

CAMBRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF PROS (Parks Recreation and Open Space) COMMISSIONERS  
February 5, 2013 – 1000 Main Street, Veterans Memorial Building

1A. Commission Chair Steve Kniffen called meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

Present: PROS Commissioners: Adolph Atencio, Tim Roche, Joyce Renshaw and Chair Steve Kniffen

Absent - Ben Bouldin (excused)

Parks & Recreation Liaison & CCSD Board: Gail Robinette

CCSD Staff: General Manager Gruber, Facilities Resources Supervisor Carlos Mendoza, and District Clerk Kathy Choate

Ex Officio Members: FFRP (Friends of Fiscalini Ranch Preserve) – JoEllen Butler

Absent: CUSD Lee Wight (excused)

Other CCSD Board members present:

1B. Established quorum of four commissioners present with Commissioner Bouldin absent.

1C. **Chair Report** – Chair Kniffen reported no report.

2A. **Ex-Officio Member Reports**

Friends of Fiscalini Ranch Preserve (FFRP) – JoEllen Butler reported on FFRP January annual strategic planning meeting. The regular FFRP board meeting will be February 20. Saturday, February 16 is a workday to pull invasive broom on backside of West Ranch. February 17, 10:00 – 12:00 is next docent walk, “Preserving the Preserve.” The wildflower Jepson manual is being revised to reflect families of plants by DNA and they are working on the nomenclature exchange on the description cards for identifying the plants shown during the wildflower show.

2B. **Coast Unified School District** – No report.

3. **Public Comment on Topics Not on the Agenda** – None

4A. **CCSD Parks and Recreation Manager’s Report**

General Manager Gruber reported the items he would discuss will be presented during the regular business section of today’s agenda and commented on his recent enjoyment of the docent mushroom walk on the Ranch.

5A. **Ranch Manager’s Report**

Status Report on Fiscalini Ranch Event(s) Policy regarding application fee. Facilities Resources Supervisor reported at the December 20 regular CCSD Board of Directors meeting the Ranch Event policy was approved with a request that staff work with PROS to recommend an application fee to recover staff time associated with events on the Ranch, which is on the regular business agenda today for consideration. It is recommended a \$100 application fee equivalent to two hours of staff time be considered.

Carlos reported 20 – 30 kids use the Skateboard Park on weekends; keeping it graffiti free and safe for kids. There is a local group of volunteers that want to do fundraising.

6. **Regular Business**

**A. Commissioner Renshaw moved to approve the December 4, 2012 minutes. Commissioner Roche seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1 (Bouldin)**

B. Discussion of Friends of Fiscalini Ranch 2013/2014 Goals and Objectives  
FFRP Director Jo Ellen Butler presented the 2013 Goals and Objectives approved by the FFRP Board of Directors. General Manager Gruber expanded on FFRP's short term goals 6, 7, 9, and 10 as being identified as goals CCSD PROS Commission could support as part of the 2013/14 budgeting process.

Listed below are FFRP Short Term Goals 6, 7, 8, and 9:

6. FFRP will work with and encourage the CCSD to create a plan to create a healthy and fire resistant forest on the Ranch, in cooperation with fire agencies and the Cambria Forest Committee

7. FFRP will control and reduce invasive plants on the Ranch

9. FFRP will implement their plan for maintaining trails that will minimize erosion

10. FFRP will submit at least two new grant proposals this year

PROS discussion followed.

**Commissioner Renshaw moved to support FFRP's short term goals as outlined. Commissioner Roche seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1 (Bouldin)**

