

Parks Measure M Citizen Oversight Committee

Meeting Agenda and Minutes

Tuesday, November 12, 2024, 5:30-7:30pm

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement– Melanie Parker, Deputy Director, Regional Parks

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.

2. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting commenced at 5:30pm. Chair Carol Eber called the meeting to order. Committee members present at roll call: Leslie Graves, John Mills, Meredith Rennie, Carol Eber.

Justin Lindenberg arrived after roll was taken.

Committee members absent: Chris Borr

Vacant Seat(s): 1 (Countywide Seat)

Regional Parks staff present: Bert Whitaker, Melanie Parker, Robert Gonzalez, Meda Freeman, Danielle Poole

3. 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; the Committee Chair may adjust the time limit considering the number of anticipated speakers.

Chair Carol Eber called for any public comment. There was none.

4. Approval of the Minutes - of the September 24, 2024, meeting of the Parks Measure M Citizens Oversight Committee meeting.

John Mills moved to approve the minutes; Leslie Graves seconded.

VOTED to approve the minutes of the Sept 24, 2024, meeting:

In favor: 4

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: 2 (Lindenburg, Borr)

Comment by Commissioner Leslie Graves regarding the MoE: Maintenance of Efforts. Possibility to include the Maintenance of Efforts in the minutes instead of just the agenda? Suggestion by Melanie Parker: post the minutes in a timely fashion for access by committee members and members of the public. Request by Graves: for a report of approvals to be recorded and distributed in the minutes.

5. Reports and Updates: Robert Gonzalez, Fiscal and Administrative Services Officer, Sonoma Regional Parks and Melanie Parker, Deputy Director, Sonoma County Regional Parks

Review Measure M FY 2023-2024 Annual Report

- First quarter Measure M disbursement report: Robert Gonzalez requested this item to be pulled from the agenda as vice chair Graves noted an error which was confirmed by the Auditor-Controller-Tax Collectors (ACTTC) Office. ACTTC is recalculating the numbers. A revised corrected report is forthcoming. The first and second quarter report will be included in the revised publication.

Brief Introduction of Danielle Poole, incoming Executive Assistant for Regional Parks by Melanie Parker

Note: Arrival of Commissioner Justin Lindenberg

Sonoma County Regional Parks Report to Community 2024, Melanie Parker

- Oversight Committee at this meeting to review and approve the annual report especially in regard to how the sales tax/Measure M dollars were spent in the previous fiscal year (Ended June 30, 2024). This information is presented within this report. The focus of the report is on the bigger story of how a sales tax plays out to create an entire Parks system.
- Key highlighted features of the report:
 - ❖ Regional Parks: How we are by the numbers: how many parks, acres, campsites, etc.
 - ❖ Notes from Bert, Melanie, the Board Chair. Communicating that this report is about leverage. These dollars are associated with more dollars that wouldn't otherwise be available.
 - ❖ Theme 1: Investing and reinvesting in Parks. Following up on what Regional Parks has told the community we will do. One story is told in depth, and the accompanying vignettes accompany the theme. For example, Taylor Mountain is featured as a leading story and similar stories and similar actions follow, such as the Tolay gathering area efforts and the opening of Chanslor Ranch.
 - ❖ Theme 2: Protecting Natural Resources. Featured, in-depth story of Shiloh Ranch. Ripple effects are noted in terms of prescribed fire efforts, rainwater catchment, habitat restoration efforts.
 - ❖ Theme 3: Create Community Connections. Programming piece of what we do.
 - ❖ Theme 4: Health, Safety, and Recreation. Highlighted changes made to the ranger program, overgoing investments we make for water safety, swimming and boating, river patrol, etc.

Note: The report is text heavy, but it will also be paired with (3) visual/video components. The intention was to make the information as accessible as possible to people.

- ❖ Financials: Snapshot of Regional Parks: where our revenues come from and where do our expenditures go, refer to page 16 of the document. The leverage message is amplified here, with intention.
- ❖ Measure M sales tax report, on page 18.
- ❖ Thank you to City Partners for their contributions and accomplishments.
- ❖ City Partner narratives highlighted on page 19.
- ❖ Break-down of Measure M revenue, expenses, and balances by city

partner.

Melanie Parker opened the floor for questions comments, etc.

Note: Suggestions for improvements and edits to the Parks Report to the Community are highlighted in this section in green.

Leslie Graves

Comment 1: Page 19. Santa Rosa's narrative is repeated. Once in column 1, and again starting at the bottom of column 4 and ending at the top of column 5.

Suggestion: Remove one of these duplicates. Melanie Parker acknowledges.

Comment 2: Positive acknowledgement of the video elements of this report due to the abundance of information being presented.

