



**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
Special Conservation Committee
Virtual Meeting
Tuesday, March 23, 2021 – 7:00 PM**

Special Videoconference Meeting via Zoom

SPECIAL VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING AGENDA

Remote Meeting Covid-19 Advisory: On March 17, 2020, the Governor of California issued Executive Order N- 29-20, suspending certain provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act in order to allow for local legislative bodies to conduct their meetings telephonically or by other electronic means. Pursuant to the statewide Shelter-In-Place Order issued by the Governor in Executive Order N-33-20 on March 19, 2020, and the CDC's social distancing guidelines which discourage large public gatherings, Portola Valley Town Council meetings are being conducted electronically. The meeting is not available for in-person attendance. Members of the public may attend the meeting by video or phone linked in this agenda

To access the meeting by computer, click on the link below:

<https://zoom.us/j/94252336379?pwd=RkZ4M1NRM01JWURrcTUxRXh3eHRldz09>

To access the meeting by phone, dial:

1-699-900-6833

1-877-853-5247 (toll-free)

*Mute/Unmute - press *6*

*Raise Hand - press *9*

Meeting ID: 942 5233 6379

Password: 567898

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Oral Communications
3. Approval of Minutes for February 23, 2021
4. Site Permits -
 - a. Link to assignments schedule - Magill
 - b. 622 Portola Cal Water Pumping Station Chiariello
 - c. 35 Possum - Plunder
 - d. 370 Golden Oak – resubmitted – Heiple
 - e. 214 Grove - ?
5. Old Business
 - a. Oversight of Significant Town Owned Properties
 - i. Spring Down – Subcommittee met 3/18
 - ii. Town Center – Subcommittee met 3/9
 - iii. Frog Pond – Subcommittee met 2/18 Murphy (Appendix A)
 - iv. Triangle Park, Ford Field, Rossotti's Field
 - b. Committee/Town Cooperation
 - i. Public Works - Murphy
 - ii. Trails - Coleman
 - iii. Open Space – Chiariello
 - iv. Fire Ad-Hoc – Plunder

- c. Backyard Habitat - Plunder
 - d. Tip of the Month - Magill
 - e. What's blooming now - Magill
 - f. Kudos - Plunder
 - g. Predators / Rodenticides – Chiariello, Plunder, Kawaja
 - h. Broom Pull – recap
 - i. Donation Program for Small-Scale Town Projects - Dennis
- 6. New Business
 - a. Budget – Deadline to submit May 3 (Appendix B)
 - 7. Adjournment
 - 8. Next meeting: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 7:00 pm via Zoom

APPENDIX A

FROG POND

Short Term Maintenance Goals

- 1) Improve the health of the vernal pond
 - a) Control Invasives
 - i) Continue program of annual mowing of areas with Harding grass (*Phalaris aquatica*) and thistles. Budget to schedule two mowings per year, with an early summer mowing of the higher, drier elevations and a later expanded mowing of the lower, wetter areas.
 - ii) When “highland” mowing takes place, we recommend that it be extended in toward the center of the pond as far as feasible – at least an additional 12 feet - along the south side of the pond.
 - iii) “Lowland” mowing can be postponed as necessary until the ground is dry enough to support the equipment. Ideally mow before the Harding Grass seeds to slow its expansion.
 - iv) Suppress thistles by hand cutting and removing in areas not mowed.
 - v) Suppress cat-tails by cutting and removing before they go to seed. Pull whenever possible.
 - b) Remove debris from the outflow tract below the “dam”
 - c) Consider raising the height of the “dam” to its original height to keep more water in the pond for longer. ?effect on silting?
 - d) Algae growth in northern part is probably the result of fertilizer runoff from the school. This should be minimized.
- 2) Reduce Fire Hazards
 - a) A stand of about 6 aging Monterey pines near the southwest edge of the area should be removed.
 - b) On the northern side, we would encourage removal of the 3 large Monterey pines between the property line and the pond (*one of these pines has several dead limbs near the ground that should be removed immediately*). There are some oaks in this area that will flourish after pine removal.
 - c) There are many dead or dying coyote bushes along the north edge of the open space (near Corte Madera school), as well as on the east end of the pond. *The dead bushes should be removed, and dead branches should be removed from the other plants, in order to eliminate highly flammable material from the area. Volunteers did a lot of this in 2020.*
- 3) Enhance the health of the woodland
 - a) On the southern edge of the open space, there are several locations where a row of live oak trees has been allowed to form a dense wall by the unconstrained growth of seedlings under the parent trees. Separation of these seedlings can be as little as 3 feet. If these tree clusters are on open space property, the town should remove the smaller plants to create a typical separation of at least 10 feet, which will allow the bigger specimens to flourish. If the clusters are on private property, the owners should be encouraged to do the same.
 - b) There are a large cotoneaster, an old plum tree, and several pyracantha at the west end of the area that should be removed.
- 4) Remove debris
 - a) Remove fallen tree support poles nearby from northeast corner of the pond.
- 5) Enhance views of the pond.
 - a) Improve the relationship between the Frog Pond and the school property.

