

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, September 12, 2016
Redwood Park Community Building, Redwood Park, 6:30 p.m.

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

Vacant Positions: Two (One Regular, One Alternate)

Commissioners Absent: Greg House (Vice Chair)

Commission Liaisons: Lon Payne, Recreation and Park

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds

Council Liaison: Lucas Frerichs

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Huber opened the meeting and everyone in the room introduced themselves. Commissioner Bone arrived at the meeting during Brief Announcements.

2. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Aptekar, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission voted 4-0-2-0 to approve the agenda (Ayes -- Huber, Aptekar, Millstein, Hoshovsky; Noes – None; Absent – House, Bone; Abstentions – None).

3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commissioners, and City Council Liaisons

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, gave brief updates on (1) a possible grant application under the California Urban Rivers Grant Program for a rainwater demonstration project at City Hall (a separate possible project – to restore a western section of the North Davis Riparian Corridor – is not part of this grant application, she said) and (2) the process for filling the current and future Commission vacancies. Commissioner Millstein alerted Commissioners to an upcoming discussion at the City Council on form-based planning. Commissioner Hoshovsky mentioned that he thought the draft City Council goals covered open space issues well, and that he was working with City staff to install more art in the City's open spaces and greenbelts. Lon Payne, the Commission's liaison to the Recreation and Parks Commission, said that the Recreation and Parks Commission had not approved a City request to use \$25,000 from the City's open space budget for improvements to Arroyo Park. He also mentioned that he may not be serving as the Commission's liaison to the Recreation and Parks Commission for much longer, as his term will end at the end of September and he was unsure whether he was going to serve on the Recreation and Parks Commission beyond that date.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Calendar

The only item on the consent calendar was to approve the Commission's June 6, 2016 minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Aptekar, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission voted 5-0-1-0 to approve the June 6, 2016 minutes (Ayes -- Huber, Millstein, Aptekar, Hoshovsky, Bone; Noes – None; Absent – House; Abstentions – None).

6. Regular Items

Discussion and Action – Appointment of Commission liaison to the Finance and Budget Commission

The Commission took no action on this item, preferring to wait until all Commission vacancies were filled in early January. The Commission agreed to take up this issue again in January or February 2017.

Discussion – Proposed grant application to the California Department of Parks and Recreation to help fund public accessibility improvements at South Fork Preserve

Tracie Reynolds, assigned staff to the Commission, updated the Commission on the status of a grant application to the California Parks and Recreation Habitat Conservation Fund that the City is pursuing that would help pay for public

accessibility improvements to South Fork Preserve. The first phase of the public accessibility improvements includes new trails and improvements to existing trails, new interpretive signs, and new benches. Later phases include construction of bike paths between South Fork Preserve and Yolo County Grasslands Regional Park, and between the City of Davis and South Fork Preserve. The Commission voted to support this effort at its June meeting and use Measure O funds as the matching funds for the grant application. The Commission received the update from staff and also made some comments about the proposed design of the public accessibility improvements. The grant application is due on October 3, 2016. The City Council will consider the environmental documents associated with this project, and give staff permission to submit the grant application at its meeting on September 20, 2016.

Discussion – Possible collaborative open space projects between the City of Davis and the University of California at Davis

Commissioner Huber led the discussion on prioritizing possible collaborative open space projects between the City of Davis and the University of California at Davis. Favored projects (in no particular order) were (1) modifications and restoration of the Putah Creek channel, (2) acquisition of parcels on the south side of Putah Creek between Interstate 80 and Old Davis Road, (3) public accessibility improvements to the university's floodplain parcel, and (4) construction of a bike path between Old Davis Road and Brooks Road. The Commission also discussed how these projects might fit into the strategic plan/implementation plan that staff is preparing as a follow-up to the feedback received from the recent public outreach effort. On a motion by Commissioner Bone, seconded by Commissioner Hoshovsky, the Commission voted 5-0-1-0 to send a working group comprised of Commissioners Hoshovsky, Huber and Millstein on a site visit with university representatives to investigate and evaluate these sites/projects and report back to the Commission as soon as possible (Ayes -- Huber, Millstein, Aptekar, Hoshovsky, Bone; Noes – None; Absent – House; Abstentions – None).

Discussion – Update on the status of follow-up reports resulting from the March 9, 2016 public workshop on open space

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, gave the Commission a brief update on the status of the follow-up reports resulting from the March 9, 2016 public workshop on open space. She said she had met with the public forum working group on this topic and discussed the contents of these follow-up reports. She said a set of follow-up reports and documents were being prepared: (1) A strategic plan that would guide the open space program for the next 15 years, (2) A five-year implementation plan that would detail specific action items to fulfill the goals and objectives contained in the strategic plan, (3) an updated background report that will discuss what Measure O open space parcel tax dollars have been spent on over the last 15 years, (4) a simple budget document to give residents a snapshot look at the open space budget, and (5) land management plans, most particularly for South Fork Preserve and the Wildhorse Agricultural Buffer. She said solid drafts of the strategic plan and background report were prepared over the summer but they were still being revised. She said she hoped to send the working group drafts to review later this fall.

