

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes

Monday, November 6, 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, Lon Payne
Vacant Positions:	None
Commissioners Absent:	Roberta Millstein
Assigned Staff:	Tracie Reynolds, Manager of Leases and Open Space
Council Liaison:	Lucas Frerichs (Regular), Will Arnold (Alternate)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Huber opened the meeting. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said the Commission will discuss the proposed Nishi Gateway development project at its December meeting. The Commission will be asked to provide feedback on the open space and habitat elements of the proposed project. She also reminded the Commission that the revised Integrated Pest Management Policy and Procedures would be going before the City Council for approval tomorrow, November 7. Finally, she informed the Commission that open space staff has observed at least four different burrowing owls and five active burrows this week in the northeast quadrant of the Wildhorse Agricultural Buffer. This is a noticeable increase from the lone owl that was observed on the site this spring/summer. Open space staff has been actively managing this area for burrowing owl habitat.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Calendar

There was only one item on the consent calendar: approval of the October 2, 2017 regular meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Bone, seconded by Commissioner Hoshovsky, the Commission voted 4-0-1-2 to approve the meeting minutes (Ayes – Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Payne; Noes – None; Absent – Millstein; Abstentions – Aptekar, Layton).

6. Regular Items

Discussion Item – Presentation by the Yolo Land Trust on the City’s existing conservation easements

The Commission heard a presentation by the Yolo Land Trust (“YLT”) on the City’s existing conservation easements. The YLT co-owns 16 conservation easements with the City of Davis. These easements protect 2,832 acres of agriculture land within the Davis Planning Area. About 166 of those acres are also protected for Swainson’s Hawk habitat. Jessica Grant, a YLT conservation associate, discussed how the YLT monitors these easements for the City and makes sure the private property owners are complying with the underlying easement documents. Michele Clark, the YLT’s executive director, said the YLT is paid for its services through endowments set up through escrow when the conservation easements are purchased.

Action Item – Approve habitat restoration concept for three acres of City-owned land at the intersection of F Street and Anderson Road

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, discussed a preliminary habitat restoration concept for three acres of City-owned land at the intersection of F Street and Anderson Road. The City Council directed staff to proceed with the habitat restoration project at its October 17 meeting. The concept was developed with the Friends of North Davis Pond. It will

include a walking path, native trees and plants (including pollinators), and interpretive panels. Part of the site will be reserved for a future landing for a bike overcrossing. Over the coming weeks, staff intend to (1) upgrade the site's irrigation system, (2) plant a hedgerow of coyote bush and other native plants along the ridgeline that will help prevent the spread of invasive species throughout the rest of the site, and (3) perform other invasive species control measures. Ms. Reynolds said staff planned to hold a "kick-off" meeting with the Friends of North Davis Pond to answer questions and discuss next steps in project implementation. On a motion by Commissioner Hoshovsky, seconded by Commissioner Bone, the Commission voted 6-0-1-0 to approve the conceptual direction as described by staff at the meeting (Ayes – Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Layton, Payne; Noes – None; Absent – Millstein; Abstentions – None).

Action Item – Approve draft objectives and action items for the Strategic Plan for the City's Open Space Program

Each Commissioner was assigned a section of the Strategic Plan to review. Commissioners were asked to either approve the section as is or make suggestions for improvements. The assignments were as follows: Commissioner Huber (Acquisitions); Commissioner Hoshovsky (Habitat Restoration & Enhancement); Commissioner Layton (Land & Resource Management); Commissioner Millstein (Public Access & Recreation); Commissioner Payne (Financial & Program Accountability); Commissioner Aptekar (Public Engagement & Partnerships), and; Commissioner Bone (All Sections). During the meeting, each Commissioner provided comments on his/her section. Commissioner Millstein, who was absent, sent in her comments. Commissioner Bone provided comments on the flow of all the sections, and noted action items that were repeated or confusing. In general, the Commission said it would like to see more action verbs and a more succinct document. Ms. Reynolds said she would make the changes and provide the Commission with a new draft to review at its December meeting.

Action Item – Approve Strategic Plan for the City's Open Space Program

The Commission decided to defer this item to a future meeting, given the requested changes to the draft objectives and action items noted above.

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 December 4, 2017. Possible agenda items discussed include (1) a discussion of the open space and habitat elements of the proposed Nishi Gateway development project, (2) approval of the draft objectives and action items for the Strategic Plan for the City's Open Space Program, (3) approval of the entire Strategic plan, and (4) a presentation by Yolo County on improvements to Grasslands Regional Park.

Upcoming Events

There were no upcoming events to report.

Working Groups

There were no reports from the working groups.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:55 p.m.