



Santa Cruz County Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

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Approved 4/30/2025
Citizens Oversight Advisory Board



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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 16th, 2025
5:30pm – 7:30pm
Regular Meeting

Simpkins Family Swim Center
Community Rooms
979 17th Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL** Meeting called to order at 5:36 PM by Elissa Benson, Assistant County Executive Officer (ACEO).

Present: Julieann "Julie" Howard (District 1), Dennis Webb (District 2), Sandy Brown (District 3), Julissa Espindola (District 4), Mark Correira (District 5), Scott Harway (City of Capitola), Rachel Dann (City of Santa Cruz), David Sanguinetti (City of Scotts Valley)

Vacant: City of Watsonville

Staff: Elissa Benson (ACEO), Jeff Gaffney (Director – Parks), Rebecca Hurley (Deputy Director – Parks), Dave Reid (Director – OR3), Juan Perez Alvarez (ASM – Parks), Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha (Admin Aide/COAB Liaison – Parks)

2. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

No agenda modifications.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

2 members of the public.

Regular Agenda

4. **County Staff and Board Member introductions.....** page 3.

ACEO Benson introduced the item.

County Staff kicked off the introductions with their position, department, their role and contribution to Measure Q and/or the COAB: Elissa Benson, Rebecca Hurley, Jeff Gaffney, Dave Reid, Kelly Mercer-Lebov, Peter Detlefs, Rob Tidmore, Tatianna Brennan, Juan Perez Alvarez, Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha

Advisory Board Members followed in order of districts and cities, alphabetically, providing a brief background of themselves and their roles/professional qualifications: Julie Howard, Dennis Webb, Sandy Brown, Julissa Espindola, Mark Correira, Scott Harway, Rachel Dann, David Sanguinetti, and Celeste DeWald.

Public Comment: 1 member of the public.

5. Consider and approve the Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board (COAB) Bylaws for submission and final approval by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors..... pages 4-12.

ACEO Benson introduced the item and passed it to Parks Director Gaffney to lead the discussion.

- Commissioner Dann asked whether suggested changes could be made during the review of the document or if County staff would consider amendments differently. It was explained that minor changes could be made by staff, while more significant changes would need to be addressed by the Board over multiple meetings. It was noted that the Board should consider adopting key parts of the framework.
- Commissioner Dann proposed edits to sections relating to Article III: Purpose, removal of the last sentence in IV.2(2.1), and changing the month to April in VIII.8.1(1.1) based on the Advisory Board's meeting schedule.
- Commissioner Correira raised concerns about how the citizen oversight board is characterized in relation to the departments (OR3, Parks, Board of Supervisors), suggesting that a different term might better describe the relationship. It was clarified that the board's function is to advise the Board of Supervisors and citizen representatives.
- Commissioner Correira also asked how the Advisory Board would collaborate on and act upon its purpose of approving a five-year plan, and whether they would have an opportunity to provide input. Staff clarified that the County intends to create an inclusive and collaborative process involving both stakeholders and the Advisory Board.

Further discussion included:

- Commissioner Dann asked whether the vote threshold for amending bylaws in Article X: Bylaws 2(2.1) should be 2/3rds. After some discussion it was decided that staff would reconfirm with County Counsel what the requirements are for this body.
- Commissioner Howard asked for clarification on who the term "Director" refers to in the definition of "Excused." It was clarified that both Director Gaffney and Director Reid may be contacted under that title.
- Commissioner Howard also asked about the meaning of "headquartered" in Article IV.1(1.1)(h.iii). Staff clarified that it refers to having both a primary presence and mailing address in Santa Cruz County.
- Commissioner Howard asked about the pros and cons of including a specific reporting date for the Advisory Board. Staff noted that due to timing, the July 1st deadline referenced in the Measure Q language may not be feasible and that funding flow also affects timing, and funds may not be available until FY26.

The group reviewed proposed changes, including:

- (1) Adding a sentence to Article III: Purpose
- (2) Removing the last sentence in IV.2(2.1)
- (3) Changing the month to April in VIII.1(1.1)
- (4) Checking the vote requirement (2/3rds vs. 7/9ths) in Article X.2(2.1)
- (5) Adding a definition for the term "Director"

Public Comment: 1 member of the public.

Motion to approve bylaws with changes listed by County Staff, with additional direction to inquire about the supermajority number for the amendment of bylaws: Sandy Brown/**2nd**: Mark Correira/All in favor.

