

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, June 7, 2021
Remote Audio and Video Meeting Participation, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Ramiro Cabanillas-Ledesma, Lindsay Correa, Patrick Huber, Sherman McFarland, Carrie Shaw (Chair), Emma Torbert, Marc Vayssieres (Vice Chair), and *Patricia Price (Alternate)*

Vacant Positions: None

Commissioners Absent: None

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds, Manager, Open Space Program (Present)

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

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Shaw opened the meeting after a quorum was achieved and called roll call. Commissioner Torbert arrived during Brief Announcements from Staff, Commissioners, and City Council Liaisons.

2. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Vayssieres, which was seconded by Commissioner Huber, the Commission voted 6-0-1-0 to approve the June 2021 regular meeting agenda (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, McFarland, Shaw, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – Torbert; Abstentions – None).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said that budget documents were not ready in time for her to prepare an overview of the Open Space Program budget for the Commission during this meeting. She said she would prepare a budget presentation for the fall. Commissioner Price said she was planning to attend a meeting this Friday of the Yolo Climate Compact, a planning group that meets to talk about climate issues that impact Yolo County residents. She said she would send the meeting link to anyone else who would like to attend. Commissioner Correa said the State of California was updating its climate action plan, and that there were opportunities for people to provide input on regional issues at several upcoming regional workshops. Commissioner Vayssieres said the California Air Resources Board is holding a series of public workshops to gather input related to an update to the California Climate Change Scoping Plan, which will reflect the state's goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. He said the first meeting was tomorrow, but there were other meetings in coming days, and information about these meetings could be found on the agency's website.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Calendar

There was one item on the consent calendar: approval of the May 3, 2021 regular meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Cabanillas-Ledesma, which was seconded by Commissioner Vayssieres, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the May 2021 meeting minutes (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, McFarland, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

6. Regular Items

Discussion Item – Receive an update from staff about the upcoming project to construct public accessibility improvements at South Fork Preserve and provide feedback on the content and design of the 10 draft interpretive panels to be installed at the preserve this fall

Ms. Reynolds, staff to the Commission, said the City-hired contractor for this work was going to be clearing, grubbing and grading the boardwalk/overlook area this month. Construction of the boardwalk/overlook would begin shortly thereafter, probably in July. She said the contractor would then grade the trail that will be accessible to people with disabilities, and the preserve may have to be closed during that time. She said the Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps would begin making the single-track trail and the seasonal trail in mid-July. The City hopes to have the project completed by the end of October, she said. As part of this project, she said the City would be installing 10 interpretive panels and she asked the Commission for its feedback on each of the draft panels.

Commissioner Shaw asked if Commissioners had any clarifying questions. There were none. Commissioner Shaw then took public comment. Marc Hoshovsky asked how he could provide comments on the draft panels after the meeting. He said the City should plan and budget to maintain them over their lifespan so they don't look neglected over time. He also said the designers should consider different types of viewers, for example, people who only want a quick glance versus people who want to linger and read more information. He said the City should celebrate its partnerships with other organizations on its signs. Commissioner Shaw then closed public comment and opened the Commission discussion.

Commissioners then provided detailed feedback on each of the 10 interpretive panels. Ms. Reynolds said she would discuss this feedback with the City-hired designer, Helix Environmental, and would incorporate as much of the feedback as possible into the final designs. She said she hoped to get the panels finalized and delivered to the manufacturer by August so that they would be ready to install at the preserve in October.

Action Item – Advise the City Council to direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals for an experienced farmer who can manage and operate the City's 7.4-acre organic urban farm at the Cannery and also provide other agricultural and community-oriented services, such as orchard care, farm maintenance, pest management, U-Pick opportunities, educational workshops/classes, community-supported agriculture boxes, volunteer days, and school field trips

Ms. Reynolds, staff to the Commission, briefly summarized a detailed staff report on this matter. Based on the analysis outlined in the staff report, she said staff recommended that the Commission advise the City Council to direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals ("RFP") for an experienced tenant farmer who can manage and operate the City's organic urban farm at the Cannery and also provide other agricultural and community-oriented services, such as orchard care, farm maintenance, pest management, U-Pick opportunities, educational workshops/classes, community-supported agriculture boxes, volunteer days, and school field trips. She said staff would like to bring the RFP before the City Council for consideration in June or July, with the item being tentatively scheduled for the June 15, 2021 City Council meeting. Staff would like to release the RFP in early summer. Staff hopes to enter into a contract with the new user in early fall so that preparations can be made for fall amendments and/or plantings, she said.

