

## Conservation Committee Minutes

### MINUTES DRAFT JUNE 25, 2019

Present: Chiariello, DeStaebler, Eckstrom, Heiple, Magill, Murphy, Plunder, Walz

Also Present: Denise Enea, Fire Marshall

Absent: Stromeyer

- 1) Call to Order at 7:35
- 2) Oral Communications – deStaebler reports Application for tasting room at Neely Property is coming to Planning Commission soon. When CUP was granted, assurances were given that this building was only for agricultural uses. Issue will not be brought to this committee.
- 3) Approval of Minutes - as written for April and as corrected for May. Will be posted to web site.
- 4) Current Site Visits
  - a) Subcommittee on Guidelines revision no report
  - b) 305 Golden Oak. Again much too densely planted. *Strong disapproval of removal of Golden Oaks. These should be added to Heritage tree list.*
- 5) Tree Permits - none
- 6) Old Business
  - a. Oversight of Significant Town Owned Open Space properties –
    - i. Committee asked by staff to bring prioritized list of our budget request to next Council meeting. Discussion of list. *Approved - attached as appendix A*
    - ii. Most mowing this year has been done AFTER weeds have gone to seed perpetuating the persistence of the density of these weeds. If progress is to be made reducing these invasive grasses and thistles, it is imperative to mow before new seeds are produced. The cost of weeding at the appropriate time or too late is the same.
    - iii. Springdown Preserve - Chiariello, Plunder, Murphy. Property is looking much improved. New path still needs creating.
    - iv. Frog Pond – discussion of difficulty of Harding grass removal.
    - v. Ford Field – deStaebler reports invasives remain
    - vi. Town Center –
      1. Plan for screening tennis courts for ASCC Magill will bring to next meeting.
      2. Tree tags received - given to Walz
    - vii. Rossotti's Field and ROW - deStaebler reports that most invasives remain.
    - viii. Triangle Park – Eckstrom, Heiple, Murphy – nothing new
  - b. Intermediate Properties analysis and recommendations. Nothing new
  - c. Tip of Month – Magill – mowing for fire prevention – AGAIN!
  - d. What's blooming now – Magill – Coyote Mint
  - e. Kudos of the Month – Plunder – Thanks for mowing
  - f. BYH deStaebler – no new applications
  - g. Vegetation management
    - i. Denise Enea spoke with us at length. High points: She is working with MROSD to reduce extreme fire danger presented by gradual overgrowth of Coyote Brush on Windy Hill and behind Sequoias. She sees much overplanting on the plans submitted to her; the solid walls requested for screening present fire danger (it is not clear when in the process she sees the plans). Raking does not greatly decrease the rapidity of fire spread – horizontal materials burn slower than vertical. A rotary mower would produce finer thatch that burns less well because it compacts more. She sees a lot of PV ROW mowing done by hand that could be more efficiently and less expensively done mechanically. It is fine to leave fallen trees on the ground if they are fully on the ground and limbs are removed. Greatest fire hazard is thick, contiguous underbrush.
    - ii. MROSD Plunder nothing new
    - iii. Ad Hoc committee on Fire Safety – Plunder reports committee still has

not been convened despite urgency when appointed.

- h. Committee/Town cooperation
  - i. Public Works – Murphy reports old asphalt path on Paseo del Arroyo has been taken up and topsoil used to fill in resulting depression.
  - ii. Sustainability and Environmental Resources Committee – nothing new
  - iii. Trails – Stromeyer is absent.
  - iv. Open space – Chiariello
- 7) Protect “Heritage” shrubs – Magill nothing new
- 8) Change Heritage Tree criteria for Bay trees – Walz *Golden Oaks should be added to list.*
- 9) Rodenticide turn in event Plunder, Chiariello nothing new
- 10) Fall Evening lecture Pumas - Plunder, Chiariello nothing new
- 11) New Business
- 12) Adjournment 9:50
- 13) Next Meeting 7/23/2019, 7:30pm

## **APPENDIX A**

### **PRIORITIZED REQUESTS**

#### **Priority List of Properties**

Town Center – Town’s living room and heavily used  
Triangle Park – heavily used  
Frog Pond – most ecologically sensitive  
Dengler – a very small effort will go a long way  
Ford Field -  
Rozzotti’s -  
Shady Trail –