Discussion – Update on the possible acquisition of about 9.5 acres of open space west of South Fork Preserve about a half-mile south of the city limits on County Road 104

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, gave the Commission a brief update on the possible acquisition of about 9.5 acres of open space west of the City's South Fork Preserve. She said staff had completed some additional due diligence and was meeting with the City Council in closed session on September 20, 2016. The Commission discussed its due diligence/site evaluation responsibilities under the 2002 Acquisition and Management Plan. Commissioner Hoshovsky made the following motion: "The Commission is interested in acquisitions of riparian area, particularly those adjacent to existing city lands, and the property for sale west of South Fork Preserve seems to fit this interest, contingent on the findings of the Commission's acquisition working group. This group will use the existing evaluation process, including a field visit and standard criteria, to examine this property and will provide its recommendation about potential acquisition at the October Commission meeting." On a motion by Commissioner Hoshovsky, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission voted 5-0-1-0 to approve the above motion (Ayes -- Huber, Millstein, Aptekar, Hoshovsky, Bone; Noes – None; Absent – House; Abstentions – None).

Discussion – Update on the Commission’s recommendation to the City Council to establish a 2x2x2 with the Natural Resources Commission and the Recreation and Park Commission to investigate the feasibility of banning insecticides containing neonicotinoids and the herbicide glyphosate on City property

Tracie Reynolds, assigned staff to the Commission, updated the Commission on the status of the Commission’s June recommendation to the City Council to establish a 2x2x2 with the Natural Resources Commission and the Recreation and Park Commission to investigate the feasibility of banning insecticides containing neonicotinoids and the herbicide glyphosate on City property. She said City staff had met over the summer to discuss this issue and concluded that a 2x2x2 would trigger the Brown Act, meaning the 2x2x2 meetings would need to be separately staffed and publicly noticed and recorded. She said the City didn’t have the resources to set up a separate 2x2x2 to investigate only one issue. Instead, City staff was proposing an alternative approach that involved joint meetings between these three Commissions to discuss this issue in the context of an update to the City’s Integrated Pest Management Policy. She said she had discussed this alternative approach with Commission Chair Huber and he said he thought it was a reasonable alternative approach. Commissioner Millstein said she and some members of the other two Commissions did not think it should be staff’s decision to throw out the 2x2x2 idea and replace it with the alternative approach. She said that decision should be left up to the City Council. She also said that it wasn’t clear that a 2x2x2 would trigger the Brown Act. These concerns were outlined in a recent letter to the City Council from Alan Pryor, a member of the Natural Resources Commission, in advance of the City Council’s goal-setting retreat in September, she said. She also said that a subcommittee of the Natural Resources Commission had asked the City’s Integrated Pest Management Specialist for information on these chemicals but hadn’t received a reply. She said ~~she and~~ some members of the other two Commissions felt that City staff was “stonewalling” their efforts to collect information. The Commission informally agreed with Commissioner Millstein that City staff should not be unilaterally making this decision and that the decision should be up to the City Council. No formal action was taken on this item. Tracie Reynolds, assigned staff to the Commission, said she would communicate the Commission’s concerns to relevant City staff and determine what the next steps might be.

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Commission Work Plan

Tracie Reynolds, assigned staff to the Commission, said the new City Council had a goal-setting workshop on September 10 and discussed how the work being done by all the City’s Commissions related to the City Council’s goals. Ms. Reynolds said she provided the City Council with a summary of the work the Open Space and Habitat Commission is doing and how that work aligns with the City’s Councils goals. In the summary, she said she explained that the Commission was not comfortable approving a new workplan at this time, given that the public outreach effort associated with future open space spending priorities hasn’t been completed yet. The Commission intends to approve a new workplan later this year or early next year when this work is completed and the vacancies on the Commission are filled.

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The next meeting is October 3, 2016. Possible agenda items discussed included a report by the acquisitions working group on the property west of South Fork Preserve, the Cannery farm lease, an update on the proposed 2x2x2 on City use of glyphosate and neonicotinoids, and an update on the grant application for public accessibility improvements to South Fork Preserve.

Upcoming Events

Lon Payne mentioned that the sports complex will be discussed at the Recreation and Parks Commission meeting on Thursday, September 15.

Working Groups

- *Grant Guidelines – Restoration Projects.* There was nothing to report.
- *Community Farms.* There was nothing to report.
- *Native Pollinators.* There was nothing to report.

- *Public Forum.* The report was given during Regular Items.
- *Open Space Website.* There was nothing to report.
- *Open Space Signage.* There was nothing to report.

Commission Liaison Reports

- *Recreation and Parks.* Lon Payne, the Commission's liaison to the Recreation and Parks Commission, gave his report during Brief Announcements.
- *Finance and Budget.* Commissioner Chung, the Commission's liaison to the Finance and Budget Commission, has resigned from the Commission so the Commission currently does not have a liaison to this commission.
- *Sports Complex Task Force.* There was nothing to report.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:45 p.m.