

# Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes

Monday, September 11, 2017

Redwood Park Community Room, Redwood Park, 1001 Anderson Road, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Rachel Aptekar, Jason Bone (Vice Chair), Marc Hoshovsky, Patrick Huber (Chair), Joy Klineberg (Alternate), Stephen Layton, Roberta Millstein, Lon Payne

Vacant Positions: None

Commissioners Absent: None

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds, Manager of Leases and Open Space

Council Liaison: Lucas Frerichs

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## 1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Huber opened the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves.

## 2. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Aptekar, seconded by Commissioner Bone, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the agenda (Ayes – Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Layton, Millstein, Payne; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said that the City Council voted unanimously at the June 6, 2017 meeting to eliminate all commission liaison roles. As a result, there will no longer be a Commission liaison to the Finance and Budget Commission or a liaison from the Recreation and Park Commission. Ms. Reynolds also updated the Commission on the schedule for the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan (“HCP/NCCP”). She said the public comment period on the public review draft of the HCP/NCCP concluded at the end of August and the Yolo Habitat Conservancy (“YHC”) received about 30 comment letters, the majority of which were positive. She said the YHC also received statements of support from about 20 organizations and individuals. She said the YHC was working with the state and federal wildlife agencies to finalize the schedule for completing the plan. It will go before the City Council for adoption in January 2018 at the earliest.

Commissioner Huber mentioned a public meeting on September 14 in Woodland that will provide information on the Yolo Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (“RCIS”) that is currently under development. The RCIS is a voluntary, landscape-scale conservation tool to identify conservation priority areas in Yolo County. He also mentioned the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day taking place on September 16, where volunteers fan out and clean up garbage and debris along Putah Creek. He said this year volunteers were meeting at the Winters Putah Creek Nature Park.

## 4. Public Comment

A concerned citizen complained that the City’s landscape contractor, Coast Maintenance, had damaged a section of the community-tended pollinator garden adjacent to West Pond. She said many plants were crushed and/ cut and she wanted to know when the damage was going to be repaired.

## 5. Consent Calendar

There were two items on the consent calendar: approval of the June 5, 2017 regular meeting minutes and approval of the June 15 special meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Payne, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve both meeting minutes. (Ayes – Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Layton, Millstein, Payne; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

## 6. Regular Items

**Action Item** – Support staff’s recommendation that City Council approve the updated Integrated Pest Management (“IPM”) Policy and Procedures

John McNerney, the City's Wildlife Biologist, and Stan Gryczko, the City's Assistant Director of Public Works, presented proposed revisions to the City's Integrated Pest Management Policy and Procedures (the "IPM Policy"). The proposed revisions to the IPM Policy stemmed from community concern about the City's use of certain pesticides, in particular neonicotinoids and glyphosate on City-owned property. Glyphosate, the main ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup and other herbicides, is a systemic, post-emergence herbicide which kills annual and perennial weeds. Some studies have determined that it is carcinogenic to humans. Neonicotinoids, which can be found in certain pesticides, have been linked in a range of studies to adverse ecological effects, including honey-bee colony collapse disorder and loss of birds due to a reduction in insect populations. City staff use neonicotinoids in limited cases to control scale insects and woolly hackberry aphids on hackberry trees, and to control grubs on sports fields.

Overall, Mr. McNerney said 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. McNerney summarized staff's proposed revisions to the City's IPM Policy, which focused on strengthening and clarifying the process for deciding when these pesticides would be used. He said while the proposed changes place greater restrictions on the use of traditional pesticides (including neonicotinoids and glyphosate), they did not outright ban any pesticides or phase out the use of the most hazardous pesticides, as some community members have requested. Mr. McNerney also informed the Commission that the City's IPM Specialist recently resigned and that the City will soon start the process of hiring his replacement. He asked the Commission to support staff's recommendation to forward the revised IPM Policy to the City Council for approval.

