

City of Brisbane

Agenda Report

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Open Space and Ecology Committee via Clay Holstine, City Manager

DATE: Meeting of January 5, 2009

SUBJECT: Open Space and Ecology Committee Report of Accomplishments

CITY COUNCIL GOALS: City Council Goals # 7 & 8.

PURPOSE: To keep the City Council informed about the activities of the Open Space and Ecology Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the attached report.

BACKGROUND and DISCUSSION:

In 2006, the Open Space and Ecology Committee prepared its first Report of Accomplishments to highlight the Committee's achievements. Its purpose is to encapsulate and document activities in order to track the Committee's progress and convey its work to the City Council and the public. This report covers initiatives and accomplishments that have taken place from spring 2007 through 2008.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING ISSUES

None.


Department Head
City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

Open Space and Ecology Committee Report of Accomplishments.

OPEN SPACE AND ECOLOGY COMMITTEE REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In 1998, the City Council established the Open Space and Ecology Committee as an advisory body to recommend policies and programs related to preservation of open space, resource conservation, and sustainability. In the ensuing decade, the Committee has worked on a wide array of ecological issues following a work program which is regularly updated. Below is a summary of the work the Committee has undertaken from spring 2007 through December 2008.

Open Space Acquisitions

Based on the priorities established in the Open Space Plan, the City purchased five more parcels of open space, bringing the total number of parcels acquired by the City to 41. The latest acquisitions -- Brisbane Acres unrecorded "lots" 75A, 76, 77, 94, and 97 -- total approximately 6.4 acres and have high open space and habitat value. Parcels 74, 76, and 77A in the upper Costanos Canyon are contiguous with SBM State and County Park. Parcels 94 and 97 in upper Firth Canyon are adjacent to City owned open space lands.

Vegetation Management Plan

In October 2007 and 2008, the City Council approved the 5th and 6th year vegetation management plans for invasive species control in the City-owned Brisbane Acres. The main priorities include follow-up work on previously treated areas, broom and eucalyptus removal, as well as vegetation mapping and oxalis control efforts.

Habitat Restoration Day:

In April 2007, the 4th restoration workday took place in the area near Quarry Road Park. The 5th stewardship day occurred in March 2008 in the area near the City's main water tank. These volunteer workdays, co-sponsored by the Open Space and Ecology Committee and the Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission, include the active participation of many Brisbane families.

Eucalyptus Removal:

A fourth and final year of Eucalyptus control work occurred in November 2008 on City owned parcels 78 and 82, as well as newly acquired parcel 77 above Paul Avenue in the upper Costanos Canyon watershed. This area had contained dense stands of eucalyptus trees that encroached on the native oak woodland ecosystem, and posed a fire hazard to the community. Follow-up work to control eucalyptus resprouts and saplings will be ongoing.

Open Space Report

The Open Space and Ecology Committee presented open space reports to the City Council on the status of open space resources in May 2007 and October 2008. The reports cover acquisitions to the City's publicly owned open space lands; the status of the Open Space Fund; the status of grant funds; strategies for acquiring and preserving open space; and vegetation management issues.

General Plan Amendment and Update

The Committee reviewed the 1994 Open Space Element and Conservation Element as part of the General Plan Update process. The Committee presented its recommendations for the Open Space Element update to the City Council in February 2007. The Committee then undertook a comprehensive review of the Conservation Element and presented a set of recommendations to the City Council in the April 2007. When the Draft General Plan Update is released, the Committee plans to review the document and make further comments.

The Committee also worked to develop new policies and programs for a General Plan Amendment to the 1994 Conservation Element. On November 19, 2007, Policy 143.1 of the General Plan was added in order to establish Green Building methods and practices and provide a foundation for the Green Building Ordinance.

Green Building Ordinance

The Committee formulated policy recommendations for a proposed Green Building Ordinance that would set sustainability standards for new commercial and residential construction in Brisbane. These recommendations were incorporated into an ordinance by the City Attorney. On December 17, 2007, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 524, adding a new Chapter 15.80 to Title 15 of the Municipal Code to establish Green Building Requirements. Brisbane is the first and only City in San Mateo County to have adopted mandatory green building requirements.

Baylands

At the 2006 joint City Council/Planning Commission scoping meeting, the Open Space and Ecology Committee presented its comments on the Baylands. The Committee proposed that the EIR study the feasibility of maximizing renewable energy, open space, and resource conservation, while minimizing negative impacts on the local, regional, and global environment. These goals form the basis for the Committee's central recommendation that any proposed project be evaluated in light of its potential to achieve ecological sustainability in the Baylands.

As a Baylands stakeholder, the Open Space and Ecology Committee was interviewed in May 2007 by the City's consultant regarding its perspectives on potential project alternatives. In June 2008, the Committee participated in a Joint Baylands Alternatives workshop with the Planning Commission and PB&R Commission. The Committee has also engaged in a discussion with the City Council Liaison Subcommittee about sustainability in the Baylands.

Star Awards

The Committee established an Open Space and Ecology Star Award for outstanding achievements in the following categories:

- 1) Conservation
- 2) Vegetation Management / Landscaping
- 3) Green Building
- 4) Pollution Reduction (air, water, noise)

- 5) Energy Conservation
- 6) Open Space Preservation
- 7) Solid Waste Diversion/ Recycling
- 8) Environmental Education

In March 2008, the Committee again submitted its Star Award nominations for outstanding ecological achievements that took place in 2007.

Public Education

Star Articles: The Committee published articles on energy conserving CFLS, solar energy, and water conservation in the Brisbane Star and City News.

Letters to Nurseries: The Committee sent letters to Lowe's Nursery and Sloat's Garden Center to request that they discontinue the sale of invasive plants.

Community Festival: Committee members staffed an information booth at the October 2007 and 2008 Community Festivals, offering educational materials and displays, in addition to distributing free compact fluorescent light bulbs.