- i) Lower the tall fence along the property line except where it is necessary for keeping in balls from field play. Leave it tall between the 2 gates; lower it to 3 feet from the gates to the eastern and western boundaries. Consider removing it entirely along the parking lot area.
- ii) Totally remove most of the large old coyote brush that grows up into the fence. Remove the pyracantha, Italian buckthorn and willows. One old willow is lifting the concrete at the corner of the school parking lot.

ACTION PLAN for Frog Pond

Remainder of fiscal year 2020-21:

- Continue mowing as in past years, but wait until pond is dry and then mow the central part of the pond and continue mowing outward as time permits. HOW DO WE SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF NOT BEING ABLE TO MOW MUCH OF THE POND??
- **Do urgent fire safety work.**
- Remove wooden trash and other trash as conditions permit (Item 4). This has been on our list since our first report.

Fiscal year 2021-22: Costs to be estimated by Public works.

- Continue mowing program, incorporating new plan to mow twice per year, first in drier areas and later in wet areas, as listed in Item 1-a above..
- Remove 3 old poor condition pines along northeast border with Corte Madera school (Item 2-b) before fire season begins. If this is not possible, at a minimum limb up dead branches on pines and redwoods.
- Remove dead material from coyote bushes along northern edge of open space (Item 2-c) before fire season begins.
- Hand-remove thistles and cat-tails from Pond before they go to seed (Items 1-b and 1-c) .
- Thin oaks along southern edge of open space. Coordinate with neighbors to conduct thinning on private property as appropriate (Item 3-a).
- Remove undesirable trees listed in Item 3-c and 3-d above.
- Begin to enhance the view across to the pond.
 - Remove all small live oak seedlings along Indian Crossing ROW by the roots.
 - Identify areas to open a view window from the Alpine Road to the pond and begin clearing brush from these.
 - Begin to widely open view from the Alpine Road trail across to the pond by clearing brush and small volunteer trees.

Going forward 2022+:

- Continue mowing program
- Continue hand removal of thistles and cat-tails as required.
- Remove multiple standing Monterey pines (6) on the southwest edge of the open space.
- Continue coordination of removal of problematic trees with private property owners on southern border and with Corte Madera School on the northern border.
- Continue to open views to the pond.

INTEGRATION OF ROAD REMNANT INTO MAINTENANCE PLAN

The Town Council has unanimously declared its intention to protect the road remnant as open space. Pending the official designation, this area should be improved and maintained as part of FPOS.

1. Neighbors have been weed whacking and scattering wildflower seeds for the last few years.
2. 2/year mowing as with the rest of the pond property.
3. Significant brush clearing and tree thinning should be done for fire safety and esthetics.

BUDGET REQUEST OR ITEM DESCRIPTION/ ACTIVITY: Please describe your budget request as clearly as possible.	ADOP TED 2018- 2019 BUD GET	PROP OSED 2019-2 020 BUDG ET	2020- 21
Fall Lecture event (probably Mountain Lion) - defer till 21-22	\$	800	0
Broom pull refreshments		150	50
Table handouts Earth Day, Town Picnic, etc		400	200
Monarch butterfly project		100	100
Co-sponsor Water Wise Garden tour spring 2020 - if happens 2021		500	200
Native plants, seeds, and seedlings		800	800
Weed wrenches 4 small		600	0
Return Rodenticides event		500	250
Town Center Native Planting Brochure		400	400
SpringDown webcam		-	1000
TOTAL		4,250	3,000

February 2021 Draft Minutes
Conservation Committee
Special Zoom meeting Agenda
February 23, 2020

