

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes

Monday, June 4, 2018

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

Commissioners Present: Patrick Huber (Chair), Jason Bone (Vice Chair), Marc Hoshovsky, Joy Klineberg, Roberta Millstein

Vacant Positions: Two (One Regular, One Alternate)

Commissioners Absent: Rachel Aptekar

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 after a quorum was achieved.

2. Approval of Agenda

Staff requested that Item B be delayed until later in the agenda. On a motion by Commissioner Hoshovsky, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission voted 5-0-1-0 to approve the June 2018 agenda, as amended (Ayes – Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein; Noes – None; Absent – Aptekar; Abstentions – None).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, updated the Commission on the City's recruitment efforts to replace the two vacant positions on the Commission. She also updated the Commission on two ongoing projects: (1) a habitat restoration project on three acres of City-owned land at the intersection of F Street and Anderson Road, and (2) a trail-building project on ten acres of riparian habitat west of South Fork Preserve that the City acquired in early 2017. Commissioner Huber also mentioned a June 4, 2018 email sent to the Commission by Pam Nieberg of the Burrowing Owl Preservation Society ("BOPS") in which Ms. Nieberg asked the Commission to work with BOPS on three projects: (1) adopting BOPS-recommended protection and conservation measures for burrowing owls, (2) requiring future developments to replicate California native prairie, rather than trees and shrubs, in agricultural buffers, and (3) setting aside all or part of the City's 25 acres off Mace Boulevard for burrowing owl habitat. Commissioner Millstein suggested a working group take up these projects. Commissioner Huber asked staff to put this subject on the Commission's October agenda.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Calendar

There was only one item on the consent calendar: approval of the April 2, 2018 regular meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Klineberg, seconded by Commissioner Millstein, the Commission voted 4-0-1-1 to approve the April 2018 meeting minutes (Ayes – Hoshovsky, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein; Noes – None; Absent – Aptekar; Abstentions – Bone). The Commission did not hold a meeting in May.

6. Regular Items

Discussion Item – Receive presentation about Commissioner Huber's pollinator mapping class

The Commission heard a presentation by undergraduate students from U.C. Davis, who mapped pollinator habitat in residential neighborhoods in South Davis as part of a class project. The class said they had found about 70 species of beneficial plants for pollinators. Based on the study's findings, the class concluded that (1) more plant diversity led to more pollinator diversity (i.e., bees and butterflies) and more pollinator visits, (2) the people who participated in the study were people who already knew each other and were involved in the community in some way, and (3) strong community participation depended on a strong community leader (i.e., a community's social and ecological systems seem to be linked). Commissioner Hoshovsky commented that an "adopt a parcel" program for the City's open space areas would be a good idea, based on this study's findings. Commissioner Millstein asked how this study's findings could translate to

urban areas. Professor Mark Lubell, who taught the class, said neighborhoods that had involved citizens and a strong, passionate leader who could sustain the effort in that particular community were good candidates for similar projects.

Action Item – Approve final working groups to serve through end of 2018

On a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Bone, the Commission voted 5-0-1-0 to approve the final working groups for 2018 (Ayes – Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein; Noes – None; Absent – Aptekar; Abstentions – None). The final working groups are:

1. Acquisitions – Commissioners Aptekar, Huber and Klineberg
2. Habitat Restoration and Enhancement – Commissioners Hoshovsky, Huber and Millstein
3. Land and Resource Management – Commissioners Aptekar, Bone and Millstein
4. Public Access and Recreation – Commissioners Bone and Hoshovsky
5. Financial and Program Accountability – Commissioners Bone and Klineberg
6. Public Engagement and Partnerships – Commissioners Hoshovsky, Huber and Millstein

The Commission also picked one member from each working group to convene one or more meetings of the working group over the summer to discuss what it wants to accomplish over the next one-year and five-year periods. Staff said the working groups should get together one or more times over the summer to pick a few action items from the Strategic Plan that the working group would like to focus on over the next year and over the next five years. The final selected action items will become the Commission’s Annual Workplan and Five-Year Implementation Plan, which will be shared with the City Council in the fall. Staff would like to discuss the working group’s selected action items at the Commission’s September meeting (September 10) and approve the Annual Workplan and Five-Year Implementation Plan at the Commission’s October meeting (October 1).

Action Item – Approve staff’s recommendation for a new “no feeding” ordinance for wild animals, including turkeys

John McNerney, the City’s Wildlife Resource Specialist, gave the Commission a presentation on a proposed ordinance prohibiting, with exceptions, the feeding of certain wildlife within the City of Davis. He asked the Commission to support staff’s recommendation that the City Council adopt the wildlife feeding ordinance.

