

DRAFT



Parks Measure M Citizens Oversight Committee Draft Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, February 13, 2024
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

PLACE: Rohnert Park-Cotati Regional Library
6250 Lynne Conde Way
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

- 1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement** – Melanie Parker, Deputy Director of Sonoma County Regional Parks read the Land Acknowledgement Statement:

“The County of Sonoma recognizes that we are on the ancestral lands of the Coast Miwok, Pomo, and Wappo who are the original caretakers of this area. We respectfully acknowledge the Indigenous peoples who have been stewarding and maintaining relationship on this land as knowledge keepers for millennia. The County of Sonoma is dedicated to understanding and educating the public about historical and ongoing connections between land conservation and social inequities. This includes the histories of genocide, forced removal and displacement, and broken promises with Indigenous peoples as a part of American history. Indigenous people are not just in our histories. We strive to optimize Indigenous voices to share their own history, as to not perpetuate another form of being silenced. While recognizing the past, we honor the resiliency of Native people still in their ancestral territories in relationship with their land and culture. This acknowledgement does not take the place of authentic relationships with Indigenous communities but serves as a gesture in respect to the land we are on.”

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting started at 5:08 p.m. Vice-Chair Carol Eber called the meeting to order.

Committee Members Present: Leslie Graves, Justin Lindenberg, Chris Borr, John Mills, and Carol Eber. Chair Meredith Rennie joined the meeting at 5:13 pm.

Committee Members Absent: None

Committee Seats Vacant: There is one “at large” appointment vacant on the Committee.

Staff Present: Bert Whitaker, Director; Melanie Parker, Deputy Director; Robert Gonzalez, Fiscal and Administrative Officer.

2. Comments from the Public – Public may address the Committee on matters that are not on the agenda

Members of the public wishing to suggest an item for a future Committee agenda may do so during this Public Comment period. The Ralph M. Brown Act (the State local agency open meeting law) prohibits the Committee from acting on any matter that is not on the agenda. Speakers are limited to three minutes each, however, the Commission Chair may adjust the time limit in light of the number of anticipated speakers.

Chair Meredith Rennie called for any comment from the public. There was none.

- Jacque Brazieal stated that she is President of Forestville Skatespot, a nonprofit organization in Forestville founded with the goal of building an inclusive and accessible skate park for new families and communities in Forestville as well as visitors to West County. She said the organization has been building community support and recently received funding from the Sonoma County Community Investment Fund as well as a Justice Department award. She stated that the Skatespot is a needed asset in the community and her organization would like Regional Parks' financial support. She stated that the unincorporated areas served by the nonprofit do not receive Measure M funding, even though those communities overwhelmingly supported the Measure M tax measure. She noted that her community loves Parks for All, that Regional Parks serves all in Sonoma County, and should support unincorporated areas. The one thing her organization has been missing is a partnership with Regional Parks. She requested that this matter be agendized for a future meeting of the Parks Measure Citizens Oversight Committee.
- Mose Portal stated that he works with Jacque Brazieal in supporting the Skatespot. He said that the Skatespot and skate boarding saved his life in giving him an outlet and community, and helping him stay sober after a time of doing drugs while growing up in the Russian River area.
- Erin Freeborn said she is here with her daughter to speak in favor of supporting projects like the Skatespot that provide critical outlets and recreation for youth in the underserved areas of the Russian River. She stated she is a therapist working with County Behavioral Health, and is speaking as a resident and a parent about the need for support for the Skatespot by Regional Parks as an unincorporated area that does not receive support of funding from the County. She asked the Committee to consider a supportive partnership between Regional Parks and the Skatespot.

3. Approval of the Minutes – of the November 14, 2023 meeting of the Parks Measure M Citizens Oversight Committee meeting.

Committee Member Chris Borr noted an error in the draft minutes. He said the sales tax measure as stated is in error. The sales tax measure should be corrected to state that the sales tax figure is a 1/8th cent sales tax (0.125 percent).

VOTED to approve the minutes of the, November 14, 2023 meeting, as amended:

MOTION:	Committee Member John Mills	AYES: 6	ABSTAIN: 0
SECOND:	Committee Member Carol Eber	ABSENT: 0	VACANT: 1

4. Review of the Quarterly Revenue Report, Report on Measure M Successes, Update on In-Person Meetings: Robert Gonzales, Regional Parks Administrative Services Officer II, Regional Parks Deputy Director Melanie Parker and City Representatives.

