



SANTA CLARA COUNTY SPECIAL DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

5770 Almaden Expressway • San Jose, California 95118 • (408) 265-2600

F1 Meeting Minutes

Santa Clara County Special Districts Association

Monday, June 7, 2021

12:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m.

Join via Zoom Web Conferencing:

<https://valleywater.zoom.us/j/87990003505?pwd=NTFibIV5djY0eGVGYjdRb2UzYS9tdz09&from=addon>

Meeting ID: 879 9000 3505; Passcode: 889389

Dial-in: +1-669-900-9128,,879-900-03505#,,,,*889389#

A. Call to Order – 12:00 PM: By Steve Wesolowski

Welcome and Introductions. Temporarily skipped welcome and introductions to hold a moment of silence for VTA workers, but roll call was ultimately not taken.

Some Members (Voting):

Steve Wesolowski, Director, Rancho Rinconada Recreation and Park District (SCCSDA President)

Stephanie Moreno, Executive Director, Guadalupe-Coyote RCD (SCCSDA Vice-Chair)

Linda LeZotte, Director, Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) (SCCSDA Treasurer)

Bill Bosworth, Director, Cupertino Sanitary District

Helen Chapman, Director, Santa Clara Valley Open Space District

Jonathan Cowan, Director of Government & Community Relations, El Camino Healthcare District

Sue Fitzpatrick, Saratoga Cemetery District

Dwight Good, Assistant Chief–Cooperative Protection (CalFire), South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District

Rocelia G. Kmak, County Sanitation District 2-3; Santa Clara County Lighting Service Area

J. Logan, General Manager, Los Altos Hills County Fire District

Pete Siemens, Director, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Peter Van Dyke, President, Loma Prieta Resource Conservation District

Christine West, Executive Director, South Santa Clara Valley Memorial District

Presenter(s):

Brian Schmidt, Legislative Advocacy Director, Green Foothills

Shiloh Ballard, Executive Director, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

Other Attendees (Non-voting):

Colleen Haley, Bay Area Public Affairs Field Coordinator, California Special Districts Association

Joshua Hugg, Governmental Affairs Specialist, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Yoriko Kishimoto, Director, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (SCCSDA Alternate)

Neelima Palacherla, Executive Officer, Santa Clara County LAFCO



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SCCSDA Support Staff:

Domingo Candelas, Office of Government Relations, Valley Water

Roseryn Bhudsabourg, Office of Government Relations, Valley Water

B. Public Comment

Opportunity for members of the public to make comments or ask questions (3 minutes/speaker)
None.

C. SCCSDA Guest Presentation

Panel Discussion: *How the intersection of special district and nonprofit services can leverage resources and provide benefits to our constituencies.*

Brian Schmidt, Legislative Advocacy Director at Green Foothills:

Director Schmidt gave a five minutes presentation on Green Foothills, an organization that advocates for open space and natural resource protection in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Green Foothills engages in local land use issues and educates decision makers and community leaders. Director Schmidt described how Green Foothills is committed to supporting the environmental activism of marginalized communities, and it currently partners with the Alma Mutsun tribal band to protect the sacred landscape called Turistac from a proposed sand and gravel mine. In addition, Green Foothills has established an 8-month community advocates leadership academy to train diverse groups of environmental activists. The program began in 2015 and has had over 200 participants (at least 20 graduates per year).

In terms of advocacy, Green Foothills has worked with the state to protect wildlife in Coyote Valley and are now focusing on protecting farm and ranchland from urban sprawl. They are also working to stop development in high-fire areas, and have recently stopped a major hotel in Saratoga. In San Mateo County, they will be organizing to bring back tidal wetlands and to halt development of the area between the Water Pollution and Control Plant, which is a habitat that is close to creeks. They note that they are relevant to any district related to open space, and they want to stay in touch with the districts to support and monitor their environmental efforts.

Shiloh Ballard, Executive Director of Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition:

Director Ballard gave a presentation on the activities of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. She explained that their mission is to improve the community, economy, and environment through normalizing the everyday use of bicycles in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The group advocates for bike-friendly city designs and has commissioned several public opinion studies. She presented data from one of these studies and explained that even though roads are unsafe (40,000 people are killed in car accidents per year), most people choose cars because they provide the fastest transportation. Director Ballard also explained that the number one reason people do not choose bikes is safety, but that people do report feeling safe when riding bikes on trails. Consequently, the Coalition has been focused on legislation that will make roads feel more like trails by expanding bike lanes and bike infrastructure. The Bicycle Coalition has been working with the VTA on Measure B and implementing adult education programs to make people feel safer. They have also worked to expand access to open space and have encouraged kids to attend cleanups. They hope to continue their work with special districts in the future, but they also urge the special districts to act on their preferred issues. The Silicon



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Valley Bicycle Coalition plans to push Valley Water to provide more points for trail access and to lobby the VTA to allocate funds through a different formula.