#### **TOWN CENTER**

1. Largest heritage oak needs special attention and protection. A . Prune for weight reduction.
  - B. Remove the constricting metal banding at the foot of the tree.
  - C. Prevent further compaction under the canopy.
    1. Prevent the foot traffic. It is very difficult to change informal usage patterns, but in this case is worth considerable effort.
      - A short rustic fence along the edge of the parking lot.
      - Move the bench to elsewhere on Town Center, perhaps to the west end of this path of use where it will both act as a barrier to continued foot traffic and provide a resting spot to enjoy the view of the western hills.
2. Restore bed #14 – in middle of circle drive. Rejuvenate the soil and plant seedlings of existing and similar natives in the fall.
3. Deferred from last year. Add low-growing screening plants in zigzag clusters along side of tennis courts facing Portola Road to screen the courts from the road. Plan to be approved by ASCC. Planting to be done in the fall.
4. NOT IN OUR BUDGET REQUEST – but should be elsewhere, continued cooperation with Grassroots Ecology for care of Sausal Creek

#### **TRIANGLE PARK**

-Prune back streetside limbs of the oak “hedge” by the radar sign for visibility.

-Throughout - remove the cotoneaster, privet, pyracantha, olive, poison oak, blackberries and ivy.

-Throughout there are many clumps of volunteer small competing oaks that should come out by the roots.

-Coppice all the coyote brush

-At corner of Alpine and Portola, remove the valley oak that has been for many years pruned into an unsightly 4 foot ball, liberating the Toyon that grows up through it.

-Remove old partly dead sprawling juniper and replace with low growing native shrub. (Salvia, Ceanothus)

-By small oak across from realty office remove the smaller oak and clump of blackberry

-At north end of Alpine frontage:

-small oaks out from under large oak and mulch under large oak

-remove several small bay trees

- one large old senescent Hawthorne and 2 old willows by the path should be removed. Willows need stump grinding to prevent re-sprouting.

-By deer statue remove the encroaching shrub.

-Encourage more growth of native grass Stipa

### **FROG POND**

□□□ Add a second mowing to the one that is currently done, first in drier areas and later in wet areas.

2. Thin oaks along southern edge of open space (gets more expensive with each passing year as they grow.) Coordinate with neighbors to conduct thinning on private property as appropriate.

Hand-remove thistles and cat-tails before they go to seed.

Improve the health of the woodland between the trail and the pond by clearing brush and small volunteer trees.

5. Begin program to remove Harding grass.

### **FIRE SAFETY ITEMS for frog pond– NOT IN OUR BUDGET REQUEST**

1. Remove 3 old poor condition pines along northeast border with Corte Madera school before fire season begins. If this is not possible, at a minimum limb up dead branches on pines and redwoods. Coordinate more extensive removal of unhealthy/flammable trees in this area with Corte Madera school and Portola Valley Ranch.
2. Remove dead material from coyote bushes along northern edge of open space before fire season begins.
3. Slash and trash the fallen pine on the SW boundary.

### **DENGLER**

1. Several large invasive shrubs – Cotoneaster and Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*) should be removed before they spread further. A small patch of French broom seedlings was removed on site and should be monitored for future germination.

2. Signage should be reviewed

### **FORD FIELD**

1. Two mowings are needed each year of the entire Open Space area, an additional one early to suppress the weedy grasses.
2. Removal of invasives

- a. Star Thistle and Dittrichia are widely present in back of the bleachers and batting box and along the approach from Alpine Rd. to the bridge. Broom and Dittrichia also newly in the vicinity of the new bridge as a result of bridge construction.
- b. Poison Hemlock between the trail and the fence along Alpine Road, about half way between the baseball field and the Tennis Club, about where the "No Parking" sign is.

### **ROSSOTTI'S FIELD**

1. Remove 2 small Monterrey Pines. In the north-west corner of the ball field enclosure, just inside the fence from the Alpine Trail, on the short embankment, are two volunteer Monterrey Pines. They are among Valley Oaks and Coast Life Oaks. Because they are small removal at this time would be quite inexpensive.
2. **Remove invasives.** Specific areas of invasives:
  - b. Privet near midfield, evenly spaced, and just outside the short section of fence where the soccer field becomes wider should be removed before bloom.
  - c. Torilus (Sock destroyer) along the field fence between the parking lot and field needs to be pulled as it shows up.
  - d. Large clumps of invasive iris on the creek bank, and invasive sedge near the outlet of the swale need to be pulled.
  - e. Poison Hemlock, scattered Sow Thistle and Geranium dissectum should be pulled.
  - f. Himalaya blackberry is present along the south side of the field fence and between the creek path and the field.
2. Grassroots Ecology has permit to work creekside and should be encouraged to continue to work in this area.

### **SHADY TRAIL**

1. Replace the log at the Golden Hills boundary to prevent parking in the open space - a large log is needed; the last one decayed quickly.