

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes

Monday, June 5, 2017

Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present:	Rachel Aptekar, Jason Bone (Vice Chair), Marc Hoshovsky, Patrick Huber (Chair), Joy Klineberg (Alternate), Stephen Layton, Roberta Millstein
Vacant Positions:	None
Commissioners Absent:	Lon Payne
Commission Liaisons:	Liaison from the Recreation and Park Commission (Vacant)
Assigned Staff:	Tracie Reynolds, Manager of Leases and Open Space
Council Liaison:	Lucas Frerichs

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Huber opened the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Hoshovsky, seconded by Commissioner Bone, the Commission voted 6-0-1-0 to approve the agenda (Ayes – Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Layton, Millstein; Noes – None; Absent – Payne; Abstentions – None).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said Vanessa Richter was no longer the Commission's liaison from the Recreation and Park Commission. She said the Recreation and Park Commission did not have a member who could attend Commission meetings on a regular basis, so members will take turns being the liaison. She also informed the Commission of the upcoming June 29 community meeting in Davis to provide public comments on the draft Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan and associated environmental documents.

Staff also mentioned that the City of Davis was awarded a \$230,000 grant from the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Habitat Conservation Fund Program (Trails), to help fund some much-needed public accessibility improvements at South Fork Preserve, a 110-acre, publicly accessible nature preserve owned and maintained by the City outside the city limits along the South Fork of Putah Creek. The current trail system at the preserve is limited and the habitat is suffering from the effects of unrestricted access to sensitive areas. The grant will pay for new trails, improvements to existing trails (including adding a loop accessible to people with disabilities), and new enhancements (i.e., a viewing deck, seating, and interpretative panels). The total cost of this project is estimated to be about \$460,000, with the grant covering 50% of that cost. The other 50% of the cost will be covered with Measure O open space parcel tax funds and open space development impact fees. City staff is currently working to secure the required permits for the project. Construction should begin during the fall of 2018, and the trails should be ready for use by the spring of 2019.

Commissioner Hoshovsky alerted the Commission to a consent item on the June 6 Davis City Council agenda which expresses the City's support for the California State Legislature's Assembly Joint Resolution 15 (AJR 15), which supports the continued use of the Antiquities Act of 1906 for designation of federal public lands as National Monuments, and continues to support the permanent protection of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

4. Public Comment

Matt Williams inquired about the status of the draft grant guidelines for restoration projects using Measure O open space parcel tax funds. Ed Whistler expressed disappointment that the City Council had delayed the implementation of an open space restoration project at F Street and Anderson Road, and he provided the Commission with a copy of a letter sent to the City Council by the Friends of North Davis Ponds Project Committee. Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said she would update the Commission on both projects during working group updates.

5. Consent Calendar

Only one item was on the consent calendar: approval of the May 2017 meeting minutes. Commissioners Aptekar and Millstein requested two edits. On a motion by Commissioner Aptekar, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission voted 5-0-1-1 to approve the May meeting minutes, as amended. (Ayes – Aptekar, Hoshovsky, Huber, Layton, Millstein; Noes – None; Absent – Payne; Abstentions – Bone).

6. Regular Items

Discussion – Annual integrated pest management report, presented by Martin Guerena, the City’s Integrated Pest Management Coordinator

The Commission heard a presentation by Martin Guerena, the City’s Integrated Pest Management (“IPM”) Coordinator, who provided an overview of the City’s integrated pest management program and an update on current City pest-management activities. The IPM report and presentation described the mechanical and cultural methods used by the City to manage pests as well as the pesticides used in 2016. Mr. Guerena reported that there was a slight increase in the City’s use of major pesticides in 2016, but the City’s long-term use still shows a downward trend. Mr. Guerena also reported new IPM practices and pesticides the City is using, as well as continuous IPM practices that have contributed to the downward trend in pesticide use by City staff on City-owned properties, such as parks and greenbelts, detention basins and channels, open space areas, and streetscapes and bike paths.

He said staff is working with the Natural Resources Commission to update the City’s IPM policy and clarify the process for classifying pesticides. As part of this process, the City has gathered feedback from the community at public workshops and through an on-line survey. He said the final draft of the updated IPM policy will be brought back to the Commission for final feedback before staff takes it to the City Council for consideration and approval later this year.

