



Solano County

Board of Supervisors

Minute Order

February 25, 2020

Director of Resource Management Bill Emlen provided a status update on the status of the formation of a Dependent Regional park and Open Space District.

In response to a question from Chairwoman Hannigan, Mr. Emlen provided information on the timeline of activities, noting that there was a little more time to put a resolution forward for the ballot.

Chairwoman Hannigan invited members of the public to make comments on the matter and the following comments were received:

A) Duane Kromm, Fairfield, commented that funding for fire districts was critical.

B) Bob Berman, Benicia, commented in support of a Dependent Regional Park and Open Space District, on the need for more outreach and feedback to and from the public and in support of making a decision about putting the item on the ballot sooner than later.

C) Michael Zeiss, Suisun City, commented in support of a Dependent Regional Park and Open Space District, in support of an exploratory committee of citizens, on the need for more outreach and feedback to and from the public and in support of making a decision about putting the item on the ballot sooner than later.

In response to a question from Chairwoman Hannigan, Mr. Emlen provided more information on the scope of activities for city and public outreach.

Chairwoman Hannigan commented on the importance of maintaining momentum on the efforts and asked about costs.

Mr. Emlen provided information on the amount of funding that would be needed for efforts noting that an exploratory group would need to provide assistance.

Supervisor Spering commented on the Planning Department being short staffed and the need for help from Mr. Kromm and Mr. Berman regarding outreach.

Executive Director of the Solano Land Trust Nicole Braddock advised that it was difficult to do outreach when the park district was uncertain. She noted that outreach had been taking place with children's programs relating to the outdoors. She advised that the Land Trust was on board and willing to help with outreach.

Mr. Kromm commented on efforts by the Green Belt Alliance to support and provide public outreach. He advised that there was a need for direction from the Board.

Supervisor Spering requested an outline from Mr. Kromm as to what help, support and commitments would be provided on the advocacy and outreach for the park district.

Mr. Kromm advised that an outline could be worked on by a collaboration of coalitions on what outreach program could be provided. He then commented on the importance of a well-crafted public poll to test whether the public was in support or not. He also noted that having the Parks and Recreation Committee assist would help and advised that the supporters were more than willing to take the lead on outreach.

Supervisor Spering advised that he would like to see an outline of what outreach could be committed to and how it would complement what County staff was doing.

Chairwoman Hannigan commented on the importance of polling results and public outreach. She advised that outreach could start now to inform the public what going forward might look like.

Mr. Kromm asked if the parks subcommittee would be willing to work with him on this.

Chairwoman Hannigan advised that she was willing to do that.

Mr. Emlen noted that staff was approaching the matter as if the November 2020 was the target date. He noted that he would commit to fine tuning the timeline and working with the speakers who were offering their assistance. He advised that there was a subcommittee on the Parks and Recreation Committee that was ready and willing to start public outreach if that was the direction of the Board.

Supervisor Vasquez commented that he did not see the need for urgency to move forward on the park district because there were several things that the department needed to address first, such as review of the Williamson Act properties, the RHNA process, water issues, permit processes, etc. He advised that the department was being stretched too thin and that a park district was a want, not a need. He commented that the priority should be to reorganize the fire districts and that if an outside entity wanted to work on public outreach for a park district then that was fine.

Supervisor Spering noted that there had been a lot of work done on the park district matter. He advised that there were always different crises to deal with and that quality of life issues such as parks could not always be put on the back burner. He noted that he had the same concerns about the department being stretched too thin and that he felt that there needed to be commitments from the other agencies to take the lead on the outreach.

Supervisor Brown commented that she was willing to support and work with agencies on the public outreach.

Supervisor Thomson commented that he needed data on whether the public supported the formation in order to make an informed decision. He advised that he was in support of staff moving forward.

Mr. Emlen provided information on discussion with a consultant regarding how to do the surveying and noted that the department was hoping to fill a vacancy soon and staff up outreach in the parks.

Chairwoman Hannigan advised that the department could work through the subcommittee on this, in addition to working with Ms. Braddock and the other speakers that offered their help. She advised that the direction would be to collaborate with them, put together a plan

and to keep moving forward.

Supervisor Spering advised that the department needed to talk with Mr. Berman and Mr. Kromm about outreach responsibilities and to provide that outline to the Board.