

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, December 3, 2018
Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present:	Patrick Huber (Chair), Jason Bone (Vice Chair), Rachel Aptekar, Marc Hoshovsky, Joy Klineberg, Roberta Millstein
Vacant Positions:	Two (One Regular, One Alternate)
Commissioners Absent:	None
Assigned Staff:	Tracie Reynolds, Manager of Leases and Open Space
Council Liaison:	Will Arnold (Regular), Lucas Frerichs (Alternate)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Huber opened the meeting after a quorum was achieved. Commissioners Hoshovsky and Klineberg arrived during Brief Announcements.

2. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Aptekar, seconded by Commissioner Bone, the Commission voted 4-0-2-0 to approve the December 2018 agenda (Ayes – Aptekar, Bone, Huber, Millstein; Noes – None; Absent – Hoshovsky, Klineberg; Abstentions – None).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said five new Commission members will be appointed by the City Council on December 4. She also notified the Commission of a downtown plan meeting on February 26 and a City Council check-in meeting on May 21.

Commissioner Aptekar mentioned a Davis Futures Forum event on December 5 featuring a discussion about more sustainable and equitable food systems. Commissioner Hoshovsky said he had visited the City's new open space property west of South Fork Preserve and really enjoyed the new trail system. Commissioner Millstein said the City should write a press release about this property to let more people know the new trail system has been installed.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Calendar

There was only one item on the consent calendar: approval of the November 5, 2018 regular meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Aptekar, the Commission voted 6-0-0-0 to approve the November 2018 meeting minutes (Ayes – Aptekar, Bone, Hoshovsky, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

6. Regular Items

Discussion Item – Conceptual designs for habitat restoration project on three acres of City-owned land at F Street and Anderson Road

The Commission provided feedback on conceptual designs prepared by Melton Design Group for a habitat restoration project on three acres of City-owned land at F Street and Anderson Road. The land is currently a weed-infested lot. The project is funded by the City's open space parcel tax, known as Measure O. It features new trails and seating areas through a restored upland habitat area. Some of the feedback received during the meeting included:

- Add holes in the fence around the pond for habitat connectivity;
- Include purple needlegrass in the mix of native grasses;
- Make sure dirt from the contour mounds doesn't wash down into the paths during winter;
- Think about ways to prevent paths from getting muddy during the winter;

- Think about impacts to seniors;
- Consider seating with a backrest;
- Consider adding a path to the west of the pump station so that there is an alternative path linking the northern and southern parts of the site in the event the bike overcrossing is built and blocks off the path to the east;
- Reconsider the seating node at the corner of F Street and Anderson Road;
- Think about how to prevent bikes from speeding;
- Consider adding cattle gates and signs at the entrances to the site to control bike traffic; and
- Consider planting elderberry and *mahonia nevinii*.

Ms. Reynolds said she would transmit these comments to Melton Design Group for possible incorporation into the draft landscape plans. The Commission will consider the draft landscape plans at its February meeting. Staff hopes to bring the final landscape plans to the Commission for consideration in March.

Discussion Item – 25 acres of City-owned agricultural land off Mace Boulevard

The Commission discussed a proposed motion to express its preferences for 25 acres of City-owned open space off Mace Boulevard (the “Mace 25 Site”). In 2011, the City purchased the Mace 25 Site with Measure O funds, the City’s special open space protection parcel tax. By purchasing the site, the City hoped to provide the City’s residents with something more than agricultural land encumbered by a conservation easement.

In 2014, the Mace 25 Site was included in a 229-acre proposal from Ramco Enterprises, a West Sacramento land developer, to build a commercial/residential project known as the Mace Ranch Innovation Center (“MRIC”). MRIC is currently on hold.

In 2015, the Commission expressed its preferences for the Mace 25 Site to the City Council. The Commission’s preferences were as follows: (1) the City retains the Mace 25 Site and develops it into a community farm, (2) the City retains the Mace 25 Site as open space, (3) the City swaps the Mace 25 Site for an equivalent or superior parcel for a community farm, and (4) the City sells the Mace 25 Site but retains an agricultural conservation easement.

Later that same year, the City Council directed staff and the Open Space and Habitat Commission to continue exploring the concept of creating one or more community farms throughout the City. The City Council also declined to remove the Mace 25 Site from the proposed MRIC project. The City Council also deemed the Mace 25 Site suitable as a potential location for a community farm.

The Commission said it continues to believe the Mace 25 Site is suitable for open space uses, including a community farm, or wildlife habitat (i.e., for burrowing owls and Swainson’s hawks), or public access/recreation, or a combination of these uses. City Councilmember Will Arnold provided the Commission with the City Council’s perspective about this issue. The Commission discussed its preferences if the Mace 25 Site is sold for urban development in exchange for money or land. Also, if a future MRIC proposal does not include the Mace 25 Site, the Commission said it would like staff and the Commission to be able to explore other open space uses for the Mace 25 Site. Ms. Reynolds said she would draft up this motion, with assistance from Commissioners Millstein and Aptekar, for the Commission’s consideration at the January meeting.

Discussion Item -- Commissioner Appreciation

The Commission took a moment to honor three Commissioners whose terms end at the end of the year. Commissioners Aptekar and Hoshovsky served for 12 years, and Commissioner Bone served for four years. The three Commissioners were honored and thanked with certificates and cookies. The certificates noted that all three have given generously of their time, energies, knowledge, and expertise toward the protection and enhancement of the City’s open space and habitat areas. Their knowledge and expertise have strengthened the City’s Open Space Program and led to the protection of natural resources, sensitive habitat, and agricultural lands in, and surrounding, the City of Davis. All three played a key role in finalizing the Strategic Plan for the City’s Open Space Program, which grew out of community input and was approved by the Davis City Council in March 2018. The Strategic Plan is a roadmap for preserving and managing open space in and around the City of Davis through 2030.

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Commission Work Plan

The work plan was not discussed.

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The next meeting is January 7. Possible agenda items discussed include (1) introductions of new Commission members, (2) an overview of the City's Open Space Program and the Commission's annual work plan, (3) the election of a new Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year, and (4) the Commission's preferences for the Mace 25 Site.

Upcoming Events

No upcoming meetings were announced.

Working Groups

Ms. Reynolds gave the following working group updates:

- **Habitat Restoration.** Ms. Reynolds mentioned that the draft grant guidelines for habitat restoration projects using Measure O funds won't be going to the City Council for consideration until early 2019. Staff needs to brief the City's Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments first. The Commission voted to recommend the draft grant guidelines to the City Council for approval in September 2018.
- **Public Access and Recreation.** Ms. Reynolds mentioned that the City's encroachment permit application to the Central Valley Flood Protection Board was signed by the Local Maintaining Agency, or LMA. The signature is a big step forward for the City's encroachment permit application, which is needed to construct about \$500,000 in public accessibility improvements at South Fork Preserve. In this case, the LMA is the California Department of Water Resources. The project is being funded with Measure O parcel taxes, open space development impact fees, and a state grant from the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:06 p.m.