

OCTOBER MINUTES

Conservation Committee Special Zoom meeting Agenda October 27, 2020

Present: Chiariello, Coleman, Heiple, Magill, Murphy, Plunder, Stromeyer (from Argentina!), Walz

Absent: DeStaebler,

Also Present: John Richards, Council liaison; Alex Kawaja, student representative; Guests – residents Rita Comes, Betsy Morgenthaler, Mary Hufty, Rita Comes, Kristi Corley

1. Call to Order 2:02
2. Oral communications
 - a. Murphy reports our committee budget was approved as submitted, but the additional funds we requested for Public Works were not.
 - b. Neely Wine CUP revised plan has been submitted, but has omissions. Murphy asked Planning to complete before bringing this back to committee as a whole. Our initial report was evidently mistakenly not sent to applicant or CEQA consultant, so CEQA responses did not include responses to us.
 - c. F/U 385 Westridge Dittrichia invasion. All has been removed after Dennis called Westridge Association and Jacks spoke to owner. Murphy spoke to Chair of ASCC suggesting they agendaize consideration of having Planning add a line to their boilerplate similar to tree protection that requires removal of invasive weeds before they go to seed throughout the building process.
 - d. Portola Valley firesafe native plant list. Not on this agenda. Special meeting will be called where subcommittee and other interested members will go through item by item to finalize and approve.
 - e. Chiariello reports that Jasper Ridge webcams have spotted a feral pig that appears to enter and exit the Preserve from Mapache. Another has been seen on upper Alpine. She will put a note on the Forum for residents to be alert and report - to help localize this pig and plan where to best trap him. Heiple and Walz remember the huge damage done by a small number of feral pigs here about 15 years ago - entire playing fields had to be redone.
3. Minutes for September 2020 unanimously approved.
4. Site permits –
 - a. 880 Westridge - report submitted
 - i. Mary and Rob (?)Jack express concerns that all of 880 Westridge is covered by a Conservation and Open Space easement created in 2006 by the Lanes. They will send us documentation. They are concerned that the Planning staff has not correctly interpreted the documents.
 - ii. Chiariello reports that this property was to have ongoing Town oversight for compliance according to the original conveyance.
 - iii. Town does not seem to have a comprehensive list of properties with Conservation or Open Space easements. **Conservation and Open Space will jointly ask Council to have such a list with map created and request staff to follow up with the required oversight.** Conservation Committee and OS are willing to help with the oversight task. Murphy and Chiariello will draft request and present to Council.
 - b. 193 Meadowwood - report submitted

- c. revised boilerplate (see Appendix A) Postponed till next month. Members will review and send suggested edits to Murphy. Updated version will be appendix to November agenda.
5. Tree Permits –
- a. 6 Hawk View - 2 approved for removal, 1 suggested removing only half. Education of residents is an important part of our mission and responding to tree permits provides another opportunity to do that.
 - b. changes re fire? not necessary; in our current process we have leeway to consider fire risk as a reason to remove a heritage tree.
6. Old Business
- a. Oversight of Significant Town Owned Properties.
 - i. SpringDown -
 - 1. Nature and Science is proposing to put a webcam here; they will contact Jasper Ridge wildlife cam manager for advice.
 - ii. Town Center -
 - 1. revised brochure will be put on our Town web site page. No point in printing until COVID eases and Town offices open again. Chiariello will post to Forum. Comes suggests putting it also on Easy to Hike app.
 - 2. Walz reports he is almost finished with tree tagging/mapping.
 - 3. Corley asks about work being done on redwoods at Town Center. Richards responds it is insurance requiring that some potentially deadfall limbs be removed.
 - iii. Frog Pond
 - 1. Ailanthus needs attention Heiple will do
 - iv. Triangle Park
 - 1. more clean up by fire crew done
 - 2. 2 small oaks near largest on north still need removal.
 - v. Ford Field
 - 1. Walz continues to attack Ailanthus and pulled Dittrichia before it seeded.
 - vi. Rosottis Field - nothing new
 - vii. ROW
 - 1. Plunder reports several areas in Town where trees cut down at considerable expense are re-sprouting vigorously: on Grove sprouts are 10' high, on Westridge at Portola they are 8' high on multiple trees. Acacias in several locations are doing the same.
 - 2. **Committee recommends that Public Works devise a method of tracking the trees removed that are likely to re-sprout and removing small suckers at 6 months intervals.** Technology should make this simple. Failure to do so is very expensive. If suckers removed when small, tree eventually gives up because no sunlight has fed roots. If suckers are allowed to grow (on Eucalyptus they can grow up to 1 foot/month in most favorable conditions!), they keep the root alive and healthy and it will re-sucker vigorously for many more years. The most obvious example of followup failure is in the ROW at SpringDown frontage - large eucalyptus removed at cost of \$10,000; re-sprouting suckers ignored for many years are now as tall as original tree was and the tree is MORE dangerous because multi trunked. These enlarging suckers also

