

County of Sonoma

Agenda Item

Summary Report

Clerk of the Board Use Only
Meeting Date
___/___/___

Agenda Item No:

Department: Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

() 4/5 Vote Required

Contact:
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Board Date:
07/14/09

Deadline for Board Action:

AGENDA SHORT TITLE:

ACQUISITION OF A CONSERVATION EASEMENT OVER THE QUINLAN RANCH PROPERTY

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION:

Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District authorizing and directing the President to execute an agreement for the acquisition of a conservation easement over the Quinlan Ranch property (approximately 248 acres) for a total price of \$1,680,000; determining that the acquisition is consistent with the 2020 Sonoma County General Plan; authorizing and directing the execution of a certificate of acceptance; directing the preparation of escrow instructions; and directing the filing of a Notice of Exemption in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

<u>EXPENDITURES</u>		<u>SOURCE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS REQUESTED</u>	
Estimated Cost	\$ 1,680,000	Contingencies (Fund Name:)	\$ 000.00
Amount Budgeted	\$ 1,680,000	Unanticipated Revenue (Sources:)	\$ 000.00
Other Avail. Approp.		Other Transfer(s): Fund Balance	\$ 000.00
(Explain below)		Total Source of Funds:	\$ 000.00
Additional Requested:	\$		

Explanation (if required): **Funding will be provided by the 2007 Series A Measure F Sales Tax Bond Proceeds.**

Prior Board Action(s):

Alternatives - Results of Non-Approval:

Do not adopt resolution. Close of escrow to acquire a conservation easement over the Quinlan Ranch property will not occur.

Background:

NOTE: Conservation Easement, Certificate of Acceptance, Notice of Exemption and Appraisal are on file with the Clerk of the Board.

Project Summary

The District is proposing to acquire a conservation easement over the Quinlan Ranch property, which comprises approximately 248 acres. The proposed purchase price of the conservation easement is \$1,680,000. The conservation easement will protect a large livestock ranch and preserve the scenic viewshed along the Highway 1 scenic corridor.

Quinlan Ranch Property (District Five)

Acreage: 248 acres

2020 Sonoma County General Plan

Land Use: Land Extensive Agriculture, CC, 160/640 density; Rural Residential, CC, 5-acre density;
Open Space and Resource Conservation Element: Scenic Corridors and Scenic Landscape Units

Property Characteristics

The Quinlan Ranch property is located south of the town of Bodega Bay and contributes significantly to the rural open space character of the County as seen from State Highway One, Doran Regional Park and Bodega Head. The topography consists of steep to rolling grassland hills that slope to plateaus and large open meadows with spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean. There are currently no usable structures on the property. Improvements are limited to gravel and dirt roads, fencing, and partially developed springs, along with a hand-dug well, small stock pond and water trough for cattle. The property possesses features that make it well-suited for continued agricultural use, including soils consisting primarily of the Rohnerville loam series, which historically have been used in the coastal area for sheep and cattle grazing. The property, currently used for raising beef cattle and leased by the Furlong family, will continue to be leased to the family for livestock grazing. The surrounding area consists of large livestock ranches and the Bodega Harbour subdivision. The property is in the vicinity of the Carrington property, as well as the Colliss, Rigler, Gilardi and Bianchi properties, protected through District agricultural conservation easements.

Project Significance/Project Design

The project is the acquisition of an agricultural conservation easement over the entirety of the property. The majority of the property is designated Land Extensive Agriculture, CC, 160/640 density. The lower portion of the property directly off Highway One, approximately 17 acres, is designated Rural Residential, CC, 5-acre density. Additionally, there are three separate legal parcels through recorded Certificates of Compliance. The conservation easement will protect the agricultural, natural and scenic resources of the land and merge the legal parcels to one; designate the Mantua Gulch area as limited agriculture, providing for livestock grazing; and restrict structures to one single-family residence and associated residential and agricultural accessory structures within two 2-acre building envelopes.

Attachments:

1. Site Map
2. Resolution

On File With Clerk:

1. Conservation Easement
2. Certificate of Acceptance
3. Notice of Exemption
4. Appraisal

CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote:

Background (cont'd):

General Plan Consistency

Acquisition of a conservation easement over the Quinlan Ranch property furthers goals in the Agricultural Element of the Sonoma County General Plan by protecting lands currently in agricultural production, and lands with characteristics suitable for continued agricultural use. It furthers the goals of the Open Space and Resource Conservation Element, specifically policies for scenic corridors and scenic landscape units, by preserving the landscape along a scenic corridor and retaining the open, rural character of the Sonoma Coast, a vital scenic resource of the County.

Acquisition Plan and Strategic Plan

The Quinlan Ranch project fulfills policies in the Farms and Ranches category of Connecting Communities and the Land and in the Strategic Plan, including policies for the protection of agricultural lands vital to maintaining ranching and dairy operations, the linkage of large contiguous areas of protected agricultural lands, and the protection of lands important to local agricultural heritage. The project also fulfills policies in the Greenbelt and Scenic Hillside category including policies to protect lands that are visible from highly traveled roads and highways and that contribute to the county's rural character and sense of place.

Approvals

Expenditure Plan Consistency

On June 18, 2009, by Resolution No. 2009-010, the Open Space Authority determined that the acquisition of a conservation easement was consistent with its Expenditure Plan.

Appraisal Information and Purchase Price

A full narrative appraisal was conducted by Chris Bell of Appraisal Associates with a date of valuation of December 17, 2008. The appraiser determined that the highest and best use of the property before acquisition of the conservation easement was for development of up to six legal lots for rural residential estate use. After acquisition of the easement, the highest and best use of the property was for one legal lot for rural residential use with conservation easement restrictions. The appraiser concluded the estimated market value of the conservation easement to be \$1,860,000.

District staff reviewed the appraisal and concluded it meets the District's Appraisal Standards and Guidelines. The Open Space Authority reviewed and accepted the appraisal at its May 7, 2009 meeting. The District staff has negotiated a recommended discounted purchase price of \$1,680,000 for a conservation easement. The Quinlan Property Partnership accepted the offer.

Escrow/Closing

Close of escrow for the conservation easement is proposed to occur in late August 2009.

CEQA

The project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to State Guidelines Section 15317; and alternatively is exempt pursuant to Section 15325(b); and alternatively it is not a project subject to CEQA pursuant to Section 15378.