Several Commissioners voiced their concern about the proposed revisions giving City department heads the ability to overrule the City IPM Specialist's recommendations about City pesticide use. Several Commissioners also voiced their disappointment and frustration that the proposed revisions did not ban neonicotinoids and phase out the use of glyphosate over time. Commissioner Millstein read a statement from former Commissioner Greg House which stated the proposed revisions were "defective on multiple levels" and urged the Commission to reject them. Commissioner Millstein also read her own statement which stated the proposed revisions (1) didn't reflect the recommendations of the Recreation and Park Commission and the Natural Resources Commission and its subcommittee, (2) didn't reflect the wishes of several City Council members and community members who participated in the public process, (3) adds a new layer of bureaucracy, and (4) tolerates the continued use of several toxic pesticides. She said she was frustrated with the proposal and said it felt like "a slap in the face," since it didn't address all the previous community and Commission input. She also urged the Commission to reject staff's proposed revisions to the IPM Policy. Alan Pryor, a member of the Hazardous Materials Subcommittee of the Natural Resources Commission, also voiced his strong opposition to staff's proposed revisions.

Additional Commission discussion ensued. As a result of this discussion, the Commission voted on two motions:

1. On a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Bone, the Commission voted ~~07-70-0-0~~ to ~~reject~~<sup>support</sup> staff's recommendation to forward the revised IPM Policy to the City Council for approval (Ayes – ~~Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Layton, Millstein, Payne~~<sup>None</sup>; Noes – ~~None~~<sup>Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Layton, Millstein, Payne</sup>; Absent – None; Abstentions – None). The motion ~~passed~~<sup>failed</sup>; and
2. On a motion by Commissioner Hoshovsky, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the following motion: "We recommend that the City Council clarify its policy preferences in the September 11 IPM Policy on the following topics: (1) should the City ban the use of neonicotinoids?, (2) should the City phase out the use of glyphosate?, (3) should there be a "no use" category for the most highly hazardous pesticides?, (4) should the exemption process be tightened to give greater authority to the City's IPM Specialist over department heads?, and (5) is there a need for a Technical Advisory Committee separate from the IPM Specialist and if so, what should its role be?" (Ayes – Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Layton, Millstein, Payne; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None). The motion passed.

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said she would include the above language in the upcoming staff report that will be sent to the City Council on this item.

**Discussion Item – Discuss draft action items for the Strategic Plan for the City’s Open Space Program**

The Commission also discussed draft action items for the Strategic Plan for the City’s Open Space Program, but no action was taken. The Commission will discuss, and possibly approve, the action items at its next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, October 2.

**Action Item – Support staff’s recommendation to install a piece of temporary artwork at Wildhorse Agricultural Buffer**

Staff presented a proposal to install a piece of artwork, titled “Good Luck Horseshoe,” on a temporary basis at the Wildhorse Agricultural Buffer. While the Commission expressed its general support for more art in the City’s open spaces, the Commission said it would prefer art that was more complementary to the open space and led to a greater appreciation of the natural habitat. The Commission voted overwhelmingly to reject staff’s recommendation to install the piece of temporary artwork at the Wildhorse Agricultural Buffer.

On a motion by Commissioner Payne, seconded by Commissioner Hoshovsky, the Commission voted 1-5-0-1 to support staff’s recommendation to install the piece of temporary artwork at the Wildhorse Agricultural Buffer. (Ayes – Layton; Noes – Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Millstein; Absent – None; Abstentions – Payne). The motion failed.

**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 October 2, 2017. Possible agenda items discussed include approval of the draft action items for the Strategic Plan for the City’s Open Space Program and a presentation by Yolo County about upcoming improvements to Grasslands Regional Park.

**Upcoming Events**

There were no upcoming events to report

**Working Groups**

Commission Millstein, a member of the Habitat Restoration Project Funding Guidance working group, updated the Commission on the status of the draft grant guidelines for restoration projects using Measure O funds. She said the working group had met with City staff twice over the summer and had made progress on the draft guidelines. She said she believed the working group owed City staff comments on the latest draft. Ms. Reynolds said she would ask Chris Gardner, the City’s Open Space Lands Manager, to follow up with the working group.

**8. Adjourn**

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