6. Elect Chair and Vice-Chair page 13.

A nomination was made to have Commissioner Dann serve as Chair. Commissioner Correira volunteered to be vice-chair.

Public Comment: 1 member of the public.

Advisory Board discussed the suggestion of equity in the officer roles. Commissioner Espindola volunteered to serve as Vice-Chair.

Motion to nominate Rachel Dann as Chair and Julissa Espindola as Vice-chair: David Sanguinetti/**2nd**: Julie Howard/**All in favor**.

Meeting is now being led by Chair Dann

7. Consider and Approve Measure Q COAB Meeting Schedule through April 2026 pages 14-15.

Director Reid reviewed the meeting schedule for the COAB and stated that the COAB would meet more often this year during the development of the five-year plan.

- *Commissioner Brown asked whether a June meeting would need to be scheduled, given the July deadline for the Vision Plan.* Staff shared that the development schedule for the five-year Vision Plan would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting on April 30th. It was noted that June is currently expected to be a working period focused on stakeholder involvement and community outreach, but County staff does not anticipate the Vision Plan being ready by the July 1st deadline.

Motion to approve meeting schedule: Mark Correira/**2nd**: Sandy Brown/All in favor.

8. Roles and responsibilities of the Measure Q COAB page 16.

ACEO Benson presented an overview of the roles and responsibilities of each Advisory Board member and explained the purpose of Measure Q, the Advisory Board selection process, the intent of the five-year plan, and provided a brief overview of anticipated funding allocations and eligible project types.

- *Commissioner Correira asked how multiple anticipated requests for matching funds would be evaluated.* Staff shared that this would be addressed during the development of the vision plan and there is currently no established process in place.
- *Commissioner Brown asked, given that the Advisory Board will not participate directly in the grant process, whether they would still be briefed on the matrix or criteria for the grant and matching program.* It was shared that the County intends to provide that information and will seek feedback from the Advisory Board.

9. Review application and select the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner pages 17-24.

a. Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Director Gaffney introduced the item and read the Staff Report included in the Agenda Packet.

- Two Commissioners asked questions:
 - *How long is the partnership?* 5 years.
 - *Is it possible to get a list of the 18 local and regional organizations that were invited to apply?* Amah Mutsun Land Trust, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, Resource Conservation District, Peninsula Open Space Trust, The Trust for Public Land, Santa Cruz Mountain Stewardship Network, Save the Redwoods League, Sempervirens, Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewardship, Ventana Wilderness, Esperanza Community Farms, County Park Friends, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, Regeneracion Pajaro Valley, Sierra Club Ventana Chapter, Groundswell Coastal Ecology.
 - *Of the 18, how many were qualified for this role? Did any of those apply?* Three organizations that were thought could be a potential Land Stewardship Implementation Partners. The County had 2 applicants – Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and Groundswell.
- Commissioner Correira: Commented that he was not surprised that the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County was the one being put forward because they were key in writing Measure Q legislation.
- Commissioner Webb: Does not find the selection odd considering the scope of the Land Trust involvement, the geographic diversity of the organizations footprint, and their alignment with the mission of the Measure Q language. Would be supportive of the partnership.

Land Trust Conversation:

- Eric Lombardo – Thank you for reviewing the application and asking questions about the partnership. Land Trust of Santa Cruz County has been around since 1978, operating as a 501(c)(3). He spoke to their 3 pillars of biodiversity and habitat protection, public access and connecting people to nature, and preserving working lands. The organization, through this partnership could benefit the entire community of Santa Cruz County.
- Bryan Largay – Conservation Director of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. Spoke about some of the land stewardship programs the Land Trust does such as Biodiversity Programming, Public Access Trails Program, Working Lands Program.
- Commissioner Dann: What is the Land Trust's past experience with wildfire resilience?
 - Most recent experience was in Scotts Valley/Ben Lomond doing prescribed fires to treat Sandhills, which is a fire dependent ecosystem. In 2021, they a prescribed fires training burn on their ranch in Watsonville. They also work collaboratively with CalFire on shaded fuel breaks on various properties.

Motion to accept application and select Land Trust of Santa Cruz County as the Land Stewardship Implementation Partner: Dennis Webb/**2nd**: David Sanguinetti/All in favor.

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, April 30th, 2025

Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms.

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. The Simpkins Family Swim Center Community Rooms, located at 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA, are an accessible facility. If you are a person with a disability and wish to participate in the meeting and require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the Parks, Open Spaces, & Cultural Services Department at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. Persons with disabilities may request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.