

ALTAMONT LANDFILL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 15, 2015
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to order** – The meeting was called to order by Shawn Wilson at 1:05 p.m.
- II. Approval of Minutes March 27, 2015** – Dick Schneider moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Jerry Pentin, City of Pleasanton, seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- III. Public Comment** – Dick Schneider asked that item #5 be continued to the next meeting. He felt that it was premature to have this discussion prior to having the presentations from all of the various organizations. He also gave a brief summary of how the committee got established and its role. Shawn Wilson expanded on how part of the funds generated from the Altamont Landfill are also used for recycling education across Alameda County.
- IV. Presentations by local open space and environmental groups regarding open space priorities in the County:**

- Tri-Valley Conservancy – Laura Mercier, Executive Director, stated that the Conservancy’s goal is to enhance the quality of life by extending preservation throughout the valley. Currently working with property owners and various agencies to connect Sycamore Grove Park with Del Valle Park. One area of interest is North Livermore. This area is under a lot of pressure from developers. Also Doolan Canyon and Alkali Sink. Tri-Valley Conservancy maintains two distinct funds, 11.6 million in the endowment fund for perpetuity easements and 5.3 million in capital fund for acquisitions. The historical average easement cost of property per acre in South Livermore has been \$16,500. TVC works with landowners as well as developers.

TVC has a 12 member board of directors, 15 advisory, 4 full time staff members, 2 interns and 75 volunteers. TVC works with various organizations.

Shawn Wilson asked about the alkali sink and how far it extends. The majority is to the west and some to the east. Darrel Sweet said most of it used to be a landfill. Dick Schneider mentioned that the committee also gives funds for conservation easements.

- California Rangeland Trust - Darrel Sweet introduced Nancy Schaefer. The organization has been in operation since 1998. Rangeland can be grassland, have shrubs or just land and it has different habitat. The Rangeland Trust has been able to help 58 properties with a total of 400,000 conservation easements. This helps ranchers to continue to preserve ranches. There is a waiting list and high demand for the central valley. Currently there is not a waiting list for this area.

Darrel Sweet expressed the challenges with fundraising for seed money and how the Rangeland Trust does not have the mechanism to process easements. There is an opportunity for mitigation funding related to the Altamont wind companies and also the high speed rail. He would like to see the County and the Planning Department come up with a mechanism to be able to process easements. Nancy Schaefer said it would help to have matching funds. Dick Schneider explained that the committee can leverage the funds, but it has to be a property that meets the requirements related to preserving and protecting habitat. The committee would not be able to fund the purchase of the entire property because it would be cost prohibitive and the committee needs to leverage the funds in order to get the most for the money. Someone commented that Contra Costa has been successful and have a good mechanism in place and that perhaps they would be a good source of information.

- Livermore Area Recreation and Park District - John Lawrence, Assistant General Manager and Chief Ranger Pat Sotelo presented the report. The district was formed 67 years ago and it covers 240 square miles. It has 30 miles of trails, 1400 acres of open space which includes Brushy Peak operated by EBRPD. This area is home to incredible biological and geological diversity and also contains a cultural protection site. This was home to the Native American community. This is a very sensitive site, easily damaged and only available for ranger led tours. Another area of interest is the Garaventa Wetlands preserve which consists of 24 acres. The Alkali sink contains a very unique eco system. The Park District is looking at building a boardwalk to protect the ground and also to educate people on the value of this land.

The Sycamore Grove Park is home to a variety of wildlife. Along the creek is the third largest span of sycamore trees in California. In addition to the rich woodland habitat, it is also home to thousands of red legged frogs. Visitation to this park has grown tremendously and preserving it is a tough balance for the district. The latest acquisition, the Bobba property will provide people access from Dell Valle to Sycamore Grove Park.

Adam Weinstein from the City of Pleasanton asked about how the district gets funds for acquisitions. Mr. Lawrence said most of the land is owned by the City. There are mitigation funds that are set aside from developers for the purchase of open space. Discussion ensued on Frick Lake property privately owned and how to preserve it. Laura Mercier advised the property owner to contact EBRPD regarding the purchase of property located in the Frick Lake area.

- East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society – Mack Casterman, Conservation Analyst for the East Bay Chapter. There are 33 regional chapters. This chapter covers Alameda and Contra Costa County. He expanded on the five protection areas which contain unusual and significant plant species. He asked that the committee make Doolan Canyon a priority. He spoke on the importance of Doolan Canyon, Tassajara, Altamont Pass, Springtown, Brushy Peak, and Corral Hollow areas and how continued development will affect the environment and local species. He also spoke on the Carnegie area and how continued expansion of the vehicle recreation park into Tesla will cause irreversible damage.
- Save Mount Diablo – Continued to the next meeting
- Greenbelt Alliance – Regional representative for the East Bay Joel Devalcourt presented the report. The Alliance addresses a single challenge for the Bay Area, how it handles growth, how to protect the region’s open spaces and at the same time create great communities. The vast areas between Dublin and Livermore are critical areas including Doolan Canyon. Dublin is the fastest growing city in the state. North Livermore is considered at risk and under pressure for development.

V. Discussion of developing a strategic vision of the Committee - This item was continued to the next meeting.

VI. Discussion of impact of loss of fees when San Francisco waste is no longer disposed at Altamont Landfill – David Tam updated the committee on the latest negotiations.

VII. Report by City of Livermore on the burrowing owl mitigation contract for its properties on Doolan Road – Steve Stewart said the city is working on an agreement to use the Doolan Canyon property for burrowing owl mitigation. Some of the funds to purchase the property came from this committee in 2009 and the city anticipates completing the whole mitigation transaction and paying back the funds to the committee in the fall.

VIII. Update on available funding – Bruce Jensen presented the report.

IX. Future Agenda Items/Speakers – Presentations by EBRPD, Mount Diablo, Fish and Wildlife, Ohlone Audubon.

X. Next meeting – July 17, 2015. Steve Stewart spoke on what was discussed at the last meeting regarding the Tesla Park. Shawn Wilson said that the discussion was in regards to the fact that if the property ever came up for sale the committee would consider the purchase. Steve said he would like to be on the record that if this subject ever came up again that Livermore would be very supportive of the Carnegie purchase.

XI. Questions/Comments

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.