

MINUTES
SAN FRANCISQUITO CREEK
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY BOARD
26 May 2005

Chairperson Zlotnick called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. at the City of East Palo Alto Council Chambers, 2415 University Avenue, East Palo Alto, California.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Chairperson Zlotnick, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Director Mossar, City of Palo Alto
Director Abrica, City of East Palo Alto
Director Duboc, City of Menlo Park
Director Gordon, San Mateo County Flood Control District

Members Absent: None

Associate Members Present: Pam Sturner, Watershed Council

Present: Michael Fox, Stanford University

JPA Staff Present: Cynthia D'Agosta, Executive Director
Andrew Kloak, Kevin Murray, Staff

Others Present: Debra O'Leary (City of East Palo/COE Liaison) Kelly Fergusson (City of Menlo Park-JPA Alternate); Joe Teresi, Glenn Roberts (City of Palo Alto); Jason Christie, Beth Dyer (SCVWD); Kent Steffens (City of Menlo Park); Ann Stillman (San Mateo County Flood Control District); John Schaefer (Palo Alto Resident); Mary Schaefer (Palo Alto Resident); Art Kraemer (Palo Alto Resident) Vivian Blomenkamp (P.A. League of Women Voters) Jason Green (Palo Alto Daily News); Michael Levin (EPA.net)

2. APPROVAL OF THE April 28, 2005 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

The Board considered approval of the meeting minutes from the April 28, 2005. Director Mossar moved approval, Chairperson Gordon seconded, and approved 5-0.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board considered approval of the agenda for May 26th. Director Mossar moved approval, Director Gordon seconded, and approved 5-0.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

None

5. PUBLIC COMMENT—Public comment on items not on the agenda. None

6. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Corte Madera Creek Bank Stabilization and Revegetation Study Update

Mr. Kevin Murray said this item was an update on the joint bank stabilization and revegetation study on Corte Madera Creek undertaken between the JPA and the Town of Portola Valley. He said the consultant (PWA) has collected and analyzed all the data. He said the report was prepared through its final stage and it would be published on June 1st.

Mr. Murray said the presentation would be given to the Portola Valley Town Council on June 8th. He encouraged members of the public and the Board of Directors to attend this meeting. He said this item would come back to the JPA Board for a presentation at the June 23rd

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meeting. He said a public awareness campaign to promote the findings and recommendations in the report would begin following that meeting.

Director Gordon said he would not be able to attend the presentation but is prepared to forward a letter to the Portola Valley Town Council on behalf of the JPA Board, regarding the successful partnership on the project. [letter prepared by JPA staff]. He said he thought this was appropriate because Portola Valley is in his Supervisorial district.

The Board considered approval of this letter. Director Mossar moved approval, Chairperson Zlotnick seconded, and approved 5-0.

B. Announcement – Special workshop with visiting MIT and USGS professors on fact finding and building trust between local and Federal agencies, as well as the community, in natural resource projects.

Ms. D’Agosta announced a special consensus-building workshop on June 14th at USGS. She said Dr. Herman Karl, a Menlo Park resident and USGS scientist, and Dr. David Laws, a MIT professor, would be conducting this workshop aimed to interpret the facts and build trust in our watershed. She said an additional outcome would be to facilitate agreement on the interpretation of scientific data and with decision-making.

Ms. D’Agosta said the three-hour event would look at San Francisquito Creek as a pilot project as these two professors take their work to other watersheds across the nation. She envisioned that this could be the beginning of the JPA’s public process for the COE project.

Ms. D’Agosta said she has sent invites out & encourages participation by the Board and public.

7. ADJOURN TO STUDY SESSION – Discussion / question & answer session on possible expansion of project boundary to include areas of tidal flooding. Staff from each city will describe the area of recommendation for their jurisdiction. Exec Director will present outstanding issue items.

Chairperson Zlotnick adjourned the meeting to a study session at 6:10 p.m.

The discussion centered upon inclusion of tidal flooding in the Project Management Plan (PMP) of the COE project. A decision on the subject under discussion would be made in Agenda Item 8.A. and will only affect work over the next three to four months. Following on last month’s discussion, tonight is a further look at the issues surrounding this choice. The COE is willing to cover the entire alluvial fan as shown on the Oakland Museum map, in the PMP for cost estimate purposes. Redwood Creek is the northern-most part of the alluvial fan and Adobe Creek is to the south.