Present: N. Chiariello, T. Coleman, P. Heiple, C. Magill, J. Murphy, M. Plunder, D. Walz, M. Richards, J. Zimmerman

Also present: J. Richards (Town Councilmember liaison)

Guests: A. Casbara (student representative), R. Comes, K. Corley, M. DeStaebler (CC Emeritus)

1. Call to Order – 7:01 pm
2. Oral communications
 - a. Introduction of new members appointed at 2/10 Council meeting, Yogi Zimmerman and Megan Richards.
3. Minutes for January 26, 2021 *unanimously approved as written.*
4. Site permits –
 - a. C. Magill has assumed responsibility for assignments schedule, is reconstructing and will provide Committee a link to Google Drive page when completed.
 - b. Neely winery – plans to be updated and resubmitted so no action is required by CC at this time.
 - c. 622 Portola Cal Water Pumping Station – completed by N. Chiariello
 - d. 370 Golden Oak – completed by P. Heiple
 - e. Priory CUP amendment request - J. Murphy: Submitted plan does not contain any proposed landscaping or physical site changes
 - increases ADA (average daily attendance) enrollment from 350 to 410
 - increases borders from 50 to 60
5. Tree Permits –
 - a. The approved Revision of Significant Tree/Shrub List (Appendix A) has been forwarded to the Town/ASCC for review and will be subsequently forwarded to Planning
6. Old Business
 - a. Aiming for more efficiency. Process changes:
 - i. Committee members to submit all reports in writing (subcommittees, other Town Committee liaison) by the Tuesday the week before the scheduled CC meeting (3rd Tuesday) to the Chair. Reports will be attached to CC agenda and reviewed prior to the meeting. Oral reports at the CC meeting will be limited to the most important issues or highlights.
 - ii. Spring Down, Frog Pond and Town Center will remain on each month's meeting agenda for CC discussion. Reduce the frequency of Committee discussion of oversight of additional Open Space locations at meetings to perhaps quarterly based on activity.
 - b. Oversight of Significant Town Owned Properties (J. Murphy)
 - i. Spring Down – Oversight report attached (Appendix B).
“Go Native” will be doing weeding in early March.
Public Works have been asked to do selective mowing closer to Portola Road to preserve the wildflower seedlings.
Addition of a mulch path to the pond was suggested.
 - ii. Town Center – “Go Native” will be weeding in March
 - iii. Frog Pond – report to be included in next month's meeting
 - iv. Triangle Park, Ford Field, Rossotti's Field – no activity required at this time
 - c. Committee/Town cooperation
 - i. Public Works – no updates

- ii. Sustainability and Environmental Resources Committee (J. Murphy)
Water – Hetch Hetchy has 2 year supply. Not clear yet if there will be rationing this year. Smart water meters should be installed for all PV Cal Water customers starting late 2021.
 - iii. Trails – no update (meeting cancelled)
 - iv. Open space – have not met/no update
 - v. Fire AdHoc – have not met/no update
 - vi. ASCC – CC discussed best practices to promote continued strong collaborations.
 - vii. Priority/Budget requests: Appendix C includes key dates for “next steps” in the Budget process
 - d. Backyard Habitat – Several pamphlets have been delivered to appropriate residents by M. Plunder.
 - e. Tip of the Month – C. Magill suggested CC offer to be an informal resource for PV community members who have questions on plantings, etc.; highlight of the Backyard Habitat program.
 - f. What’s blooming now (Magill) – Garrya elliptica
 - g. Kudos (Plunder) – fire/vegetation clearing; possibly also thistle removal
 - h. What are our Singing Frogs doing now? A. Kawaja to consider helping to develop an on-line mini-course about the singing frogs for town youth
 - i. Predators / Rodenticides (N. Chiariello) – subcommittee has three goals:
 - 1) increase awareness of rodenticides and decrease their use;
 - 2) consequences of rodenticide use;
 - 3) gather information for the Town to use in reporting to authorities
 Proposed a second “tip of the month” (to be renamed to facilitate differentiation) on PV forum to highlight rodenticide-related issues (i.e., removing backyard bird feeders; what to plant to attract birds to yards; how to get rid of hazardous waste in San Mateo County). CC agreed to this proposal.
 - j. Broom Pull is the first week of March and will again be virtual.
 - k. Evening Lecture (Murphy) – Ohlone Care of Land Professor Matt Kroot (“placeholder” for the time being)
 - l. Emeritus Group - a list of former CC members who are interested in participating in specific ad hoc activities will be compiled as a resource for the Committee
7. New business
- a. The Town is considering a targeted “Donation program” for specific projects and activities. Jeremy Dennis will discuss at the next CC meeting.
 - b. The designation of the road remnant at the Frog Pond as open space is working its way through the town process.
8. Adjournment – 8:26 pm
9. Next meeting: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 7:00 pm via Zoom

