, who has been hired by the City of Davis to manage the planning process for the two innovation centers proposed for West and East Davis. He clarified Ms. Tschudin's role (i.e., that she is an independent planner working for the City of Davis), and summarized the current schedule for the review and approval process for the Draft EIR. He said the analysis of alternatives in the Draft EIR is a comparative analysis, in which quantitative values are not yet required. He said the proposed "Project" described in the Draft EIR will assume the most square footage and will have the greatest environmental impact. He clarified that the "Project" described in the Draft EIR is not necessarily the project that will get built. The final project will be modified during the later planning stages, as directed by the City Council (and influenced by citizens and commissions). The environmental impacts from the final project must be equal to, or less than, the impacts from the "Project" described in the Draft EIR. He said that Ms. Tschudin said none of the alternatives being analyzed in the Draft EIR would preclude the development of a community farm at the Mace Boulevard site.

Commissioners expressed an interest in submitting comments on the Draft EIR. They requested greater clarity on the timing of the comment periods for the Draft EIR, and wanted to be notified when the Draft EIR was available. The Commission agreed to hold an extra Commission meeting in July to coordinate Commissioner comments on the Draft EIR.

**7. Project/Program Updates**

- *Burrowing Owls at the Wildhorse Agricultural Buffer* – Staff reported that no agreement was ever finalized between the City of Davis and the Burrowing Owls Preservation Society (the "Society"). Commissioners said they would like the president of the Society to present at a future Commission meeting.
- *North Davis Riparian Greenbelt* – Staff reported that volunteers are fine-tuning the irrigation system but are having a difficult time irrigating the plantings under the City's water restrictions.
- *Evaluation Criteria for Restoration Projects* – A short discussion was held about the evaluation criteria for funding of restoration projects using Measure O funds, and Commissioners agreed to postpone further discussion until the next Commission meeting.

**8. 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: June 1, 2015.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:40 p.m.