Beginning in the north or in the city of Menlo Park, and ending in Palo Alto, each city staff presented recommended boundaries for inclusion and issues of the areas. A watershed map was referenced that included areas of tidal and alluvial floodplains. The conclusion of staff is that the JPA would be addressing the need for tidal flood protection from Mountain View up to near Bair Island in Redwood City

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The most apparent northern watershed border for Menlo Park is Marsh Road. The road is at a high elevation where it meets Hwy 101, which would provide for “tying into” a levee. A small portion of unincorporated San Mateo County just north of here, was included in the FEMA map and should probably be included in our study.

The Sun Microsystems campus on Bayshore Road in Menlo Park is not in the floodplain but everything around it would be inundated including Highway 84.

In Menlo Park, previously untouched salt ponds might be opened up and exposed to bay waters. It is an unanswered question as to whether the regulatory agencies would allow this to happen as the habitats behind the levees have had no exposure to bay waters for decades. If opened, the question becomes where the inboard levees to protect property would be build or placed.

There is a tide gate near the salt pond in the Atherton Channel area. Also, the City of Redwood City is working on a multi-year flood control project for the Bay Front Canal.

Comments:

Since Redwood Creek is the northern-most part of the historical alluvial fan, the JPA should consider leaving an opening for the City of Redwood City to throw themselves into this process. The JPA would have to move on if Redwood City cannot make that commitment.

Several people expressed interest in approaching City of Redwood City to gage their interest in this.

Would Redwood City’s choice to not implement flood control measures cause increased risk for Menlo Park and East Palo Alto? This would need to be studied.

Flooding from creeks outside the alluvial fan could impact our watershed. An overlay with the county and salt pond restoration project would have to be considered.

The JPA can define the boundaries and sections for the PMP. Similar to this issue, regional cooperation is happening with the Dumbarton Bridge traffic issue. The JPA does not lose anything by proposing this like cooperation to the City of Redwood City. They need to be given a chance to be included in the PMP. The door can be left open for a short period and then the JPA would move forward either with or without them.

Does the City of Redwood City need to be members of the JPA?

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Q: Would the COE be able to accommodate that increase in the project's size from a staffing perspective? A: [provided by Debra O'Leary] Regardless whether the COE has 5 or 15 people involved now, they could get more staff people involved if needed. The COE team would expand or decrease based on the needs of the study.

The alluvial fan could be considered in its entirety. It would be most advantageous and beneficial to the COE to study all the possible areas in the watershed now.

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In East Palo Alto (EPA) the area from near the Dumbarton Bridge and the old elevated railroad spur to SFCreek on the south would be an alternative boundary for inclusion. There are several ponds around EPA that are owned by entities other than the city. Currently there is little protection from tidal flooding and indeed the city has experienced this in the past. A portion of the city's redevelopment zone lies adjacent to these ponds. In this stretch, the JPA staff will have to coordinate with other agencies including those considering Hetch Hetchy improvements, Dumbarton rail planners and local businesses.

Palo Alto boundaries are perhaps the easiest to define of all cities. The northern boundary would be SFCreek, and the southern recommended boundary is a levee around Adobe Creek and Palo Alto flood basin. [near Mt. View] This area will be addressed in the Shoreline Project [COE levee project] with the SCVWD acting as local sponsor, if not included in SFCreek JPA project. Palo Alto contains over 2,400 properties in the floodplain.

General comments and questions:

Will the upper watershed boundaries change if the tidal flooding inclusion is based on the alluvial map as seen on the Oakland Museum map? This map shows a restricted area in upper watershed.

Given any changes, there will have to be additions and subtractions to the watershed boundaries. Is there a hybrid version of the watershed that will be talked about in the process?

When the JPA came together in 1999, the cost to do a project was \$100 million dollars. Now that the cost may be double to \$200 million dollars. [by adding tidal flood areas].

Is there a possibility to break out sections in the PMP, to get cost figures for each area [city boundary] of flood protection coverage?

When the PMP Report is completed in September or October, would there be a chance to study additional areas [add on areas] then?

FEMA and the COE study have two different interpretations of what a levee is. FEMA certifies levees and if a levee is not a FEMA-certified, it does not exist in their eyes. On the other hand, the COE will recognize levees as functional whether each one is certified or not.