Discussion – Proposed outline and table of contents for the City’s land management plans, presented by Christopher Gardner, the City’s Open Space Lands Manager

The Commission heard a presentation by Chris Gardner, the City’s Open Space Lands Manager, about the City’s proposed outline for a land management plan that could be used as a template for several of the City’s key open space areas. The Commission provided a number of comments to staff’s proposed outline. Mr. Gardner said he would revise the outline and work with the Commission’s working group to finalize the outline. Once finalized, staff will bring the outline back to the full Commission for discussion. Once agreement is reached on the outline, staff will begin preparing drafts of full land management plans for key open space areas, such as South Fork Preserve and the Wildhorse Ag Buffer.

Discussion – Proposed fiscal year 2017-18 budget for the Open Space Program, presented by Tracie Reynolds, the City’s Open Space Program Manager

The Commission heard a presentation by Tracie Reynolds, who manages the Open Space Program for the City, about the fiscal health of the program. She summarized the program’s accomplishments during the previous fiscal year, including acquiring 10 acres west of South Fork Preserve, completing significant deferred maintenance work, applying for state grant (public access improvements), and organizing several community volunteer events. She also summarized the current fiscal year’s budget, and compared it to what was actually spent during fiscal year 2016-17. She said the program was working well within its budget. The only major difference was a jump in revenues and expenses due to the acquisition of the 10 acres west of South Fork Preserve, which was not included in the original budget. Two-thirds of the \$432,000 transaction costs were paid with Measure O open space parcel tax funds (\$290,000) and one-third of the transaction costs were paid with open space development impact fees (\$142,000).

For fiscal year 2017-18, she said one of the City’s key priorities was to make sure that the Measure O open space parcel tax fund paid no more than 33% of the City’s open space maintenance and program administration costs. She also said the City was seeking to identify new revenue sources (i.e., grant revenue and ag lease revenue) and had requested additional funding for deferred maintenance, invasive species control, monitoring equipment, public outreach and events, and cleanup of homeless encampments. She also said that the City has now consolidated the Open Space Program budget under the Community Development and Sustainability Department for the first time in years. This consolidation will help provide greater transparency, accountability and oversight of the Open Space Program budget.

She said the program has a budget of \$588,000 for the 2017-18 fiscal year. Of those funds, 52% comes from the City's General Fund and 31% comes from the City's open space parcel tax fund (Measure O). That money will be spent on: personnel, including outside contractors (57%), maintenance supplies and equipment (24%), general overhead (10%), and other miscellaneous expenses, such as permits (9%).

She also detailed the program goals for the upcoming fiscal year, and informed the Commission of the fund balance available for future acquisitions and special capital improvement projects. She said there is approximately \$6.72 million available in three separate open space funds: the Measure O parcel tax fund (Fund 135), the agricultural mitigation in-lieu fees fund (Fund 190), and the open space development impact fees fund (Fund 475).

Finally, she concluded her presentation by giving the Commission a detailed look at the revenues and expenses projected to flow into and out of the Measure O parcel tax fund (Fund 135) for the upcoming fiscal year. She said the Measure O open space parcel tax fund was projected to pay no more than 27% of the City's open space maintenance and program administration costs during fiscal year 2017-18, a decrease of a couple of percentage points from the previous fiscal year. She also said the fund's share of personnel expenses declined by 14% and the fund's share of general overhead declined by 39% from the previous fiscal year.

The Commission asked several questions during the presentation and provided staff with feedback for future budget presentations.

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Commission Work Plan

The Commission has deferred approval of the work plan until the Strategic Plan for the Open Space Program is finalized.

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The next meeting is a special meeting on June 15, 2017. There will only be one item on the agenda: finishing the Commission's review of the draft objectives for the City's Strategic Plan for the Open Space Program. The Commission takes a summer recess during July and August. The Commission's next regularly scheduled meeting is September 11.

Upcoming Events

There were no upcoming events to report

Working Groups

Staff updated the Commission on (1) the status of the draft grant guidelines for restoration projects using Measure O open space parcel tax funds, and (2) the delayed implementation of an open space restoration project at F Street and Anderson Road. She said Chris Gardner, the City's Open Space Lands Manager, was meeting with the Commission's working group to finalize the grant guidelines. Staff hopes to finalize the grant guidelines and bring them before the City Council for consideration and approval later this year. She also said the City Council would like a more formal community discussion about the final future use of the City's three-acre property at F Street and Anderson Road. Possible future uses include affordable housing, open space/habitat, and community gardens. She said there would likely be a public hearing before the City Council on this topic in the fall. She said she would keep the Commission apprised of this meeting.

Commission Liaison Reports

- *Recreation and Parks.* Currently, the Commission does not have a liaison from this commission.
- *Finance and Budget.* Currently, the Commission does not have a liaison to this commission.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:25 p.m.