APPENDIX A

Revised List of Significant Trees / Shrubs
 PROPOSED – Feb 24, 2020
 REVISED – Jan 26, 2021

CC Recomm.		Minimum Diameter
	Trees	(at breast height –

		54")
Keep	Coast Live Oak (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>)	11"
Keep	Black Oak (<i>Quercus kelloggii</i>)	11"
Keep	Valley Oak (<i>Quercus lobata</i>)	11"
Keep	Blue Oak (<i>Quercus douglasii</i>)	5"
Keep	Coast Redwood (<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>)	17"
Keep	Douglas Fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	17"
Remove	California Bay Laurel (<i>Umbellularia californica</i>) — (If multiple trunk, measurements pertain to largest trunk)	11.5"
Keep	Big Leaf Maple (<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>)	7"
Keep	Madrone (<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>)	5"
	Shrubs	(at 12" above ground)
Add	Golden Oak (<i>Quercus berberidifolia</i>) any limb:	2"
Add	Leather Oak (<i>Quercus durata</i>)) any limb:	2"
Add	Coastal Scrub Oak (<i>Quercus dumosa</i>)) any limb:	2"
Add	Manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos spp.</i>) – mature, native shrubs – any limb: Or burl diameter of:	2" 12"

APPENDIX B
SPRING DOWN
RESULTS OF 3 YEAR PILOT PROGRAM

2020-21 is Year 3 of a 3year pilot program funded by the Town Council to restore a weedy and overgrown Spring Down Open Space. Results have been very positive; this Open Space is now an improved environment enjoyed by residents and wildlife.

1. Selective pruning and thinning of long neglected oak trees and shrubbery reduced fire risk and improved views.
2. Repeated timed mowings and focused removal of invasives weeds have increased the density of native wildflowers, most notably CA poppy and Yarrow. They are now self-seeding sustainably.
3. The Blue Heron Pond has become a valued focal point. Ducks nest there and a Blue Heron visits regularly.
4. Both habitat value and beauty have been enhanced by these improvements. The park has increased numbers of appreciative visitors.

ACTION PLAN for Springdown Open Space

Conservation Committee will visit the site monthly to monitor. We work closely with and make recommendations to Public Works about the optimum timing of implementing the items in the maintenance plan and any necessary specific additional tasks.

Remainder of fiscal year 2020-21 – already budgeted.

1. Continue focus on weed control. Strategically scheduled mowing and weed whacking to decrease the prevalence of invasive weedy grasses and thistles

- and prevent any further seeding of invasives. This will encourage the natives that have survived there to grow and bloom.
2. Gradually remove the metal stake fencing uprights along Portola Road Trail. Leave the existing old wooden uprights which have historical esthetic value and are an aid to horses on the trail. As repairs needed, replace the metal stake fence with a simple wooden top crossbar fence of weathered wood.
 3. Create a new fence opening adjacent to the large Eucalyptus on the White property line. Clear a simple curving trail from this opening to connect to the existing circular Spring Down path.
 4. Continue the thinning of the overgrown shrubbery along the fence between Portola Road Trail and Spring Down path. Several large dead Myrica bushes need removal. Several small oaks growing up in the Myrica need removal. Several large old coyote brush should be coppiced down to 1foot.
 5. Install a live trail camera focused on the pond with live feed to the Town's web site.

Fiscal year 2021-22

Requests for Public Works budget – Young to estimate costs

1. Continued emphasis on increasing the beauty of the meadow and improving habitat conditions. Focus on weed control with strategic mowing, weed whacking and hand weeding. Maintain schedule of 4/year repeated mowing and hand weeding.
2. Remove a few redwood branches to open access to the barn owl box.
3. Remove the large multi-trunked Eucalyptus in the Portola Road ROW. It is an eyesore and a fire danger and the increasingly sizeable sucker stems are unstable and dangerous. Cut this as close to the ground as possible and take measures to prevent re-sprouting.
4. Identify with precision where property line is between Spring Down and White property. There is a large heritage oak along that line that would benefit from clearing underneath and arborist pruning.
5. Consider signage at each entrance re keep dogs on leash.