Commissioner Shaw asked if Commissioners had any clarifying questions. Commissioners asked for clarification on (1) whether an experienced farmer was necessary, (2) whether the submittal requirements could be modified to widen the potential pool of applicants, and (3) who currently manages the ground squirrel population in the Cannery farm hedgerow.

Commissioner Shaw then took public comment. Vern Goehring, a member of the Cannery homeowner's association ("HOA") and a member of the Cannery farm working group, thanked the City and the Commission for working collaboratively with Cannery residents on the proposed RFP. He said he was excited to be at this point and looked forward to a successful conclusion. Andrew Mcelrone, another member of the Cannery HOA and Cannery farm working group, said he also appreciated the City's effort to work collaboratively with Cannery residents on this RFP. He said he hoped the RFP would lead to a unique farmer who could deliver on the promises made by the Cannery developer to have a working urban farm on this site. Ira Bray, another member of the Cannery HOA and Cannery farm working group, said he echoed the comments of the two previous speakers. He said he was looking forward to a prompt hearing before the City Council and he thanked the Commission for its help in making that happen.

Commissioner Shaw then closed public comment and opened the Commission discussion. Topics discussed included (1) whether an experienced farmer was necessary, (2) whether the submittal requirements could be modified to widen the potential pool of applicants, and (3) whether preferences could be given to disadvantaged farmers and other under-represented groups. After some additional discussion, the Commission took the following action:

On a motion by Commissioner Shaw, which was seconded by Commissioner Torbert, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the following motion (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, McFarland, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None):

"The Open Space and Habitat Commission advises the City Council to direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals for a farmer who can manage and operate the City's 7.4-acre organic urban farm at the Cannery and also provide other agricultural and community-oriented services, such as orchard care, farm maintenance, pest management, U-Pick opportunities, educational workshops/classes, community-supported agriculture boxes, volunteer days, and school field trips. The Commission reviewed the draft Request for Proposals and has given open space staff comments on:

- 1. Expanding the experience requirements to widen the pool of applicants,*
- 2. Clarifying that the lease terms are negotiable,*
- 3. Expanding the types of temporary irrigation the farmer can install,*
- 4. Clarifying that the farmer does not have to do all the community events,*
- 5. Not requiring the farmer to grow produce all year round,*
- 6. Reallocating points in the scoring criteria from staff qualifications to community engagement,*
- 7. Not requiring the farm to be totally free of weeds, and*
- 8. Replacing organic registration with organic certification."*

Commissioner Price then made a motion to amend the previously approved motion to add points in the scoring criteria for underserved applicants pursuant to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's criteria for underserved groups. Commissioner Huber seconded her friendly amendment. The Commission then voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the following friendly amendment: *"9. Adding points in the scoring criteria for underserved applicants pursuant to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's*

criteria for underserved groups” (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, McFarland, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

The Commission then discussed if they wanted to continue ten more minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Shaw, which was seconded by Commissioner Huber, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to continue the meeting for another ten minutes (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, McFarland, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Commission Work Plan

The Commission work plan was not discussed.

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, September 13, the second Monday of the month because the first Monday of the month is Labor Day. Possible topics discussed included (1) a discussion about the Open Space Program budget, (2) a discussion about racial and socioeconomic equity in easements, (3) community outreach plans, and (4) the possible habitat restoration project near Old Davis Road with U.C. Davis.

Upcoming Events

Ms. Reynolds mentioned that she would be speaking as part of the Putah Creek Council's "CreekSpeak" seminar series on September 16 at 4:00 p.m. about the new public accessibility improvements at South Fork Preserve. Commissioner Shaw mentioned that the City's recent Brown Act webinar could now be viewed on-line for those who missed the live session.

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.

Update on Cannery Farm

The update on the Cannery Farm was provided during Regular Items.

Update on Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update

Ms. Reynolds said the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan ("CAAP") Update team was still compiling data and input from the first set of workshops, other community presentations, and the first online survey completed on May 30, which garnered 238 responses. She said the City will summarize this feedback at the next set of workshops, which will help identify actions to reduce greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions so the City can reach carbon neutrality by 2040. She said these actions will be evaluated based on community values, GHG reduction potential, feasibility, and other issues.

She said the second on-line survey was scheduled to be released in mid-June. There also will be two sets of workshops in July, she said. Although the subjects of these workshops have not been finalized, she said they likely will focus broadly on mobility/energy/buildings and waste/water/natural

resources. She said more information about the CAAP Update and the opportunities for public input could be found on the CAAP website on the City's website.

8. Adjourn

On a motion by Commissioner Correa, which was seconded by Commissioner Huber, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:06 p.m. (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, McFarland, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).