An important criterion is that the final project needs to have FEMA-certified levees. Removal of properties from FEMA flood plain maps is the desired outcome or goal of considering to include these areas in the study.

The tidal project is not dependent on the creek project and visa-versa. The COE wants to solve flooding in the watershed, not just one kind of flooding.

There could be the potential for tidal waters coming around the end of the levees on the north and the south. Our objective is to make this is worth our money, do the right thing in eliminating that threat, and take properties out of FEMA flood zone mapping

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Ms. D'Agosta stated that she has begun an analysis of impacts to JPA and staff workload for inclusion of tidal flooding issue in COE project. She will return in July, after seeing draft of PMP, with a quantitative summary.

8. RECONVENE SPECIAL MEETING

Chairperson Zlotnick reconvened the meeting. (7:20 p.m.)

A. Recommendation for Geographic Boundaries to be included in Project Management Plan for Feasibility Phase Cost Estimates - Accept staff recommendation.

Chairperson Zlotnick opened the meeting to public comment on this item. No members of the public chose to comment.

Staff Recommendation: The recommended boundaries for cost estimation are the southernmost bay-front border of Palo Alto and the northernmost bay-front border of Menlo Park.

The Board considered approval of this item. Director Mossar moved approval of the recommendation with the condition that the following statement be included after the last sentence of the recommendation, "Provided that the project schedule will not be adversely affected and Redwood City agrees to participate in the PMP, the northernmost boundary for cost estimation will be Redwood Creek."

Director Gordon seconded the motion, and the motion was approved on a 5-0 vote.

B. Future Meeting Schedule and Draft Agendas

Ms. D'Agosta said this item was for information only. She said that the August Board meeting was cancelled as requested by the Board.

9. BOARD AND ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPORTS - Agendized reports from Board and/or Associate Members requesting Board action. None

10. BOARD AND ASSOCIATE MEMBER MATTERS - Non-agendized comments, requests, or announcements by Board and/or Associate members, no action may be taken.

Ms. Pam Sturner said the Watershed Council recently completed their creek workday season. She said they were encouraged with the 1,073 hours of total volunteer time spent on the creek from the season's cleanup events. She said unfortunately two of their May events were cancelled due to rainy weather.

Ms. Sturner said there was a good turnout of 80 people at the May 11th, USGS watershed map event. She said there was great interest and discussion about the new San Francisquito Watershed published by Oakland Museum map that day.

Ms. Sturner extended a thank you to the Board for their work in communicating with various elected officials in Sacramento about the continuation of the Department of Conservation's Watershed Coordinator grants. She thanked Cynthia for coordinating the response to potential cuts in the DOC grants proposed in Sacramento earlier in the month. Ms. Sturner said this joint grant (Watershed Council and JPA) was vital to further the work of both organizations.

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Mr. Michael Fox said Stanford University had been holding discussions with the Department of Fish and Game about the university's divergence dam at Happy Hollow. He said this facility is located in an area between Stanford Golf Course and the confluence of Los Trancos Creek.

Mr. Fox said, in particular, the two parties have been looking at making improvements on the fish ladder at Happy Hollow that would extend the season for adult fish migration during low flow periods. He said he would continue to update the Board as things proceeded ahead.

Director Mossar said the star thistle population was greatly expanding along the creek and in the urban areas near the Arboretum. She said this was distressing to see how quickly it has spread. She stressed more attention needed to be given to this.

Ms. Sturner said the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve was studying how star thistle propagates. She said that the findings in their study could be helpful in controlling it on the San Francisquito Creek.

Chairperson Zlotnick said the President's FY 2006 Budget request made by SCVWD and other JPA members of \$200,000 for San Francisquito Creek had been increased to \$300,000 at the committee level. He said the House Committee recently approved this amount and it was moving to the Senate floor. He said he learned this on a recent trip to Washington, D.C. with the San Jose Chamber of Commerce.

Chairperson Zlotnick said Congresswoman Anna Eshoo should be commended for her special efforts on this matter.

Director Abrica thanked Cynthia and staff for the May 21st creek tour. He said he both enjoyed the day and learned a great deal on this special tour of several key locations along San Francisquito Creek.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Zlotnick adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by: Andrew M. Kloak
Clerk of the Board