Steve Holmes, Executive Director of South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition

Steve Holmes did not attend.

C. CSDA-Endorsed Business Affiliate Introduction

Urban Futures, Inc. Pension Advisory Services, Julio Morales

Julio Morales provided an overview of the pension advisory services he offers to the special districts. He explained that he is a financial advisor and endorsed affiliate of the CSDA, and he currently works with the City of San Jose. His service would help the special districts analyze and work through their pension liabilities. He explained how many agencies, including Valley Water, have large pension liabilities and high annual payments. He then described his services and business process. He would help agencies determine funding strategies and risks and then develop a plan to implement the financial policies.

D. State Legislative Office Updates:

Anurag Pal, District Director for Assemblymember Alex Lee (Assembly District 25) gave a quick update on Assemblymember Lee's upcoming emergency preparedness training that will take place on June 25 from 12-1:30 pm.

E. Business

1. Minutes: Page 2 (Discussion and Approval of March 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes)

Action: M. Wesolowski moved to approve, H. Chapman seconded; approved unanimously.

2. Financial Report: **Page 6** (Discussion and Action)

Action: L. LeZotte moved to approve, M. Wesolowski seconded approval; approved unanimously.

3. Officer Titles: Page 8 (Discussion and Action)

M. Wesolowski noted that the bylaws state that the names of the officers are President, Vice President, and Secretary Treasurer rather than Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer.

Action: S. Moreno moved to approve, M. Wesolowski seconded approval; approved unanimously.

4. SCCSDA Website (Discussion and Action)

S. Moreno explained that last year the membership created an ad hoc committee that set up form and content for a new website. The committee requests permission for the website to go live urgently because the host of the old website has suspended service, meaning the old website cannot be updated. The format, content, and administration of the new website will be discussed in the September meeting. S. Moreno also encouraged other members to take the Streamline training that is required to edit the website. The ad hoc committee will also have another meeting to finish the process of formalizing the website, and several more seats on the



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ad hoc committee are available. A request will also be sent out to update the roster. M. Wesolowski noted that several voting members have not paid their dues to the SCCSDA during Covid and reminded organizations to do so.

Action: SCCSDA unanimously granted permission to the website to go live.

F. Partner Agency Reports

1. Local Agency Formation Commission – Neelima Palacherla, Executive Officer Santa Clara

Neelima Palacherla stated that the SCCSDA received notification of LAFCO's adopted budget for FY22, which is 10% lower than the past year. She also gave an update on the Countywide fire service review. They have a consultant and have sent a fact sheet to the special districts. To increase its outreach to the community during the review, LAFCO is developing a website and will hold three community workshops around July and August. She thanked the cities and fire districts for participating in the study. LAFCO previously established a technical advisory committee composed of members from LAFCO, the Fire Chiefs Association, and the City Managers Association. The goal of the TAC is to serve as a liaison with the agencies and LAFCO and to provide expertise and guidance to LAFCO and the consultant, and TAC meetings are public.

2. California Special Districts Association – Colleen Haley, Bay Area Network Field Coordinator

Colleen Haley gave a legislative update on the Covid relief funding. Although CSDA made significant leeway in its first attempt at federal lobbying, the congressional bills and Senate companion bills did not pass. However, the federal government included the definition of a special district in its federal code for the first time, a significant step that will allow special districts to receive funding in the future. The federal government also granted transfer authority to federal, state, and local governments, meaning each of these governments can transfer federal funds to the special districts. After the American Rescue Act was passed, CSDA began to lobby every state legislative team in the state. CSDA was ultimately able to get state government to propose \$2 billion for all utilities, \$5 billion for water and wastewater infrastructure projects, \$250 million for relief funding, and \$3 billion for zero emission transit, which is around 20% of CSDA's ask. These apportionments represent all the funds granted, but they are available to special districts. Unfortunately, these grants left out funds for fire, healthcare, libraries, veterans, pollution, and open spaces, meaning these special districts were not allocated funds. The state assembly has proposed \$100 million in funding to special districts for their June 15 budget, and CSDA is working with special districts to determine their needs. They will then report these numbers to the California Department of Finance and the Governor's Office, who will create a plan to distribute the funds.

