

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, April 1, 2019
Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Stephanie Holstege, Patrick Huber (Chair), Joy Klineberg, Roberta Millstein, Carrie Shaw, Garrett Allen (Alternate)

Vacant Positions: None

Commissioners Absent: Erin Gooch, Marc Vayssieres

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds, Manager, Open Space Program

Council Liaison: Will Arnold (Regular), Lucas Frerichs (Alternate)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Huber opened the meeting after a quorum was achieved.

2. Approval of Agenda

Staff announced that Regular Item 6A on the agenda (Recommend the agricultural mitigation proposal for the West Davis Active Adult Community development, aka “Bretton Woods,” to the City Council for approval) needed to be postponed to comply with the Brown Act. On a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Holstege, the Commission voted 5-0-2-0 to approve the April 2019 agenda, as amended. (Ayes – Holstege, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein, Shaw; Noes – none; Absent – Gooch, Vayssieres; Abstentions – none).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, discussed with the Commission possible dates for an upcoming trip to South Fork Preserve West. She also mentioned an upcoming meeting with the City Council to discuss open space issues. She also said that she would prepare a staff report on the agricultural mitigation proposal for the West Davis Active Adult Community development, aka “Bretton Woods,” to assist the Commission in determining whether the proposal complies with the City’s agricultural mitigation ordinance.

Commissioner Huber said he was happy to report that the City installed a valley oak in his yard to replace the street tree that had been removed. At its March meeting, the Commission approved a motion encouraging the City to include the valley oak on the approved City street tree list where appropriate and when stock is available.

4. Public Comment

Catherine Portman, the Executive Director of the Burrowing Owl Preservation Society, said she would be happy to give the Commission a presentation on the decline in the burrowing owl population in Davis over the last several decades. She also said that she would like to see the City’s 25 acres of open space off Mace Boulevard remain as publicly owned wildlife habitat. She said the City could partner with the Yolo Habitat Conservancy to place a conservation easement on the site so that it is preserved as wildlife habitat in perpetuity.

5. Consent Calendar

There was only one item on the consent calendar: approval of the March 4, 2019 regular meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Holstege, seconded by Commissioner Huber, the Commission voted 3-0-2-2 to accept the March 2019 minutes. (Ayes – Holstege, Huber, Shaw; Noes – none; Absent – Gooch, Vayssieres; Abstentions – Klineberg, Millstein).

6. Regular Items

Action Item -- Recommend the agricultural mitigation proposal for the West Davis Active Adult Community development, aka “Bretton Woods,” to the City Council for approval

This item was postponed to comply with the Brown Act.

Discussion Item -- Discuss open space and habitat preferences for new development projects

The Commission discussed the City's process for reviewing and approving development projects. Commissioner Huber expressed his desire to provide project applicants with valuable feedback beyond the mitigation measures required for environmental compliance. The Commission discussed their open space and habitat preferences for new development projects. After much discussion, on a motion by Commissioner Millstein and seconded by Commissioner Holstege, the Commission voted 5-0-2-0 (Ayes – Holstege, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein, Shaw; Noes – none; Absent – Gooch, Vayssieres; Abstentions – none) to approve the following motion:

“The Commission’s open space and habitat preferences for new development projects include:

Open space preferences

1. Install signage in open space areas per City specifications
2. Ensure public accessibility to ag buffers at multiple points to encourage connectivity
3. Minimize building footprint and parking footprint
4. Preserve view sheds shown on the City’s priority acquisition areas map

Habitat preferences

1. Plant native vegetation, especially valley oaks and plants good for pollinators
2. Ensure habitat connectivity within site and with adjacent parcels
3. Create or enhance local habitats in ag buffers, such as valley oak savannah, habitat hedgerows, native prairie habitat, and wetlands (no orchards)
4. Create and manage stormwater conveyance channels and detention basins for habitat value, including for native vegetation
5. Consolidate habitat features, rather than disperse them throughout the site
6. Place bee boxes, bat boxes, bird boxes, and owl burrows on site designed by qualified biologists
7. Create drainage swales throughout site, planted with native sedges and rushes, etc.
8. Minimize or avoid planting turf grass and ornamental plants
9. Incorporate permeable pavements/cellular confinement systems for parking lots
10. Construct green roofs”

Discussion Item -- Discuss draft “Request for Proposals” for new open space signage

Ms. Reynolds presented a brief overview of the draft Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for new open space signage. She encouraged the Commissioners to visit the open space sites and help staff develop ideas for site identity icons and subjects for interpretative signage. The Commission was generally happy with the RFP and the direction staff was taking with the proposed site signage. Ms. Reynolds said she would schedule a brainstorming session for an upcoming Commission meeting to discuss site identity icons and subjects for interpretive signage.

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Commission Work Plan

The Commission work plan was discussed as part of the working group reports.

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The Commission’s next meeting is May 6. Possible agenda items discussed include (1) recommending the agricultural mitigation proposal for the West Davis Active Adult Community development, aka “Bretton Woods,” to the City Council for approval, and (2) approving final designs for habitat restoration project on three acres of City-owned open space at the corner of F Street and Anderson Road.

Upcoming Events

No upcoming events were discussed.

Working Groups

1. *Acquisitions.* No updates were given.
2. *Habitat Restoration and Enhancement.* The working group met with the Burrowing Owl Preservation Society and discussed burrowing owl habitat on Wildhorse Agricultural Buffer and the 25 acres off Mace Boulevard. They also discussed where the City might consider installing hedgerows on City-owned farmland. Ms. Reynolds mentioned that the City had reached agreement with a cell tower company to install a hedgerow around the cell tower on the former Howat Ranch property, which the City owns. She also said she planned to bring final landscape design plans for the habitat restoration project at F Street and Anderson Road (aka North Davis Uplands) to the Commission for approval in May.
3. *Land and Resource Management.* The working group met and discussed land management plans. They requested a copy of a draft land management plan to review.
4. *Public Access and Recreation.* Ms. Reynolds mentioned that, since the rains have finally stopped, the City's environmental consultant could now finish the biological assessment that is required as part of the City's encroachment permit application to the Central Valley Flood Protection District. The encroachment permit is needed for the public accessibility improvements the City wants to install at South Fork Preserve. The improvements are being funded by a state grant, Measure O funds, and open space development impact fees.
5. *Financial and Program Accountability.* The working group met and discussed turning the Open Space Program Budget into a two-page summary the public could review. They also discussed possible funding sources the City could access to help achieve open space goals and objectives.
6. *Public Engagement and Partnerships.* No updates were given.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:23 p.m.