

**Open Space and Habitat Commission Minutes**  
**Monday, December 2, 2024**  
**Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, 6:30 p.m.**

Commissioners Present: Ramiro Cabanillas-Ledesma, Lindsay Correa, Sara Geonczy, Steve Greco, Christina Harrington, Patrick Huber (Chair), and Marc Vayssieres (Vice Chair)

Vacant Positions: None

Commissioners Absent: *Christopher Alberts (Alternate)*

Assigned Staff: Tracie Reynolds, Open Space Program Manager

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

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**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

Commissioner Huber opened the meeting after a quorum was achieved and took roll call. Commissioners Harrington arrived during Item #3, Brief Announcements.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Vayssieres made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Correa. The Commission voted 6-0-1-0 to approve the motion (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Geonczy, Greco, Huber, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – Harrington; Abstentions – None).

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

Ms. Reynolds, staff to the Commission, informed the Commission that the prescribed burn at South Fork Preserve took place and was successful. She said she had sent the Commission some photos.

**4. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**5. Consent Calendar**

On consent was the approval of the November 2024 meeting minutes. Commissioner Greco requested two edits. He then made a motion to approve the draft minutes, as amended. It was seconded by Commissioner Cabanillas-Ledesma. The Commission voted 7-0-0-0 to approve the draft minutes, as amended (Ayes – Cabanillas-Ledesma, Correa, Geonczy, Greco, Harrington, Huber, Vayssieres; Noes – None; Absent – None; Abstentions – None).

**6. Regular Items**

**Discussion Item – Receive staff presentation on the budget for the Open Space Program for the current fiscal year and the previous fiscal year**

The Commission received its annual presentation on this topic from staff. Ms. Reynolds discussed the budget and accomplishments from the last fiscal year, and the budget and goals for the next fiscal year. She said the program's 2024-25 budget is about \$1.25 million. Of those funds, about 14% comes from the City's General Fund, about 38% comes from the City's special open space protection parcel tax fund (Measure O), about 47% comes from open space development impact fees, and about 1% comes from ag lease revenue, she said. That money will be spent on: personnel, including outside contractors (27%), maintenance, operating, supplies and equipment (7%), allocated overhead

(5%), and capital improvements (61%), she said. Capital improvements scheduled for this year include about \$450,000 for a design/engineering contract related to a wetlands habitat restoration project the City is working on with UC Davis, about \$290,000 for new open space signage, and \$30,000 for new interpretive panels at the North Davis Upland Habitat Area, she said. She also discussed \$8.6 million in restricted fund balances that are available for open space acquisitions, maintenance, and capital improvements.

She concluded her presentation by giving the Commission a detailed look at the revenues and expenses projected to flow into and out of the open space parcel tax fund (Measure O) for the upcoming fiscal year and beyond. She said 35% of expenses from the Measure O fund during the 2024-25 fiscal year is budgeted to be spent on maintenance, including staff.

Commissioner Huber then asked if Commissioners had any clarifying questions. The Commission asked for clarification on (1) what open space development impact fees can be spent on, and (2) whether the open space parcel tax escalates every year. Commissioner Huber then took public comment. There was no public comment. Commissioner Huber then closed public comment and the Commission discussed this item. Topics discussed included how the City could better inform the public about Measure O and the projects funded with the open space parcel tax. No action was taken.

#### **Discussion Item – Discuss the progress made to date (since 2018) on the action items in the Strategic Plan for the City’s Open Space Program**

The Commission reviewed and discussed a matrix that staff prepared that described the status of each action item in the Strategic Plan. Staff said that reviewing this matrix could be a recurring agenda item. There was no public comment. No action was taken.

### **7. Subcommittee and Liaison Assignment Updates**

#### **A. Liaison Assignments**

(1) *Lower Putah Creek Coordinating Committee (“LPCCC”)*. Commissioner Huber said the new temporary removable wooden fish ladder at the check dam was a success this fall, with hundreds of salmon using it to get past the check dam and enter the creek. He said the fish ladder was inexpensive but it has made a large impact on the creek and the salmon’s ability to get upstream to spawning grounds near Winters.

(2) *Yolo Habitat Conservancy (“YHC”)*. Commissioner Huber said there was nothing to report from the YHC’s implementation committee.

### **8. Long Range Calendar: Upcoming Meeting Dates and/or Potential Agenda Items**

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, January 6, 2025. Due to the holidays, the Commission agreed with staff to cancel the January meeting and meet next on February 3, 2025. Possible agenda items discussed included (1) the selection of chair and vice chair for 2025, (2) the open space and habitat elements of the Village Farms development proposal, (3) a discussion about outstanding action items in the Open Space Program Strategic Plan, and (4) a discussion about recent research into ownership/management options for the Davis wetlands. Staff also mentioned that the General Plan update might be discussed at the City Council on December 17.

### **9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:33 p.m.