CSDA also reached out to Bay Area counties to ask if they had leftover funds and if they would sign a coalition letter in support of special districts being funded by the state. However, most counties have policies that dictate that it is not within their legislative platform to provide support for special districts or ask the state to do so. As of now, Alameda County is considering signing, and so far Assemblymember Evan Low, state Senator Becker, and Congressman Ro Khanna signed on to the letter. Currently, to be eligible for a piece of the \$100 million funding, special districts must demonstrate financial need. She noted that the special districts should not demonstrate their need with PPE costs, and should instead focus on the services they were



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unable to provide for communities due to the increased costs of Covid. In the future, CSCDA will focus on building relationships with legislators and County supervisors, and it hopes to potentially include some in these meetings.

G. Santa Clara County Special District Association Member Reports

1. Rancho Rinconada Recreation & Park District--- Steve Wesolowski

Steve Wesolowski said that his district is opening up and is preparing for further reopening on June 15. The district is now providing lessons and is reaching out to Cupertino to work together during the reopening.

2. Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) --- Linda LeZotte

Linda LeZotte reminded the SCCSDA that California is in an exceptional drought and the water district will be holding a special meeting on June 8. Valley Water will be asking Santa Clara County to declare a water emergency and will call on retailers to implement water use restrictions that will result in over 30% reduction in water use. She notes that the resolution attached to the district's Wednesday meeting provides further information. She wants to stress that this drought accelerated faster and more harshly than the last drought, and she reaffirmed that water conservation is way of life going forward.

3. Cupertino Sanitary District--- Bill Bosworth

Bill reminded the SCCSDA that the Cupertino Sanitary District operates a major sewage treatment plant own by Santa Clara and San Jose, and the district owns capacity rights. All of the sewage from the district flows into the plant, and with the increases in population, the district is approaching limitations on how much sewage they can send through the pipeline into the treatment plant. The district will have to come up with ways to increase capacity, and they are hoping to put new caveats into developments, especially since the state just ordered Cupertino to build 5,000 new homes.

4. El Camino Hospital--- Jonathan Cowan

John Cowan informed the SCCSDA that El Camino Hospital is continuing to run its vaccination site in North Sunnyvale that is open from 10 am to 4 pm and takes walk-ins between 9 am and 3 pm. In addition, another local vaccination clinic will start operating in June. He asked the other districts to forward him recommendations of groups who have not had enough access to vaccines, and he will conduct outreach to those groups.

5. Los Altos Hills County Fire District --- J. Logan

Logan notified the SCCSDA of a regional partnership between Los Altos Hills County Fire District, Central Fire, and the City of Palo Alto that will provide funding to allow fire crews to expand services at an underutilized fire station called Fire Station 8 in Foothills Park. The station will provide fire and emergency medical services during the high fire season starting June 13 through October 31. Suwanna Kerdkaew, the acting assistant chief, explained that Santa Clara County Fire and the Palo Alto Fire Department will alternate staffing the station, and Kerdkaew is going over expectations and coordinating between them. This station will help lower dispatch times to that area, which is more difficult to serve.



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6. Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District--- Pete Siemens

Pete Siemens noted that his district had finished up a major several year study of environmental documents relating to fire resilience. This study gives the district a structure for future and how it will conduct fire prevention activities that include forest-thinning and fire road clearances. They are currently working to increase their staff numbers in order to remove hazards in their property, and their new staffing models will take into account the fact that fire resiliency work has increased significantly. They are currently in a good position to apply for federal and state grants, and they will be doing many cooperative projects with the fire agencies in the future. They also notified the SCCSDA that remodels to the headquarters building in Los Altos are coming along on schedule, and they will be able to move in and have in-person meetings there during the spring of next year.

7. Santa Clara Valley Open Space District--- Helen Chapman

Helen Chapman reported that her district has entered a partnership with Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) and is managing two new properties in Coyote Valley. Tomorrow, the County Board of Supervisors will hear an item about the climate change overlay zone on the county level. The city of San Jose has already approved the overlay, so after the meeting both County and City policies will be in alignment. With this item, jobs would be passed out of Coyote Valley and into Diridon Station, and the district is also looking at the historical preservation of significant portion of land.

8. Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District--- Stephanie Moreno

Stephanie Moreno informed the SCCSDA that throughout last year, the district has worked on diversity and inclusion in all of their policies and procedures. They have acknowledged that environmental and social justice are at the heart of all of their policies, and the Board President asked for an update what other special districts doing. She will be reaching out to other districts about their policies. Secondly, they are going to reapply for Cal Recycle Farm and Ranch grant in August. The grant will allow them to provide illegal dumping cleanup services to special districts who have public land used or zoned for agricultural purposes. She informed the districts that her district could get funding to clean up illegal dump sites on their property, and she encouraged the districts to reach out.

H. Review of Action Items and Adjournment

By next meeting, the SCCSDA plans to have a working website up and running, and they invite others to join the ad hoc committee.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 13, 2021.