

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MONTE RIO RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Monday, May 9, 2022, at 6:00 pm
Virtual Meeting**

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Director Jean Sasso, stepping in for Board Chair Steve Baxman, who was on a call.

2. Roll Call and Approval of Agenda and Minutes from Previous Meeting

Present: Directors Steve Baxman, Jean Sasso and Allison Baumhefner. Administrator/Board Clerk Sherry Pimsler. Stephanie Felch and Brian Grant of PRAXIS Architects. Absent: Director Paul DuBray.

Allison moved, Paul seconded approval of this agenda and minutes of April 11, 2022.

3. Public Comment – None

4. Old Business – None

5. New Business –

A. Resolution 451: Authorizing Remote Teleconference Meetings until the June 13th meeting (discussion/possible action)

All Board members present agreed that meetings until next board meeting will be in person.

6. Reports & Information

• **Board Reports** – None

• **Staff Reports**

• The budget process will begin with the Appropriations Limit at the next meeting.

C. Budget Committee – Allison requested a one-on-one with Sherry.

D. Facilities/Safety Committee –

Refer to the May 4th Facilities & Safety Committee minutes, attached. Brian helped to clarify actions to be taken for both the draft EIR and the draft Section 4(f) Evaluation. Kevin Doble at LACO will provide a peer review of the dEIR before a special meeting of the Board on Monday, the 16th.

Regarding the proposed Per Capita Grant water well project at Creekside: Brian mentioned that Gold Ridge RCD is attempting to restore a year-round flow in Dutch Bill Creek and is currently in the process of establishing the depth of the aquifer. In conversation with them, they discouraged the drilling of a water well that would further deplete the aquifer. The Board was in general agreement that the project should not be pursued

E. Personnel Committee – None

F. Marketing & Public Outreach Committee – None

G. Creekside OWTS (Onsite Wastewater Treatment System) – No update.

7. Correspondence – None

8. Action Items –

A. Resolution 451: Authorizing Remote Teleconference Meetings Until May 9, 2022

No action was taken.

9. Review Monthly Accounts Payable: The P&L report for March reflected expenses of - \$16,170.99.

10. Next Meeting/Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2022 at 6:00 pm (in-person).

**DRAFT MINUTES
FACILITIES & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, May 4, 2022, @ 8:30 am
Virtual Meeting**

1. **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by Chair Steve Baxman.

2. **Roll Call**

Present: Directors Steve Baxman and Jean Sasso; Administrator Sherry Pimsler; Brian Grant and Stephanie Felch of PRAXIS Architects.

Approval of Minutes/Agenda

Jean moved and Steve seconded approval of this meeting's agenda and the minutes of April 8, 2022; unanimously approved.

3. **Public Comment** – None

4. **Reports & Information**

- Steve gave a report on the Beach setup. Grading has occurred, trailers are in place and the berms are in. Brocco's is being contacted to coat the parking lot.

5. **New Business** –

• **Draft EIR for Monte Rio Bridge Replacement Project:**

Sherry shared with the committee questions she emailed on May 3rd to Deborah Waller, Senior Environmental Specialist at the County, including a request for clarification on the 4(f) (federal) NEPA process. Although this New Business item refers to the Draft EIR, additional information is included about the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, which is not a part of the (state) CEQA EIR, but rather part of the (federal) NEPA requirements.

• **Draft EIR**

Samuel Baumgardner-Kranz, Senior Engineer, confirmed that there will be some activity during the off-season outside of the regulated waterway. He said a dedicated point of contact person will provide us with updates throughout construction, so we will know when activity might impact the Community Center. Deborah Waller also said that portions of the parking area may be opened up at times during the year, and when they do, they would be maintained in comfortably usable condition. The committee questioned whether winter high water events have been taken into consideration.

She assured us that the contractor is required to carry adequate insurance in the event of injury or accident.

Right of way acquisition of MRRPD property that is mentioned in the EIR refers to the northern bridge approach along the eastern edge of the MR Fishing Access parking area (middle parking lot). According to Deborah, after appraisals have been performed, the County will make first offers, which would begin R/W negotiations (if all goes well, early to mid-2023). R/W will conclude only when the County has reached agreements with all parties and executed those agreements. The County will then request authorization for construction after the R/W phase is concluded.

- There is a May 18th deadline for EIR comments. BAE has finalized and submitted their economic impact report (included) for the Board's review and LACO (Kevin Doble) has been engaged to provide a peer review by May 13th. A special Board meeting will be called at 5:00 pm on the 16th, before the 18th deadline, for Board discussion and concurrence. After that, a meeting will be requested with Supervisor Hopkins.

Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation

- *(The Draft Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation document was released after this meeting on May 6th and the following is information Deborah subsequently provided.)*
Now that the Section 4(f) document has been released, there is a 30 day review period, after which the County and Caltrans will seek a letter of concurrence from the District, saying that the project will not adversely affect the “activities, features and attributes that qualify MRRPD’s property for protection under Section 4(f).” Deborah said that a draft letter is being prepared for MRRPD signature, based on information we have discussed to-date and any new information brought forward during this review period.
The Notice of Availability of the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation (*attached, with links to the documents themselves*) notifies “officials with jurisdiction” (MRRPD) Caltrans and the County propose to make a *net benefit finding* under Section 4(f) regarding the effects of the proposed Project, and that they are providing this opportunity to comment. Once the District concurs, Caltrans will issue a finding of net benefit. Our comments must be submitted in writing before the deadline of June 6th at 5:00 pm.

