

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, January 11, 2016
Redwood Park Community Building, 1001 Anderson Road, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Patrick Huber, Roberta Millstein, Jason Bone (Alternate), Marc Hoshovsky, Colleen Rossier, Rachel Aptekar

Commissioners Absent: Helena Chung, Greg House

Commission Liaisons: Recreation and Parks (TBD)

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds

Council Liaison: Lucas Frerichs

1. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Hoshovsky, seconded by Commissioner Aptekar, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the agenda (Commissioner Rossier was not present for this vote.)

2. Approval of Minutes

December 7, 2015 minutes. Commissioner Millstein requested a correction to the minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Hoshovsky, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the December 7, 2015 minutes, as amended. (Commissioner Rossier was not present for this vote.)

3. Public Communications

None.

4. Discussion – Draft Grant Guidelines for Restoration Projects Using Measure O Funds

Commissioner Hoshovsky, chair of the working group on this subject, summarized the comments on the draft guidelines (See Attachment 1) to date: (1) whether the timeline was too rushed and whether further refinements to the guidelines should be postponed until after the public forum on open space in the spring (The Commission agreed that it would like to continue to work to finalize the grant guidelines before the public forum, but also use the results from the public forum to inform and refine the guidelines), (2) whether work associated with establishing one or more community farms in Davis could be an eligible use of the grant funds (Commissioner Hoshovsky said these guidelines focused on habitat restoration and would not be applicable to the work associated with establishing one or more community farms), (3) the need to clarify the underlying motive behind the grant guidelines, (4) the appropriateness of the \$150,000 maximum annual grant availability amount, (5) whether to allow lengthier submittals from grant applicants, (6) whether tax-exempt organizations other than 501(c)(3) organizations should be eligible to receive grant funds, (7) whether to expand the review criteria to include (i) public accessibility features, (ii) proximity to the City’s edge, (iii) biological significance, and (iv) ADA accessibility, and (8) questions about grant administration (i.e., whether a grant can be granted in one year but used in multiple years). During the meeting, the Commission discussed all these issues. Commissioner Rossier suggested that a proposed project’s alignment with City planning documents might also be added as a review criterion. A member of the public added that the review criteria may need to be refined to make it easier to score multiple projects, and that it would be helpful to include in the guidelines the other steps needed for grant approval. The Commission asked staff to research some of these issues, in particular questions about the City’s approval process and grant administration. He said once the working group had additional information, it would discuss the draft guidelines again with the full Commission.

5. Discussion – Update on the Cannery Farm

Tracie Reynolds, assigned staff to the Commission, gave a brief status report on the farm at the Cannery and the draft lease with the Center for Land-Based Learning (“CLBL”), who will be leasing the farm property from the City after the project developer (“New Home”) transfers the farm property to the City later this year. She said the draft lease is still under review by both CLBL and the City, and that the only major outstanding issue is

clarifying the landscaping maintenance areas and the corresponding water controllers. She summarized the draft lease terms as follows: (1) the lease term would be for five years with one five-year option; (2) the rent would be \$1/year for the first three years, and then CLBL and the City would negotiate a rental payment after that based on market comparables and the farm's performance, among other things; (3) CLBL intends to employ organic farming practices on the property, and use organic pesticides and fertilizers, unless unanticipated circumstances require the use of non-organic products; (4) no pigs, cattle, or horses will be allowed on the property; however, CLBL will be allowed to have egg-laying hens, sheep and goats on the property; (5) CLBL will provide on-site staffing assistance to the on-site farmer(s) and will house a designated staff person on the property for at least 20 hours per week; and (6) CLBL will be responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and landscaping, and the City will be responsible for maintenance of the structural components of the barn and other farm buildings.

She also said that during the first three years of the lease term, CLBL can, but will not be required to, hold community events on the farm property. During the fourth year of the lease term, and every subsequent year thereafter, CLBL will be required to hold a minimum of four community events every year on the farm property (Community events are defined as tour days, harvest festivals, workshops, open houses, or other ways the public is able to visit and learn about the farming operation on the property.).

She said New Home recently processed a lot line adjustment to add acreage to the farm and reduce the acreage of the farmhouse. She said the property transfer of the farm property likely wouldn't happen until the spring. Because CLBL needs to get onto the property and begin preparing the farm and barn for spring planting, CLBL and New Home are entering into a short-term license agreement. New Home also has agreed to advance CLBL half of the first \$100,000 startup payment, required under the Cannery development agreement.

6. Working Group Updates

- *Community Farms.* Commissioner Rossier, speaking on behalf of the working group on this subject, said there was nothing to report.
- *Native Pollinators.* Commissioner Huber, head of the working group on this subject, said there was nothing to report.
- *Public Forum.* Tracie Reynolds, assigned staff to the Commission, said two small focus groups of between eight and 10 people each were scheduled for late January. These focus groups will be facilitated by Greg Bourne from the U.C. Davis Extension Collaboration Center. She said the open space survey was on the City's website and that more than 30 people had responded so far. She said a press release about the survey and public forum had been distributed through several websites and was being sent to targeted groups, such as the local land trusts and resource conservation districts. She said she was planning to also publicize the survey and forum (scheduled for March 9) at upcoming farmer's markets. A member of the public suggested distributing paper surveys around town, for example, at libraries. Commissioner Hoshovsky also has volunteered to write a couple of columns for the Davis Enterprise.
- *Open Space Website.* Commissioner Bone, head of the working group on this subject, said there was nothing to report.
- *Open Space Signage.* Tracie Reynolds, assigned staff to the Commission, said there was nothing to report.

7. Program/Project Updates

- *North Riparian Corridor.* Tracie Reynolds said the Putah Creek Council was hosting a plug and bulb planting event on the Martin Luther King holiday. Prep work for this event was done in December, including clearing eucalyptus debris, installing irrigation, spot spraying, and replanting failed plants in the Bird Entry Park and Northstar Connector interpretive gardens.

- *Yolo Habitat Conservancy (“YHC”).* Tracie Reynolds said the City of Davis’s City Council passed the resolution to partner with the YHC on implementation of the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan (“HCP/NCCP”) on December 15, 2015. She said the pre-public review draft of the HCP/NCCP was complete. The public review drafts of the HCP/NCCP and Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement were scheduled for release in the fall of 2016. She said the YHC was now focused on completing easement transactions already approved by the YHC Board of Directors, and applying for grants for early implementation of the HCP/NCCP.

8. Staff/Commission Communications

- *Commission Liaison Reports*
 - Recreation & Parks/Planning. No reports were given.
 - City Council. No reports were given.
- *Sports Complex Task Force Liaison report.* No reports were given.
- *Staff Report.* Tracie Reynolds said the next Commission meeting on February 1, 2016 would focus on the merits of the open space and habitat elements of the Mace Ranch Innovation Center (“MRIC”) as spelled out in the Final Environmental Impact Report (“FEIR”). She outlined the project approvals schedule for MRIC, and agreed to send the schedule to the Commission. She also discussed the impending resignation of Commissioner Rossier, and the process for finding a replacement Commissioner. She also mentioned that the terms of four current Commissioners will ended on September 30 of this year.
- *Next Meeting and Agenda Items.* The next meeting is February 1, 2016. Possible agenda items discussed included: the MRIC open space and habitat elements (action item), the state of burrowing owls in and around Davis (presentation and discussion), the draft grant guidelines for restoration projects (discussion), and an overview of the open space and habitat elements of the U.C. Davis long-range development plan (presentation and discussion).

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Draft Grant Guidelines for Restoration Projects