C. Discuss and receive comments related to Open Space issues in Cambria.

**Public comment:**

John Colgan, member of Neighbors of Open Space. Requesting fence on Covell Ranch to come down. Read from PROS master plan and commented on trails through Bridge Street. He presented trail easements from real estate books that were established through the back of Leimert property years ago. The Open Space group is currently negotiating with CT Ranch regarding public access to the existing trails. The Nature Conservancy paid over \$4 million for the conservation easement. A meeting is scheduled for February 14 to meet with Supervisor and Nature Conservancy to reopen trails. The Nature Conservancy is tough to deal with and the Open Space group is hoping to prove there is a loophole in the funding of the easement; says no public access. Qualifying money states pedestrian and bicycle usage. Anything with a scenic value funded for \$1, since the property acquisition funded \$4 million plus it violates the spirit of the TEA grant. The docent led hikes to allow access on the Ranch and they are going after the loophole. They want to address prescriptive rights as to the conservation easement. Everything is in compliance with PROS Master Plan. Commented on the TEA grant enhancement guidelines #1 priority; provisions for pedestrians and bicycles. Acquisition of scenic or historic sites; subtitle scenic acquisition limited to \$1 million for this program. They have not retained counsel yet, they are having a mediation meeting with Supervisor Gibson and the Nature Conservancy. This is a required first step.

Madie Gracey, Cambria. They have contacted a Santa Barbara legal firm and consulted. They have not hired the firm.

Harry Farmer, Cambria. Has investigated with CCC and environmental defense center, FFRP and have provided guidelines to pursue.

Wayne Gracey, Cambria. Community was instrumental in attaining FFRP and would like Covell Ranch to be like FFRP; open to the public.

John Colgan, Cambria. The CT Ranch was hiked in 1950s, open for last six plus decades. According to conservation easement it cannot be grazed; the only legal fence allowed is between livestock and habitat.

Unidentified speaker. What is Nature Conservancy's funding?

John Colgan responded the Transportation and Enhancement Grant funding.

Commissioner Atencio asked if Mr. Colgan had knowledge of other public/private agreements. Any there any locally?

John Colgan – The agreements that do exist, many are for agricultural use.

Commissioner Atencio. If private/public agreement for trails and used for years, property owner would have to give permission into perpetuity. Have other areas worked that out?

John Colgan, Cambria. Referenced rails to trails system was once privately owned. Railroad gave up easement for trails system. Concept has been around for a long time.

Unidentified speaker -Previous owner allowed use of trails.

John Colgan, Cambria There will be an article coming out this Thursday regarding the issue. To date over 350 signatures right now in support of taking down the fence. Google Cambria trails petition to be sign the petition.

Harry Farmer, Cambria. John Fitzrandolph is writing an article for this week's Cambrian and New Times is planning to write a story.

Unidentified speaker. The barb wire fence is not friendly to wildlife. Anything in TEA grant funds regarding type of fencing? Six strands of barb wire hurt wildlife or it cannot get through. Use environmental defense fund. Build the ammunition to take the fence down.

Wayne Gracey, Cambria. The design of the fence is not what was recommended. Several strands with no barb wire on bottom to allow deer passing; two to three strands less than what was installed. Deer that once traveled behind his property are no longer there grazing. The original plan was a chain link fence. Quite a contrast putting in six barb wire fence. It is recommended four with two none on the bottom for passing of wildlife. Fence costs were \$94,000.

John Colgan has tried to reach Ralph Covell, left messages, he would not talk on the record. He is not going to be easy to deal with. It's private property and is going to keep fence there. He is angry with Nature Conservancy in that all interviews he thought would go through him and not the Nature Conservancy.

Commissioner Renshaw reviewed the 1994 PROS Master Plan. There is no mandate, but it did say we were looking at trail system and would finalize an easement which never happened. Had worked with previous owners and the access to trails was not finalized.

John Colgan. Confirmed that is correct.

Jo Ellen Butler. Is there any wildlife corridor language in the purchase agreement? Many purchase agreements mention that. Wondering what trails or trails you want to

keep open because there is a whole labyrinth of trails and does not think all would be successful.

John Colgan wants the entire network of trails, want the fence down. Feels that public has paid for it; 200 acres west of Bridge Street.

Unidentified speaker, Cambria. They have voluntarily maintained trails, pulling jenesta and want a win/win solution with Mr. Covell. They would exchange maintenance for access to trails.

Commissioner Renshaw. Commented on Mr. Covell's concern with safety and fires on the Ranch property.

Unidentified speaker, Cambria. He has seen one tree where homeless and drinkers hang out. With Ranch fenced off, no one can access. Vagrants will get in even if fenced. Public provides more protection, than if excluding the public.