Going forward after 2021-2

1. Continue a strategic yearly maintenance schedule that will minimize the re-emergence of weedy invasives and encourage wildflower meadow to thrive.
2. Consider building a boardwalk from the perimeter path to the pond if monitoring shows it would be useful.
3. Maintain the more generous view windows from the street to the western hills that has been created to enhance the Scenic Corridor. There is a tendency for brush, weeds and squirrel planted oaks to fill in open areas and obstruct this view.

APPENDIX C

Next steps for our requests to Council

- a. Council Priority Setting –February 24 study session
- b. Committee 2020 annual reports –April/May
- c. Council Priority Setting –finalized April
- d. Council Priorities shared with Committees
- e. Draft FY 2021-21 Budget -May



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and Members of the Town Council

FROM: Jeremy Dennis, Town Manager

DATE: January 27, 2021

RE: Donation Program for Small-Scale Town Projects (formerly PV Donates)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Town Council consider the implementation of a donation program to fund small-scale Town projects.

BACKGROUND

The Town's incorporation was made possible by the countless hours and resources volunteers made to implementing a vision of a community where public service and financial support was central. Residents have donated millions of dollars to fund community-benefitting projects, such as the acquisition of open space, reconstruction of Town Center, and other town-defining endeavors.

Providing different ways for residents to participate in the public process is key to the continued success of the Town, and the projects the Town Council, the committees, and residents alike support.

DISCUSSION

The Town does not currently have a program that allows residents to fund/support small-scale projects. While staff, for the purposes of this staff report, did not attempt to define what a "small-scale project" is, staff did create a list of potential projects that such a program could support (Attachment 1).

A program like this exists in many other cities today, typically in the form of a Parks and Recreation program that funds benches, tree plantings, and other such small projects. Donated funds are typically tax deductible, and are supported by some type of acknowledgement that requires further discussion.¹

Staff believes that many residents would support discreet programs in their areas of interest (trails, fields, sustainability demonstration projects, bicycles, and children/youth) through modest donations.

¹ While programs in other cities support branding opportunities (naming facilities and events, for example), the staff strongly recommends that no such opportunities be included as part of any future program.

Such projects should be initially developed by the Town's committees, and could be supported by Council and staff recommendations. The appropriate committee would review resident recommendations.

Staff requests that the Town Council provide feedback on this nascent idea, with additional review by committees as part of the next round of development. Questions for the Council include:

- Should there be a range of funds that could be donated?
- Does the Council wish to discuss recognition of donations at this meeting or a future meeting?
- Are there types of projects that you would want included in this program? Any that should not be included?
- Should such a program be bound by an annual work plan, or be on an ad-hoc basis, as ideas come up?
- Should there be a match to the program from Town funds?

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact in receiving this staff report and providing guidance. Should such a program be created, there will be modest support from staff/contractors to ensure that any adopted program is implemented and projects are completed.

ATTACHMENT

1. Ideas for consideration

ATTACHMENT #1Donation Program for Small-Scale Town Projects

- Plantings in Right of Way
 - Flowers
 - Seeding
 - Open space improvements
 - Tree donation
- Trail improvements
 - Adopt a Trail
 - Minor work
 - Drainage
 - Grading
 - Fences
 - Tree removal
- Sustainability measures
 - Small-scale demonstration projects, such as rain catchment barrels
 - Climate Fund
- Public Infrastructure
 - Adopt a catch basin
 - Adopt a Public Tree – maintenance
 - Beautification of Village Square, Triangle Park
 - Public Fence Repair/Replacement
 - Tree removal – Fire safety (may be part of Wildfire Preparedness Committee program), or removal of invasive plants and trees
 - Trash Clean-up
- Special Events
 - Holiday Food/Toy Drives
 - Music (Concerts/PV Palooza), Town Picnic, Zots to Tots
- Historic Resources
 - Support for acquisition, cataloging and access
- Parks and Recreation – Support the fields and facilities
- Emergency Preparedness