

MINUTES  
Fairfax Open Space Committee  
Fairfax Public Library, Sir Frances Drake Blvd., Fairfax  
February 28, 2006, 7:00 pm

**OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE:**

Ted Bright  
Niccolo Caldararo  
Helen Fauss  
Denise Ferry  
Terry Goyan  
Ruth Horn  
Pam Meigs  
Ryan O'Neil  
Jane Richardson-Mack  
Martha Ture  
Sally Cavanagh

Call to order

1. Roll Call: Ted Bright, Niccolo Caldararo, Terry Goyan, Ruth Horn, Pam Meigs, Ryan O'Neil, Jane Richardson-Mack, Martha Ture, Sally Cavanagh. Guests: Scott Feierabend (executive director, Marin Conservation League), Larry Bragman (Vice-Mayor, Fairfax Town Council), Frank Egger
2. Moved, seconded, approved – change order of Agenda – Move item 7 to after item 5 and item 3 to follow
4. Approval of minutes of January 30, 2006
5. Treasurer's Report – Ted Bright
  1. Set up separate account for Wall Property acquisition funds
  2. Follow-up – monies not yet received
6. Scott Feierabend, Executive Director of the Marin Conservation League (MCL) gave information on the multi-year initiative, requested by the League's board of directors. The theme is conservation work for the county and citizen activist campaign for an open space protection strategy. The goal is to work with groups on a deeper level – not to raise funds - but to find ways to promote these groups. The outreach mode is to find: 1. what the group's needs are, and 2. what resources the MCL could provide -- to essentially 'envision'. He has spoken with Jonathan Braun of San Anselmo Open Space.

Examples of services include: 1) 501 (c) 3 status – therefore as a fiscal agent or sponsor for tax-deductible status; 2) banker (generally charges 5% to recoup staff time for a project); 3) outreach tools – a monthly newsletter to 1500 members in Marin County; 4) ombudsman – a clearinghouse for grants; 5) Identify our members who are good conservationists and can provide political capital and energy as an asset and resource.

Scott emphasized the good, close relationship and neighborly aspect of their goals.

Groups that are using their services include Sorich Park Association in San Anselmo and a hill project in San Rafael (60 acres costing \$250,000 in which the group was able to raise \$100,000 in 4 weeks)

Committee discussion included our desire to have Federal non-profit status to be able to hook up with groups like Friends of Corte Madera Creek and other income streams. Possible groups now are Marin Conservation League (MCL) and Marin Community

Foundation (MCF).

Scott will pull up that language and share our needs with his board of directors which is all part of their strategy to explore deeper with county groups.

Agendize - look at information and fees of agents who could provide tax-deductible status and services.

7. Larry Bragman, councilman with overview for our committee, presented background on the rewriting of the Fairfax General Plan (G-Pak). He presented documents of two of the remaining elements that the G-Pak committee would like input on from our committee:

Document 1 – Open Space Element dated September 12, 1974, prepared by a consulting firm (41 pages plus appendices). Document 2 – Conservation Element (10 pages).

Martha worked with a committee on these documents.

Larry suggested that we: 1) Post these documents on our web site; 2) Read and discuss them; 3) Decide whether they need revision at all.

Our goal is to strengthen and protect the Conservation and Open Space elements.

Larry introduced Bruce Ackerman who is shepherding G-Pac. Bruce said the main role of the G-Pak Committee is to ensure there is strong public input of Fairfax citizens. For long-term scenarios there is enormous agreement of what we like and want to see Fairfax become.

The G-Pak Committee would like the expertise of the Open Space Committee on the Open Space and Conservation elements. Ann Welch, town planner, proposed a time schedule of one year to complete but there's no precise limit.

Larry emphasized that the present documents are good documents that we want strengthened.

8. Tree Committee – This is a four-member committee (Larry is one member) that checks when there is an application for tree removal. It would be appropriate for a member of Open Space to serve on this committee also. Moved, seconded, approved – we appoint a member to the Tree Committee. Agendize for next meeting.
9. Terry was hiking the Melvin Property and found a big surprise. Three big trees by the creek bank were on the ground, cut down. One had a 50-inch diameter, another was two feet in diameter, and the third was a smaller redwood. On investigation at Town Hall, he found that the residents across the creek had phoned about their fear that the trees would fall on their home. The new public works director deemed it an emergency situation and made the decision to have the trees removed, taking 3 photos, and informing Larry Bagman, councilman, who did not have time to investigate before the deed was done. The cost for tree removal was \$5000 to the town. Apparently no report has been written and none else was consulted.

Terry pointed out that the emergency of the December 31 flood was over; the trees were in good shape and not leaning and their roots were holding up the bank; and there was time for notification of other related officials and committees.

The management plan for the Melvin Property needs to include situations like this, otherwise anyone can complain and all the redwoods along the creek simply with a phone call by a fearful resident. Checks and balances in these decisions must be in place.

The wood is still on the property and is substantial – 100 feet – 50-inch diameter. Terry is awaiting a return phone call from a Forest Knowles man who does milling of local lumber.

10. Pam passed out a two-page document entitled “ Conservation and Preservation Organizations”. She proposed creating a special district sales tax of a quarter-cent to fund the purchase of the Wall and adjacent Cappe property in San Anselmo. Proposition 13 restricts property tax increases to fund new districts. (We have been considering a fee for Open Space on sale of a property). Such a ‘special district sales tax’ would require a two-thirds voter approval under Proposition 218. Both San Anselmo and Fairfax would be part of this special district tax. Sonoma County has such a sales tax.

Discussion included adding Bald Hill to entice San Anselmo, elections coming up - November 2006, January 2007, November 2007; need to find out tax base for both Fairfax and San Anselmo, Mello-Roos to raise money. Agendize for next meeting

11. Agendize – using Robin Glazer to help in our campaign to purchase Wall and Cappe property together. She has helped San Anselmo with campaigns in the past.
12. Annual fund-raiser Saturday, May 13, 2006 – Linda Kelly, town administrator, was most helpful in setting up the meeting date. We’ll be doing the same thing as last year. We’ll have a list of jobs and communicate by e-mail.
13. Fundraising – Jane has lined up Dave Corkhill of Fairfax Theater who will give us a percentage of one night’s proceeds in September and her barber who will do the same thing. She’s working on getting every business in town to participate in our fundraising. It’s chump change, but every bit counts. She presented samples of a potential letterhead. Comments were that the trees looked cut off. We should all look around and bring in some examples for a letterhead.
14. Motion made, seconded, approved – we recommend to Town Council that the Melvin Property be renamed after Frank Egger who served our town so well for 40 years. Terry will write a simple basic letter to them. The council will rename it.
15. Agendize – subcommittee formation so we can get things done
16. We will meet in two weeks, March 14 to accomplish more.