Maddie Gracey, Cambria. Generations have used the area and there has not been a wildfire for over 100 years. Fence is a newer issue, trail users have been out there until the fence went up. If concerned about liability, back acreage is fenced off. If anyone playing and fall into that fence, that is a liability.

How is liability for FFRP handled?

Jo Ellen, FFRP. Fiscalini Ranch is publicly owned open space. Different from privately owned. Waivers are signed by volunteers to work on the Ranch. No control on walkers, so covered by public open space. As a private property owner, Mr. Covell would not be insured in the same manner.

Director Robinette why do we have one ranch open to the public? And not another? What does Covell propose to do with the property?

John Colgan – south of Montana de Oro owned by PG&E, with public access, has liability coverage.

Commissioner Atencio. The 1991 PROS Master Plan was a fact Cambria was a growing community and would need more recreational space. Goal was to establish enough of that space and use actively to have public/private partnerships.

John Colgan, Cambria. The most sophisticated thing that had happened with regard to recreation in Cambria. First organizational approach to PROS here in Cambria.

Commissioner Chair Kniffen. Stated he is not an environmentalist. Spoke with Mike, Nature Conservancy and is clear on their mission. Town has done other things not possible and could become nexus of whatever more comes. As we struggle to finance the Ranch publicly, it costs money to maintain the Ranch. What does that Ranch cost us. We have 400 acres and what does it cost? Does not think there is action PROS can take other than discuss and listen to the cause.

Commissioner Roche. Would like to be kept abreast via updates and what PROS' role is.

Director Robinette expressed appreciation to group for sharing and keeping CCSD informed.

Commissioner Kniffen stated the issue can be add to future agendas as needed.

General Manager Gruber asked if a PROS member should attend the February 14 meeting with Supervisor Gibson.

John Colgan, Cambria. They have been instructed to keep the meeting closed at this time. He would love to bring Supervisor Gibson and Michael Conner, Nature Conservancy Project Manager to town and discuss the fencing issue. Keep the dialogue open. Nature Conservancy is huge and does not need us.

Commissioner Renshaw suggested considering a presentation to NCAC.

John Colgan, Cambria. They need more information from Nature Conservancy before next step can be taken.

Harry Farmer, Cambria. Phelan family owned the land for decades and sold to CT Ranch. He has resided here 26 years. Everything was in East Village at one time, so people would walk from Park Hill (Hansel and Gretel Hill) to shopping and banking to today. It was an opportunity to communicate with nature in this hectic world. To see fence and masticator is disturbing to the natural access to the land. Nature is a gift to us. We should commune with nature, not fear based energy with fence being installed.

Approximately twenty public attendees.

#### D. Discussion to identify 2013/2014 PROS Goals and Objectives

Kniffen introduced. Gruber presented and requested PROS identify a few goals. As part of 2013/14 budget process that starts in February offer to support based on budget constraints to support those goals. Less goals rather than more goals.

1. Quantify budget \$ for the Ranch, what is Ranch costing us?  
Can government raise money and save money? Long term project, save money and pay for project.
  2. Route between Hwy 1 and Cambria Nursery, kids to junior high safely. Dirk Winter is open to talking. Steve will be personally working on a trail with Dirk. (safe route to school). Needs two crosswalks. Coming out of Nursery is dangerous.
  3. Moonstone Connector Trail finished with parking lot so it is safer. (Renshaw). Cherie and Gail worked on it when other part of trail done, received communication today regarding status. Bumper parking by Nick Franco so cars cannot go forward. Reminded him Sept 9 2012. Will sent another email to Nick Franco today and if not replied, will give him a call. Funding services will come from County, PROS involved for Coastal Trails and safety. Who owns property, part is County ROW. El Colibri loops from back around that way. They want it safe and looking good.  
Gruber – DG or boardwalk.  
Robinette – DG, pick this project up with Cherie/Carlos.  
Butler – State Parks did DG trail from Leffingwell, used CCCs to do that.  
Gruber – replaced stairs that were deteriorating.  
Roche
1. Dog Park – work closed with CCSD to create the necessary access and structure to move the dog park
  2. Develop and execute plan to rebuild dog park - \$50,000 – does not include the road (number would be greater based on recent dog parks established), using penal labor; 70% lower than CCC.