Mr. McNerney said the City Council, as part of its approval of a wild turkey management plan, asked staff in October 2016 to develop a “no feeding” ordinance for its consideration. The City Council agreed with staff that a “no feeding” ordinance would likely be necessary to reinforce the City’s existing outreach and education efforts related to the management of wild turkeys. The plan approved by the City Council in October 2016 calls for (1) community outreach and education on supplemental feeding of turkeys, (2) mass capture and relocation, (3) promotion of natural predators, and (4) selective lethal removal of overly aggressive individuals.

The problems associated with feeding wildlife (i.e., habituation to humans, localized activity, and artificial population growth) are not limited to wild turkeys, he said. Therefore, staff drafted the ordinance to prohibit the feeding of several wildlife species within the City of Davis, with exceptions. He said “wildlife” for the purpose of the ordinance includes coyotes, wild turkeys, foxes, skunks, raccoons, opossums, squirrels, ducks, geese, crows, and gulls. He said penalties for violating the ordinance increase as the number of violations increase. The first violation would result in outreach/verbal communication/education. The second violation within 12 months would result in a written warning. Additional violations within 12 months would result in formal written notices of violation, followed by inspections by the City’s code enforcement staff and fines if the problems are not fixed within 48 hours. The City’s current administrative citation fine is \$100 for the first violation, \$200 for the second violation and \$500 for each additional violation within the same calendar year. The ordinance exempts backyard bird feeding and also does not address feral cats, he said.

Commissioner Millstein said staff should not refer to these species as “nuisance” species in the discussion about the ordinance and in the ordinance itself. On a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Bone, the Commission voted 5-0-1-0 to support staff’s recommendation that the City Council adopt the wildlife feeding ordinance, with the suggestion by Commissioner Millstein (Ayes – Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein; Noes – None; Absent – Aptekar; Abstentions – None).

Discussion Item – Receive presentation about the proposed FY 2018-19 budget for the City’s Open Space Program

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 completing the 15-year Strategic Plan for the Open Space Program, posting a set of guiding program documents on the City’s website, executing agreements with three land management entities and a honey bee company, organizing several community volunteer events, completing the management plan template, and making progress on public accessibility improvements to South Fork Preserve and habitat improvements to City property at F Street and Anderson Road. She also summarized the current fiscal year’s budget, and compared it to what was actually spent during fiscal year 2017-18. She said the program was working well within its budget; although the program is scheduled to receive less money from the City’s General Fund than it did this fiscal year. She said this fiscal year (2017-18), General Fund money represented 52% of the program budget, whereas next fiscal year (2018-19) General Fund money represented only 37%.

For fiscal year 2018-19, 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 agricultural lease revenue) and had requested additional funding for deferred maintenance, invasive species control, and habitat restoration.

She said the program’s 2018-19 budget is \$502,300 (about \$85,000 less than 2017-18). Of those funds, 37% comes from the City’s General Fund and 42% comes from the City’s open space parcel tax fund (Measure O). That money will be spent on: personnel, including outside contractors (51%), maintenance supplies and equipment (25%), general overhead (9%), other miscellaneous expenses, such as permits (11%), and capital improvements (4%).

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 \$7.7 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 482).

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 28% of the City’s open space maintenance and program administration costs during fiscal year 2018-19. She also said the fund’s share of personnel expenses declined by 9% and the fund’s share of general overhead declined by 50% from the previous fiscal year.

Discussion Item – Receive update on draft grant guidelines for habitat restoration projects using Measure O funds

Staff provided the Commission with a brief update on the draft grant guidelines for habitat restoration projects using Measure O funds. Commissioners said they would like more discussion about funding guidelines for City-sponsored habitat restoration projects. Ms. Reynolds said she would continue working with the working group on this subject over the summer.

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Commission Work Plan

The work plan was discussed above during Regular Items.

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The next meeting is the second Monday in September (September 10) since the first Monday is a holiday. Possible agenda items discussed include (1) the Commission’s annual work plan and five-year implementation plan, and (2) the draft guidelines for grants (using Measure O funds) for habitat restoration projects. Commissioner Huber also mentioned he would like to discuss the projects proposed by the Burrowing Owl Preservation Society at the Commission’s October meeting.

Upcoming Events

An upcoming workshop on Caltrans's proposal to widen a 16-mile stretch of Interstate 80 through Yolo and Solano counties was mentioned. The workshop will be held on June 6, 2018 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Davis Senior Center, 646 A Street.

Working Groups

No working group updates were discussed.

8. Adjourn

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