

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, December 5, 2022
Remote Audio and Video Meeting Participation, 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Ramiro Cabanillas-Ledesma, Lindsay Correa, Patrick Huber, Patricia Price, Carrie Shaw (Chair), Emma Torbert, Marc Vayssieres (Vice Chair), and Sara Geonczy (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) (Absent)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

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

2. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Vayssieres, that was seconded by Commissioner Cabanillas-Ledesma, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the December 2022 meeting agenda (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Geonczy, Huber, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – Price; Abstentions – None).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff liaison to the Commission, said that staff from the California Department of Conservation are recommending to the Strategic Growth Council that the City of Davis, the Yolo Land Trust, and the Solano Land Trust be awarded almost \$4.0 million to purchase two agricultural conservation easements near the City of Davis. She said one grant of \$915,000 would go toward purchasing a conservation easement on farmland owned by the Gill family northeast of the city limits and the second grant of \$2.9 million would go toward purchasing a conservation easement on farmland owned by the Tyson family south of the city limits. She said the Strategic Growth Council would formally approve these staff recommendations on December 15.

She also said that four Commissioners whose terms were set to expire at the end of the year were extended to June 30 to better coincide with other commission term-ending dates. She said those Commissioners were Commissioners Shaw, Vayssieres, Price, and Geonczy. She said if they didn't want to serve another six months they could resign from the Commission by sending her an email. The City Clerk's Office will begin the next recruitment cycle in March 2023, she said.

Finally, she also told the Commission that (1) Commission liaison assignments were going to be discussed at the City Council on January 3, (2) she was working on an update to the open space interactive map that would be ready for review soon, and (3) about 15-20 different companies came to the preproposal meeting on November 9 for the Request for Proposals for design/engineering services related to a wetlands habitat enhancement project the City is working on with UC Davis. The proposals are due near the end of December, she said.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Consent Calendar

There was one item on the consent calendar: approval of the November 7, 2022 regular meeting minutes. Commissioners Correa and Shaw each requested an edit to the minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Price, that was seconded by Commissioner Huber, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the November 2022 meeting minutes, as amended (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, Price, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

6. Regular Items

Discussion Item – A discussion with Max Stevenson, the new Streamkeeper for the Solano County Water Agency and the Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee, about the Putah Creek Accord, his role in keeping the creek healthy, and possible acquisition opportunities

Max Stevenson, the new Streamkeeper for the Solano County Water Agency (“SCWA”) and the Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee (“LPCCC”), gave the Commission an introductory presentation about Putah Creek. He discussed the 26-mile creek’s role in the regional watershed, the history of water flows along the creek, how the SCWA times and manages water releases from Monticello Dam, the number of salmon that have been spawning in the creek over recent decades, and the requirements of the 1996 Putah Creek Accord, an historic agreement between landowners and public agencies to maintain minimum water levels in the creek to support both agricultural uses and wildlife habitat. He said the Putah Creek Accord (1) regulated water flows and pulse flows along the creek, (2) created the position of the Streamkeeper, and (3) created the LPCCC, a group of public and private stakeholders who help decide what happens on the creek. He said Putah Creek was historically an “ephemeral” creek, meaning it would often go dry during certain parts of the year. He said historically salmon swam up Putah Creek every year, but their numbers were not large. The \$25 million habitat restoration along the creek between Interstate Highways 80 and 505 was designed to mimic natural conditions for salmon and other fish, he said. About a couple hundred salmon have made the journey up Putah Creek this year, he said.

Commissioner Huber, who is the current chair of the LPCCC, said the LPCCC is managing a novel ecosystem and trying to make decisions about what the community wants for the creek.

Commissioner Shaw then asked if Commissioners had any clarifying questions. Commissioners asked for clarification on how salmon are counted in the creek every year. Commissioner Shaw then took public comment. Marc Hoshovsky said that he really appreciated Mr. Stevenson’s presentation and that he learned some new things about the creek. Commissioner Shaw then closed public comment and the Commission discussed this item. Topics discussed included (1) where publicly owned parcels are located along the creek, (2) how the flow of groundwater moves underground in this region, (3) the impact of the drought on water flows, (4) how water flows and vegetation growth have changed over time, (5) the possibility of enhancing the habitat of certain creek parcels east of Mace Boulevard, (6) how gravel bars used to dominate the creek habitat, and (7) what habitat restoration projects the SCWA and the LPCCC are working on along the creek. No action was taken.

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The next regularly scheduled meeting is January 2, 2023, which is a holiday. The Commission discussed whether to hold a meeting on the next Monday, January 9, or cancel the meeting. The Commission decided to cancel the January meeting. The next regularly scheduled meeting will

therefore by February 6, 2023. Possible agenda items discussed included the election of the chair and vice chair for 2023.

Upcoming Events

Ms. Reynolds said that the City Council would be holding a workshop about the City's commissions on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. Commissioner Shaw encouraged Commissioners to go see the salmon swimming up the creek in Winters at the Putah Creek nature park.

Subcommittee Reports

1. *Acquisitions*. No reports were given.
2. *Habitat Restoration and Enhancement*. No reports were given.
3. *Land and Resource Management*. No reports were given.
4. *Public Access and Recreation*. No reports were given.
5. *Financial and Program Accountability*. No reports were given.
6. *Public Engagement and Partnerships*. No reports were given.
7. *Ad-Hoc Subcommittee to Improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the City's Open Space Program*. No reports were given.

Reports on Meetings Attended

There were no reports about meetings attended.

Climate Action and Adaptation Plan ("CAAP") Update

Commissioner Price said the updated final draft will be discussed at the City Council tomorrow night. She said a lot of changes were made related to the residential electrification issue, but no changes relevant to the Commission were made.

Urban Forest Management Plan

Commissioner Geonczy said that there would be a major presentation about the final draft plan at the Tree Commission this month.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.