represent a fire danger because they are in the most flammable species and are now understory ladder fuel.

- b. Committee/Town cooperation
 - i. Public Works – Murphy reports they are busy with continued fire work and getting ready for winter rains by cleaning drains and creating waterbars. Playgrounds and fields are re-opening.
 - ii. Sustainability and Environmental Resources Committee - no meeting since our last.
 - iii. Trails – Stromeyer
 1. Signage at Coal Mine Ridge, Safe Routs to School and Stanford Wedge all discussed.
 - iv. Open space – Chiariello - next meets this Thursday at 6pm for first time since July.
 - c. Milkweed/Monarchs – Gibson Anderson, Heiple, Kawaja
 - i. Kawaja reports that 30 milkweed were donated to Priory and have been planted on campus. He is reaching our to Corte Madera school to see if they would like to do something similar.
 - ii. Hufty thanks the Priory students who were a great help with the milkweed sale. Enough plants were sold to establish 100 plots each with 9-10 milkweed across town.
 - d. Tip of the Month – Magill Planning fire safe garden – roll out of fire safe plant lists
 - e. What's blooming now - Magill -Protect Our Creeks - time to prepare for rains by clearing your property of leaves, silt and chemicals that can clog the drains and contaminate our creeks. All Town stormwater drainage goes to Corte Madera, Los Trancos or Sausal Creeks. They eventually feed SanFrancisquito Creek which runs to the bay. Next month: fire safe planting recommendations to coordinate with roll out of finalized list.
 - f. Kudos Plunder - to owners of horses who have cleared their corrals of Dittrichia
 - g. What are our Singing Frogs doing now? Heiple will send paragraph to Murphy to post.
 - h. Changes heritage shrubs – in Planning hands
 - i. Predators / Rodenticides – Chiariello, Plunder, Kawaja - nothing new
7. New business
 - a. 2021 Membership - all current members plan to remain.
 8. Adjournment at 4:02
 9. Next meeting: Tuesday, November 24, 2:00 pm Zoom

Appendix A

BOILERPLATE FOR SITE REPORTS - REVISED OCTOBER 2020

ADD – FIRE CONCERNS?

ALWAYS MAKE COPY AND WORK ON COPY NOT THIS BOILERPLATE!! This boilerplate is a guide to make sure we remember things and to provide uniformity to our reports. Please delete the sections that are not applicable.

3 members go on site visit – 1 a plant expert

Leader:

- ***arranges site visit***
- ***careful look at plan BEFORE meeting at site,***

- *explain to others at the site, then do walkaround looking for issues not obvious from just the plan.*
- *Bring to next CC meeting for group discussion unless:*
 - o *Simple and straightforward*
 - o *No time before ASCC meeting where it will be considered*
- *Lead discussion at CC meeting with annotated, marked up plan*
- *Write up report using boilerplate as guideline; circulate to other subcommittee members for editing.*
- *Send report to Chair who may edit and will send to Planning staff and full committee.*
- *Track when site to be considered by ASCC*

Preliminary Conservation Committee Comments

address
date

Committee members at site visit:

Volume of Grading - Need to include this only if the grading has impact on landscape or planting. Otherwise delete.

Impermeable Surfaces

Impermeable surfaces should be kept to a minimum. This plan has extensive patio/pathways/decking all laid on concrete pad base. Consideration should be given to having some large portion of this laid on a pervious base.

Landscape Plan:

Current Site:

Several inappropriate specimens are currently growing here xx,yy,zz. the committee strongly suggests removal of (would have no objection should the property owner decide to remove) these shrubs/trees.

Redwoods planted in the fog belt or in riparian areas are local treasures. The redwoods on this property will never do well without copious irrigation, and will rapidly grow to create unwanted shade and problematic surface roots. The committee strongly recommends the removal of these redwoods.