Comment 3: Robust report about County Parks and about Measure M. Is this a Measure M Report or is this a County Parks Report? Is there a way to draw the Measure M information out? **Suggestion:** Include a note indicating something to the effect of "flip to these pages for more in-depth information about Measure M specifics". **Suggestion:** specific font for Measure M dollars in the different programs or parks.

Justin Lingberg

Question on Regional Park finances regarding fees (24%). Is this accurate?

Response by Robert: This includes revenue from all memberships, permits, parking fees, and camping, all the fees that we charge for services.

Suggestion: identify another way to categorize "fees". This would make it more palatable for people reading it. Change the wording to make this clear that it is incoming income, not outgoing (the term "fees" has the connotation of something parks are paying for, as opposed to revenue coming in). Possibly replace with "operating income".

Meredith Rennie

Praise of the Measure M financial snapshot – good visual showing each of the municipalities.

John Mills

Question: Who is this report designed for? How will it get to who its designed for?

Response by Melanie Parker: Regional Parks staff were discussing several different strategies including postcards, a QR card, a brochure version that we put in select venues.

Addition from Bert Whitaker: Not thinking of distributing to every household, every registered voting household. The approach is to include a small batch of hard copies, especially for the electives, and those who will really use the information. Also places like libraries.

Addition by Meredith Graves: Request for a link that can be shared out via social media and/or community groups.

Addition by Whitaker: The Report is meant to be a tool for educating the community and setting a baseline that will help to build potential.

Carol Eber

Question: To what extent does each city present Measure M to its community?

Response by Whitaker: Council meetings, park and rec meetings

Response by Petaluma rep: Measure M is folded into Petaluma's budget workshops. It usually starts with the Recreation and Parks Commission.

Response by Santa Rosa rep: The same applies. City of Santa Rosa meets with Board of Community services annually to provide a report on expenditures. One such meeting is occurring in December of this year.

Response by Windsor rep: Windsor has a commissioner who sits on the Parks and Recreation commission. Windsor does a quarterly CIP update to their commission.

Suggestion by Carol Eber, John Mills, and Leslie Graves: Include a piece in the report regarding leverage. For example: "For every dollar Measure M brings in, how many dollars can be spent on Parks?" This will speak to the leverage aspect of Measure M funding, and the compounding benefits.

Addition by Bert Whitaker: We know we have a 7 to 9 multiplier on every dollar.

6. Action Items

Approve Measure M FY 2023-2024 Annual Report

- John Mills moved to approve the Measure M Report to the Community; Leslie Graves seconded, with consideration of provided comments:
- VOTED to approve the Measure M Report to the Community, with consideration and potential incorporation of edits related to feedback

provided:

In Favor: 5

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: 1 (Borr)

- Review of any amendments or edits made to the Annual Report will take place next meeting

7. Meeting Dates and Times for 2025

- Results of Survey Monkey poll provided to Measure M Oversight Committee Members and City Partners
- 2nd and 4th Mondays but never before 530pm, with latitude to bounce around.
- Consideration: 2nd Mondays are often holidays.
- Had previously been doing Tuesdays but there are conflicts with Rohnert Park's representation
- Quarterly
- 2025 Meeting invites to be sent out from Danielle Poole

8. Discussion on Agency Reporting Format for Future Quarterly Meetings

- Revisiting discussion from prior meeting on the topic of whether all of the jurisdictions should come to the meetings where there are presentations and forecasts of future Measure M projects and/or reporting completed measure M projects, with something in writing and can be prepared, included in the agenda packet, and sent out in advance of the meetings.
- Not just verbal updates
- This effort would be for the public as well as for commissioners and attendees of the Measure M meetings.
- **Resolution:** Staff members and/or City Partners who are preparing a presentation and/or update will provide Danielle with several bullet points summarizing key points. Danielle will include these in the agenda packet. This will allow for a written component in addition to the verbal updates provided in the meetings. Bullet points can address current projects, key-points, and upcoming projects. This will allow the Commissioners and the public the opportunity to research projects prior to the meetings.
- Question posed by Justin Lindberg: Can we, by the Brown Act, have the city

partners participate by Zoom?

Response by Bert Whitaker: There's some value in seeing everyone in person at least 4 times a year. We are not in hybrid meetings right now, even though it is a public meeting.

Responses by city partners: We'll come in person. There is value in meeting in person. If Zoom, becomes available, it would allow flexibility, but it is not imperative.

- Need for more robust notes/minutes for better tracking and representation.
- Will look into a viewing option for Zoom in 2025.

9. Adjournment

Materials related to an item on the Parks Measure M Citizens Oversight Committee agenda are available for public inspection (after distribution of the agenda packet) by contacting Regional Parks at parkspublicmeetings@sonoma-county.org.

Meeting adjourned by Carol Eber at 6:13pm.

These meeting minutes were prepared by Danielle Poole, executive assistant for Sonoma County Regional Parks.