- Robert Gonzalez conveyed the Quarterly Revenue Report, noting that this report corresponds to the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2023-2024. He stated that the total amount for the second quarter coming into the County is 3.9 million in revenue, of which approximately 2.6 million goes to Sonoma County for parks, and approximately 1.3 million is disbursed to the nine cities in the county. He noted a slight drop in receipts over the quarter amounting to approximately \$220,000.
- Scott Wilkinson, representing the City of Santa Rosa, stated that recent successes include the repair of six fire-damaged parks as well as roadway landscaping repair and the monthly volunteer program. He said priorities also include capital improvements including projects in Galvin and Jacobs Park.

Committee Member Justin Lindenberg asked about Santa Rosa being an outlier in terms of the balance of funds that has not been spent. He noted that Santa Rosa also has the great population of the city jurisdictions, and that the annual report showed almost eight million unspent by the City of Santa Rosa.

Scott Wilkinson responded that several factors contribute to the situation but the main factor is that the City of Santa Rosa wants to use this funding for significantly large projects, which can take significant time.

- Drew Halter, representing the City of Petaluma, reported that Measure M funding enabled Petaluma to engage the community in a way that the city had not been able to do before. He stated that funds have been used to repair and rehabilitate parks, including a trail along Thompson's creek on the west side of Petaluma, sports courts, a new skate park, and equity-focused developments.
- Nell Herman, representing the Town of Windsor, reported that Measure M funding has enabled construction of pickleball courts, the renovation of the Windsor Library, and a master plan for Pleasant Oak Park.
- Melanie Parker conveyed a report from the City of Healdsburg. She stated that Fitch Mountain Public Access project is well underway and the City hopes to have a celebration for the grand opening in early May.

- Mike Berger, the Director of Public Works for the City of Sonoma, reported that projects are the Depot Park renovation including retrofits of the bathrooms and paths. Additionally, he reported that Olsen Park, Montini Preserve, and Sonoma Oaks Park Enhancement Project, as well as others are underway. He noted that they want to be aware and cognizant of the capacity of staff to take on new projects. He stated that the City of Sonoma is excited to have a new Parks and Recreation Department for the City.
- Hector Galvan, representing Cloverdale, reported that Measure M funds have been instrumental for critical park amenities, including new pickleball courts, a new dog park, a new basketball park, and new restrooms in the Plaza. He also reported the ongoing efforts in vegetation management and a new open space area provisionally called Soda Springs Ranch. He noted how gratifying it is to see Cloverdale residents enjoying the parks.
- Sonoma County Regional Parks Deputy Director Melanie Parker conveyed a report from the city of Cotati. She stated that Cotati is in the design phases for Putnam Park and Civic Center Park, with Putnam Park focusing on a new dog park, new restrooms, and a new walking path; and Civic Center Park getting a new dog park and sand volleyball courts.

Committee Member Justin Lindenberg asked how the City of Santa Rosa is tracking their 2023-2024 disbursement of funds, given the large reserve that has not been spent for the city. City Representative Scott Wilkinson responded that he did not know, but would follow up directly with the Committee about this issue.

- Sonoma County Regional Parks Deputy Director Melanie Parker reported that Regional Parks has used Measure M funds in many areas, but she wants to focus on the department's Natural Resources division, and the department's investment in that division's staff development, training and expansive recruitment. She stated that with the department's investment in the Natural Resources staff, that division has helped leverage Measure M funds in vegetation management, forest restorations, protecting endangered species, and prescribed fires. She said the investment in the Natural Resources staff is a Measure M success story.

Chair Meredith Rennie asked for any public comment on this item. There was none.

5. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

VOTED to elect Carol Eber as Chair of the Parks Measure M Citizens Oversight Committee.

MOTION:	Committee Member John Mills	AYES: 6	ABSTAIN: 0
SECOND:	Committee Member Meredith Rennie	ABSENT: 0	VACANT: 1

VOTED to approve Leslie Graves as Vice-Chair of the Parks Measure M Citizens Oversight Committee.

MOTION:	Committee Member John Mills	AYES: 6	ABSTAIN: 0
SECOND:	Committee Member Meredith Rennie	ABSENT: 0	VACANT: 1

6. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathleen Culhane, Executive Assistant
Sonoma County Regional Parks

DRAFT