XX and yy are on the Town's list of Discouraged Plants. We recommend they be removed. Good substitutes would be a.b.c...

Young bays are found on the property. They are more flammable than the older bays and create ladder fuel and should be removed. Older bays put the heritage oaks at risk of SOD and should be removed.

The following invasive weeds are seen on the property and should be eliminated. X,y,z. This will take continued attention to removal over several years.

Proposed:

We appreciate and encourage areas left open and native.
We appreciate limited amount of turf – suggest use only lowest water use varieties...
We appreciate that no turf is included in this plan.

As the ground is disturbed by construction it is especially vulnerable to invasives like *Dittrichia*. This should be watched for and carefully eliminated before seeding during construction and for a few years following.

Planting in Right of Way should be minimal and low maintenance. Native grasses and wildflowers are appreciated here.

Screening from neighbors is adequate except xxx

Only for properties abutting Jasper Ridge or Open Space: This property is adjacent to invaluable wildland. Given the potential risks posed by *P. ramorum* and other pathogenic *Phytophthora* species, planting nursery stock in and near native forests should be avoided in general. Nursery-grown plants should not be used where spores produced on the plants could be dispersed into native stands or where contaminated soil or water runoff from the planted area can reach native stands.

Only for properties that have swales that drain to creeks and have animal enclosures - horses, goats: Swales that drain to seasonal tributaries of creeks should be protected from toxic materials and animal waste runoff.

Plants List

We appreciate that a good percentage of the plants are native.

The non natives are appropriately low water use and not invasive, except xxx . Consider substituting non invasives like xx, yy

Some of the proposed plants require considerable water and are not appropriate in our Mediterranean climate. Consider substituting more water efficient plants like xx and yy

Are there native species that might make good substitutes?

Unless riparian: This property is not in a riparian area. Due to the spreading of Sudden oak death (SOD) through bay trees and the lack of natural water, the committee discourages planting a bay tree on this property.

Carex tumulicola is on the Town discouraged list because too few available nursery plants are actually true Berkeley Sedge; almost all sold under this name are actually the invasive *C. divulsa*. Substitute we suggest is Deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*, previously *Lotus scoparius*).

We recommend checking with the nursery to make sure that the Olive species is truly the sterile species and will not be invasive as most are.

Suggested substitute shrubs:

- Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), which might eventually reach 20' tall. -Sugar Bush (*Rhus ovata*) is a first rate landscape bush to 15'-18'
- Lemon Berry Bush (*Rhus integrifolia*) can reach 18'.
- Hollyleaf Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*) to 18'
- Catalina Cherry (*Prunus lyoni*) to 25'-40'.

The plants chosen for area xyz do not have the same water and light requirements and will not do well long term as a result.

There is not enough room allowed for the plants to grow and mature – we suggest planting with less density in area xx.

The native trees on the property will receive too much summer water to maintain their health with the current irrigation plan.

Thought should be given to establishing a new generation of oaks to replace the older ones as they age. They are best grown from acorns from existing trees.

Fencing

The Committee strongly discourages perimeter fencing. Wildlife corridors are essential.

We appreciate the corridors left for wildlife.

NATIVE AREAS

In addition to the landscaped areas detailed in the submitted plan, there is an area (approximate size =) of open and uncultivated hillside/land. It is currently primarily xxx habitat, in (undisturbed/good/fair/poor) condition.

The committee strongly recommends that this area remain undisturbed and the following steps taken to move it even closer to a native condition, both to preserve the rural atmosphere of the neighborhood and to provide habitat for local wildlife:

1. Removal of invasive plants xx, yy and zz.
2. Careful protection and maintenance of xx, yy and zz
3. Any additional plantings are discouraged and should be strictly limited to materials on the Town Native Plant List, and appropriate to the existing habitat.
4. Any paths should be of only pervious material.
5. Fire mitigation should be mindful and focus on removing fire ladders and opening breaks between clumps of vegetation while preserving important habitat.
6. Any work done on the property should fully protect this area from the effects of construction debris and runoff. Large machinery should not be allowed in this area, even for access – alternative routes should be used. Erosion control should be carefully implemented.

Lighting

The lighting fixtures are appropriate and minimize light spread.

The number of light fixtures are appropriate except: xxx

The Committee would like to accompany ASCC on their site visit to see if additional comments from us are warranted.

Submitted by _____