

Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes
Monday, February 6, 2023
Remote Audio and Video Meeting Participation, 6:30 p.m.

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

Vacant Positions: None

Commissioners Absent: Sara Geonczy (Alternate)

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds, Manager, Open Space Program

Council Liaison: Josh Chapman (Regular), Bapu Vaitla (Alternate)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Commissioner Shaw opened the meeting after a quorum was achieved and called roll call.

2. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Commissioner Vayssieres, that was seconded by Commissioner Huber, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the February 2023 meeting agenda (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, Price, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

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

Tracie Reynolds, staff liaison to the Commission, introduced the Commission's new City Council liaison, City Councilmember Josh Chapman, who said a few introductory words. She also mentioned that City Councilmember Bapu Vaitla was the Commission's new alternate City Council liaison. She also said the Commission would be returning to in-person meetings in March.

She also said the State of California in December approved two grants to purchase two agricultural conservation easements: one for \$915,000 for an ag easement in northeast Davis (known as Gill #2) and the other for \$2.9 million for an ag easement in south Davis, known as El Molino Farm. She said the grant agreements would be signed in mid-February. She said she intended to ask the City Council for the matching funds for the El Molino Farm easement in March.

She also said that new native plantings had been installed around the cell tower at the City's Howat Ranch, paid for by the cell tower company. Chris Gardner, the City's Open Space Lands Manager, partnered with the Yolo Resource Conservation District and the Center for Land Based Learning who was looking for a conservation project for a class of Davis High School students, she said. In November, the students planted several hundred native forbs at the South Fork Preserve to help mitigate construction impacts and improve biodiversity, she said. In January, the students went to Howat to help install 200 native plants as a hedgerow around the cell tower, she said. In March, the students will return to install irrigation and maintain the young plants, she said.

Finally, she updated the Commission on (1) efforts to purchase land along the South Fork of Putah Creek east of South Fork Preserve, (2) where things stand with a Request for Proposals for new signage within the City's open space areas, (3) staff's participation in a career day sponsored by UC Davis's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, (4) where things stand with a Request for Proposals for design/engineering services related to a wetlands habitat restoration project the City

is working on with UC Davis on UC Davis land, and (5) when a new art sculpture called “*Frog Totem*” would be installed in the Woodbridge/Willowbank habitat area.

Commissioner Shaw also mentioned that she had met with City Councilmember Bapu Vaitla to discuss the Open Space Program.

4. Public Comment

Chris Gardner, the City’s Open Space Lands Manager, introduced himself and Luis Corona, a student at American River College, who is interested in policy and is interning this semester with the City’s Open Space Program. Mr. Gardner said he and Mr. Corona were interested in listening to the proceedings of the Commission.

5. Consent Calendar

There was one item on the consent calendar: approval of the December 5, 2022 regular meeting minutes. Commissioners Price requested one edit to the minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Correa, that was seconded by Commissioner Vayssieres, the Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the December 2022 meeting minutes, as amended (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, Price, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

6. Regular Items

Action Item – Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2023

Commissioner Cabanillas-Ledesma nominated Commissioner Huber for Chair. Commissioner Huber accepted the nomination. Commissioner Shaw nominated Commissioner Correa for Chair. Commissioner Correa said she was honored to be nominated but had to respectfully decline.

Commissioner Shaw then took public comment. There was no public comment. Commissioner Shaw then closed public comment and Commissioner Cabanillas-Ledesma made the following motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Shaw: “*The Open Space and Habitat Commission nominates Commissioner Patrick Huber as Chair of the Commission for 2023.*” The motion passed by a 7-0-0-0 vote (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, Price, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None). Commissioner Huber took over as chair of the meeting.

Commissioner Vayssieres said he would like to continue as Vice Chair, but he also nominated Commissioner Correa for Vice Chair. Again, Commissioner Correa said she was honored to be nominated but had to respectfully decline.

Commissioner Huber then took public comment. There was no public comment. Commissioner Huber then closed public comment and Commissioner Huber made the following motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Shaw: “*The Open Space and Habitat Commission nominates Commissioner Marc Vayssieres as Vice Chair of the Commission for 2023.*” The motion passed by a 7-0-0-0 vote (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Huber, Price, Shaw, Torbert, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

The Commission thanked Commissioner Shaw for all her work as Chair of the Commission over the last two years.

Discussion Item – Demonstration of the draft open space interactive map

Ms. Reynolds gave the Commission a brief demonstration of the draft open space interactive map, which will allow the public to click on open space areas in the region to get information about recreational opportunities, what activities are and aren't allowed, and who owns the land and/or conservation easement, among other things.

Commissioner Huber then asked if Commissioners had any clarifying questions. There were no clarifying questions. Commissioner Huber then took public comment. There was no public comment. Commissioner Huber then closed public comment and the Commission discussed this item. Commission feedback included (1) adding filters for Measure O properties, public access, whether dogs were allowed, hiking, fishing, and boating, (2) adding markers for access points, car parking and bike parking, (3) showing directions or including a link to google maps, (4) showing the aerial map under the color coding, (5) changing the legend color scheme, (6) coordinating with the City's Parks Department to make sure both interactive maps can be used together, and (7) including a separate link for public comments in the "Overview" section. The Commission also recommended that staff publicize the new interactive map once it was available on the City's website. Ms. Reynolds said she would work to implement these suggested changes to the draft interactive map. No action was taken.

Discussion Item – Update on Sen. Bill Dodd's (D-Napa) legislation that would allow the City to help establish sensitive species reserves and support climate mitigation projects

Ms. Reynolds said this legislation, known as Senate Bill 256, would modify the terms of a voter-approved bond act, Proposition 70 of 1988, which provided \$1.97 million to the City to purchase eight properties along the South Fork of Putah Creek to preserve and enhance the riparian habitat in perpetuity. The proposed modifications would allow the City to encumber the properties with habitat conservation easements and other agreements to support carbon sequestration projects.

Commissioner Huber then asked if Commissioners had any clarifying questions. There were no clarifying questions. Commissioner Huber then took public comment. There was no public comment. Commissioner Huber then closed public comment and the Commission discussed this item. There was no discussion and no action was taken.

7. Commission and Staff Communications

Upcoming Meeting Date, Time, Items

The next regularly scheduled meeting is March 6, 2023. Possible agenda items discussed included (1) an update from staff on the Request for Proposals for new signage in the City's open space areas, and (2) an update from staff on the consultant study on the Davis wetlands.

Upcoming Events

Commissioner Torbert mentioned the California Small Farm Conference that was happening from February 26 to March 6. She said she would send the staff liaison more information to pass along to the Commission in case anyone was interested in attending.

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.* Commissioner Torbert said this subcommittee had met and planned to meet again.

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 is on hold again. She said it went to the City Council in December and the City Council asked for some substantial changes to the residential electrification sections. How those changes will affect the carbon targets are now being investigated, she said. Staff hoped to bring the updated final draft back to the City Council at the end of March, she said.

Urban Forest Management Plan

In Commissioner Geonczy's absence, Ms. Reynolds said the draft Urban Forest Management Plan ("Plan") has been posted on the City's website for public review. She said a special meeting of the Tree Commission to review the Plan will be held February 8 starting at 5:30 p.m. An in-depth discussion about the plan will take place at the regularly scheduled Tree Commission meeting on February 16, she said. The meeting notices and webinar links are posted online, she said.

The City is working to adjust the existing public comment portal online to receive comments on the Plan through March 3, she said. Comments can also be sent via email at citytrees@cityofdavis.org, she said. The City is scheduled to bring the Plan to the City Council on March 21, she said.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:16 p.m.