

City of Capitola

Commission on the Environment Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 15, 2023– 6:00 PM



Capitola City Hall, Council Chambers
420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010

Chairperson: Michelle Beritzhoff-Law

Commissioners: Anthony Lacenere, Margaux Keiser, Jason Shepardson, Peter Wilk

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Michelle Beritzhoff-Law, Margaux Keiser, Anthony Lacenere, Jason Shepardson, Peter Wilk

Commissioners Absent: None

City Staff Present: Jessica Kahn, Erika Senyk, Ed Morrison

Chairperson Beritzhoff-Law called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

2. Oral and Written Communications - None

3. Consider the minutes from the February 15, 2023, Commission on the Environment Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Shepardson and seconded by Commissioner Lacenere. Motion passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

4. General Business

- A. Don Alley from D.W. Alley & Associates presented on the history and ecological importance of Soquel Creek, the processes for forming the Soquel Creek Lagoon, and the methods for sampling steelhead and tidewater goby populations within the Lagoon.

Don Alley's presentation concluded with discussion of population declines for adult steelhead and the recommendation for planting tules at three locations within Soquel Creek to provide additional habitat for steelhead and tidewater gobies. Don also recommended additional actions that could be taken, including planting trees along Soquel Creek to provide for additional shaded habitat and updating or replacing signage to increase public awareness.

The Commission gave the following considerations to the tule planting in Soquel Creek project:

- Utilizing volunteers and Public Works staff to do the planting of tules
- Utilizing Green Building Funds to pay for tules, if needed
- Contacting local businesses and property owners who may be impacted by tule planting
- Creating a recommendation document for the next City Council Meeting on April 13th which would document the tule planting locations and rough timing of the project, with planting ideally scheduled to occur in May 2023

- B. The Commission discussed the possibility of utilizing Green Building Funds to pay for the tule planting project, if needed, in addition to organizing volunteers for planting efforts.

A motion to plant tules at three locations in Soquel Creek, prior to the closure of the sand bank, utilizing volunteers, and using Green Building Funds to help pay for the tules, if needed, was made by Chairperson Beritzhoff-Law and seconded by Commissioner Wilk. Motion was passed unanimously (5-0-0).

- C. The Commission requested to move the ESHA public outreach opportunities discussion to the April Commission meeting.

5. Items for Future Agenda

The Commission requested that the following items be agendized for a future meeting:

- Outreach opportunities to eligible parcels for the Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) Riparian Vegetation Planting Reimbursement Program
- Use of Green Building Funds
- Scheduling regular beach cleanups prior to summer months
- Incentive program encouraging residents to designate and maintain heritage trees

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm to the next Regular Meeting of the Commission on the Environment on April 19, 2023.