

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, June 3, 2019
Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Erin Gooch, Patrick Huber (Chair), Joy Klineberg, Roberta Millstein, Carrie Shaw (Vice Chair), Marc Vayssieres, Garrett Allen (Alternate)

Vacant Positions: None

Commissioners Absent: Stephanie Holstege

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

On a motion by Commissioner Millstein, seconded by Commissioner Vayssieres, the Commission voted 6-0-1-0 to approve the June 2019 agenda. (Ayes – Gooch, Huber, Klineberg, Millstein, Shaw, Vayssieres; Noes – none; Absent – Holstege; Abstentions – none).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, reminded Commissioners about the upcoming discussion with the City Council on June 4. She also said she enjoyed the Commission’s special meeting on June 1, a walking tour of the newly acquired 10 acres west of South Fork Preserve, led by Chris Gardner, the City’s Open Space Lands Manager, and Marc Hoshovsky, a former Commissioner and docent for the Putah Creek Council. Several Commissioners also said they enjoyed the walking tour and were impressed by Mr. Gardner’s and Mr. Hoshovsky’s knowledge of the preserve’s habitat.

Commissioner Millstein asked staff to provide her with an update on the Open Space Program’s use of the herbicide glyphosate, more commonly known as Roundup, which is being phased out within all City parks, City greenbelts, City bike paths and City-owned areas with high public exposure risk under the City’s Integrated Pest Management Policy.

Ms. Reynolds also mentioned she was talking to a landowner about a possible conservation easement and she would like to meet with the Commission’s Acquisitions Working Group over the summer to visit the site.

4. Public Comment

Two North Davis residents -- Larry Snyder and Mark Woerner -- brought up the City’s land management practices along the North Davis channel. Mr. Snyder said he was not happy the City mows over some of the milkweed plants that were planted by a U.C. Davis professor every spring as part of the City’s fire suppression efforts along the channel. Mr. Snyder said the milkweed plants provide marvelous habitat and should not be mowed. He said he would like a consistent policy from the City to preserve as many of these milkweed plants as possible. Mr. Woerner said he was not happy with the City’s fire suppression efforts along the channel. Ms. Reynolds said she would discuss this matter with the City’s Public Works Department and bring up the matter at the next quarterly meeting of the City’s land managers. The Commission also requested that this issue be placed on the Commission’s agenda in September.

5. Consent Calendar

There was only one item on the consent calendar: approval of the May 6, 2019 regular meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Vayssieres, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, the Commission voted 5-0-1-1 to approve the May 2019 regular meeting minutes. (Ayes – Gooch, Huber, Klineberg, Shaw, Vayssieres; Noes – none; Absent – Holstege; Abstentions – Millstein).

6. Regular Items

Discussion Item -- The annual financial review 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 starting a habitat restoration project at F Street and Anderson Road, controlling weeds using non-toxic methods, posting programmatic/budgetary documents on the City's website, making progress on public accessibility improvements to South Fork Preserve, and expanding/strengthening partnerships with the public and outside organizations. She also summarized the current fiscal year's budget and compared it to what was actually spent. She said the program was working well within its \$440,000 baseline budget.

For fiscal year 2019-20, 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., open space development impact fees, ag lease revenue) and had requested additional funding for maintenance of the eastern hedgerow at the Cannery Farm and for the habitat restoration project at F Street and Anderson Road.

She said the program's 2019-20 budget is about \$697,000. Of those funds, 28% comes from the City's General Fund and 58% comes from the City's open space parcel tax fund (Measure O). That money will be spent on: personnel, including outside contractors (39%), maintenance supplies and equipment (21%), general overhead (7%), other miscellaneous expenses, such as permits (2%), and capital improvements (31%).

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 \$7.8 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 28% of the total Measure O parcel taxes the City receives during fiscal year 2019-20 (estimated to be about \$673,000) would be spent on maintenance at the City's open space areas. She said 40% would be saved and the remaining 32% would be spent on capital improvements to the City's open space areas.

Discussion Item -- The future of farming, and possible habitat and public access improvements, at the City-owned former Howat/Clayton Ranch property east of County Road 105

Commissioners Huber and Millstein said the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Working Group had met to discuss possible habitat and public access improvements at this City-owned agricultural property. About 600 acres of this property is leased to a farmer who grows row crops and about 200 acres is leased to another farmer who grows fodder for his cattle. Some of the ideas discussed included adding hedgerows around the perimeter of the property, converting part of the property to wetlands with walking paths, converting part of the property to small-scale agricultural plots, and adding a parking lot at the northern edge of the property. There was some discussion about these ideas and the City's intent to hire the Yolo County Resource Conservation District to prepare a carbon plan for this property, which could include a discussion of some of these ideas. The Commission decided to wait until this carbon plan was completed to discuss these ideas again.

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 will take a summer recess in July and August. The Commission's next meeting is September 9, since the first Monday of the month is a holiday. Possible agenda items discussed include maintenance practices at the North Davis channel, possible habitat and public access improvements at the City-owned former Howat/Clayton Ranch property, and a possible acquisition of a conservation easement.

Upcoming Events

No upcoming events were discussed.

Working Groups

1. *Acquisitions*. No updates were reported.
2. *Habitat Restoration and Enhancement*. No updates were reported.
3. *Land and Resource Management*. No updates were reported.
4. *Public Access and Recreation*. No updates were reported.
5. *Financial and Program Accountability*. No updates were reported.
6. *Public Engagement and Partnerships*. No updates were reported.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.