6. Old Business -

- **Bridge Replacement Impact:**
 - Refer to 5.A above.
- **Grant Updates:**
 - Per Capita Grant:
 - The committee discussed an additional \$25,000 expense to install a water well at Creekside Park as part of the Per Capita Grant. In looking at the Sweetwater Springs billing history, it didn’t appear to be a prudent use of the grant money. The committee was in general agreement.
 - Also, SolarWorks asked for DIR Project ID numbers for both solar panel installation projects, a requirement for public works jobs. Although the Dept. of Industrial Relations states that the projects should be registered by the Awarding Body, with past projects, MRRPD has simply asked the contractor to keep certified payroll records in the event of an audit. SolarWorks agreed to do the same.
- **2019 Flood Impact:** No update.
- **Flood/Emergency Preparedness:** No update.
- **Trails Projects Update –**
 - Crawford Gulch and Starrett Hill Properties: Committee continued discussion of a very productive meeting with Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist at Ag + Open Space, regarding impending acquisition of the Sweetwater Springs excess property across from Creekside Park. (Refer to attached notes of the meeting.) Louisa mentioned the possibility of having someone on the property as caretaker (possibly a ranger station/lookout tower) as part of the conservation easement. It was agreed that MRRPD could only acquire the property if there were a guarantee that some other entity maintains it. (Notes from the meeting are included.)

7. Safety Committee Report:

- Steve said the wildlife cameras that have been installed in various areas to monitor homeless encampments have been working well. (Not on MRRPD property.)
- Brian said there are some logs that can serve as traffic bumpers at Creekside in Rio Nido. Steve will send crew to pick them up.

8. Next Meeting Date: June 8, 2022; Adjournment: 9:15 am

Notes from April 14, 2022 Virtual Meeting re Acquisition of Sweetwater Springs Water District properties

Attending: Louisa Morris, Acquisition Specialist at Ag + Open Space (SCAPOS)
Ed Fortner, GM, Sweetwater Springs Water District (SSWD)
Brian Grant and Stephanie Felch of PRAXIS Architects
Sherry Pimsler, MRRPD District Administrator

Louisa described the mission of SCAPOS's Acquisition Team, who have to-date acquired hundreds of conservation easements over 10%-20% of Sonoma County, funded by a ¼% sales tax. The covenant for recreation and educational easements is that they be compatible with views and conservation, and must be open to the public.

Louisa was Project Manager for the Torr acquisition, south of the Sweetwater property, so she is familiar with the area. The Sweetwater properties under discussion here are a result of applications submitted in 2017 by Steve Mack, former SSWD GM.

There have been on-going conversations about the properties for many years by SCAPOS (Former Director Bill Keen and current Director Misti Arias), Regional Parks (Former GM Caryl Hart, current GM Bert Whitaker) and MRRPD (Administrator Sherry Pimsler, Board Chair Steve Baxman and PRAXIS Architects Brian Grant and Stephanie Felch). Both former 5th District Supervisor Efren Carrillo and current Supervisor Lynda Hopkins have been in support of the acquisition and transfer.

The properties are: 318 acres across from Creekside Park SCAPOS is now calling the Starrett Hill property; and 92 acres south of the Torr acquisition, they are calling Crawford Gulch.

For historical context, in 1995 SCAPOS transferred the Old Monte Rio School property to MRRPD retaining a conservation easement. Future renovation for that property (now Creekside Park) has been approved by the PRMD for a watershed museum and as a future trailhead which would allow recreational users to access public land from Monte Rio to the Coast. The Torr acquisition, now called Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and the Starrett Hill property, will be pivotal parts of the new trail system.

The current proposal is for SCAPOS to purchase the Starrett Hill (and possibly the Crawford Gulch) property and transfer it to MRRPD to operate, while retaining a conservation easement. Sherry expressed a concern for the MRRPD about ongoing maintenance. Regional Parks and the MRRPD will continue discussing a partnership related to O & M for the properties. Louisa also indicated that the Rec Covenant could include such features as a ranger residence, a campground, day use areas and other programmatic recreational uses.

Louisa indicated that an appraisal for the property's fair market value may cost \$25,000-\$30,000. Because the properties were surplus by SSWD, the value will be adjusted to reflect the sale of properties from one public agency to another. She understands the Starrett Hill property has some important conservation attributes including but not limited to old growth redwoods.

Louisa provided the following acquisition steps, with a loose timeline:

- 1- Develop project structure, with map (takes about 2-3 months to shepherd thru process)
- 2- Develop draft CE and other project docs (Rec Covenant) (1-2 months internal to Ag + Open Space, 2-4 months to negotiate with project partners)

- 3- Appraise value of properties (60-90 days)
- 4- Have appraisal reviewed by third party appraiser (30-45 days)
- 5- Take appraisal and project documents to Ag + Open Space's Fiscal Oversight Committee for approval (they meet on the first Thursday of each month)
- 6- Make offer to landowner, with time for their consideration (30 days)
- 7- If landowner accepts offer, take to Board of Directors (Supervisors)- 60 days
- 8- CEQA Noticing- 35 days
- 9- Escrow and Closing- 60-90 days (depends on complexity of things to do before closing)

She will be asking for MRRPD Board consideration (and approvals) throughout the process.