3. Based on timetable of first two goals, determine with CCSD present dog park location parking lot maintenance; figure out what the timetable is and what to spend at which location

Gruber – spoke with David Foote regarding amendments to EW Ranch Management Plan, he says no, moving it would not require an amendment. This would expedite the project. Has preliminary costs on DG, do all the way out to Burton, work collaboratively to fund.

Carlos – fix approach where currently located, solicited quote from contractor \$4,500 to fix the approach to driveway. No quotes for Rodeo Grounds for DG from point A to B.

Grading and drainage permit; excess of specific linear foot of DG, Foote would submit permit application. Does not feel there are environmental issues related to the creek.

Over time will relocate water yard to WW and create Facilities and Resource Dept at former Water Department.

Renshaw – sign at top of bridge regarding Community Park

Gruber – notify County end of lease agreement for yard.

Fire flow for residential system, smaller footprint, less obtrusive. Building will be conducive to look nice. What are we doing with Phillips house? Beyond repair?

Robinette – water yard office, is there enough room to have a FRRP office?

Gruber – currently two offices, he could probably work. Proposes keeping Vets Hall office as is. Get Ranch equipment inside, rather than sitting outside.

Butler, Phillips property is not part of the Ranch.

Renshaw

1. Sign for Community Park “Coming”; also place sign on Burton
2. Parking Lot – Maintenance
3. 4. Signage

Atencio

1. Map the trails and understand what we have; he has programs. Runkeeper that would map the trails (all CCSD trails), where CSD has jurisdiction.

Not sure trail map distributed is accurate. Covell Ranch is a big part of the trail loop. Robinette approached Erin regarding CCSD trail for bicycle event. Moved back to Covell Ranch.

Butler – Interesting as it relates to entire Coastal Trail; Strawberry Canyon has void. Map everything in CCSD and public ownership.

Robinette – great presentation to the Board

Chair Kniffen restated the goals.

1. Quantify the budget for the Fiscalini Ranch. What is the Ranch costing us from a short term perspective to operate and what will the Ranch cost the community long term?
2. Work on creating a safer route to Santa Lucia Middle School for children; the area between Hwy 1 and the Cambria Nursery. This would include working collaboratively with Dirk Winters and the County regarding the installation of two additional cross walks.
3. Complete Moonstone Connector Trail. This would be the small area starting from the end of the existing boardwalk on Moonstone Beach and connecting to

the recently finished trail that was completed on Moonstone Beach to Windsor Boulevard.

4. Create a timetable and associated cost to relocate the Dog Park to the Fiscalini East Ranch area. This would include parking, access, specific site location, and cost to include fund raising and community outreach and feedback as outlined by the Fiscalini Ranch Management Plan.
5. Improve and or add signage relating to the East Ranch. This would include a small sign on Burton Drive and one on Main Street adjacent to the walking bridge pointing to the East Ranch.
6. Establish a clear, easy-to-read, updated map for all of the designated trails that currently are part of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve

Adolph, Jo Ellen, and Carlos to map the dog park area to move the dog park.

**Commissioner Renshaw moved to accept as PROS 2013/14 Goals stated by Commissioner Kniffen. Commissioner Atencio seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1 (Bouldin)**

- E. Discussion and Consideration to recommend establishing a fee for application and costs associated with administration of Fiscalini Ranch Event(s) to CCSD Board of Directors. Commissioner discussion followed. An established fee would be for administration of application, not use of the Ranch. PROS discussion followed. FFRP is working on a draft as it relates to donations. One third of Dog Park funding comes from donations provided in donation box on site.

**Commissioner Renshaw moved to recommend establishing a fee of \$100 (two hours of staff time) for application and costs associated with administration of Fiscalini Ranch Event(s). Commissioner Atencio seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1 (Bouldin)**

7. **Comments, Concerns, Other Future Discussion Items - None**

8. Commissioner Kniffen adjourned the meeting at 12:03 PM.

**Next PROS Regular Meeting: April 2, 2013 at 10:00 A.M., Veterans Memorial Building, 1000 Main Street, Cambria**