



CAMBRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2026, SPECIAL PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE (PROS) COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CAMBRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

A special meeting of the Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Committee of the Cambria Community Services District was held at the Cambria Veterans' Memorial Hall, located at 1000 Main Street, Cambria, CA 93428, on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at 3:00 PM

1. OPENING

1.A Call to Order

Chairperson Thomas called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

1.B Establishment of Quorum

A quorum was established at 3:01.

Committee Members present: Michael Thomas, Shannon Sutherland, Gary Stephenson, and Matthew Jaffe.

Staff Present: General Manager Matthew McElhenie, Facilities & Resources Manager David Aguirre, and Confidential Administrative Assistant Haley Dodson, with Rachelle Benjamin on Zoom.

Public Present: Shelly Vinatieri, Juli Amodei, Tony Church, Shelly Becker, Cheryl McDowell and Dick Clark. On Zoom: Laura Swartz, Crosby Swartz, Karin Argano, Kitty Connolly, Tina Dickason, and Elizabeth Bettenhausen.

1.C Chair Report – 3:01

Chairperson Thomas reported the following from recent CCSD Board meetings:

Harry Farmer was elected president of the CCSD Board on December 11. Karen Dean will serve as vice president.

General Manager McElhenie presented his 58-page CCSD 2025 Year-End Report, which Chairperson Thomas said provided a good summary of recent district events.

The Board heard a presentation from the San Luis Obispo County Regional Ecological Strategy for Improving Landscapes.

CCSD accepted a \$60,000 grant from the Cambria Tourism Board for the Veterans Hall renovations.

Strategic Planning Workshop will take place at the February 12 Board meeting.

Commended Facilities and Resources Manager Aguirre for calling attention to graffiti on the Center Street restroom mural; Cambria Center for the Arts artists repaired the damage to the mural.

1.D Agenda Review – 3:05

1.E Ad Hoc Subcommittee Report(s) – 3:05

Secretary Jaffe reported on touring the Community Park property to see the proposed placement of the 30 Monterey Pine trees received from Los Olivos. He also briefly discussed the local deer safety effort and the study that will be conducted this year.

1.F Committee Member Communications – 3:07

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS – 3:07

3. REPORTS & PROJECT UPDATES – 3:08

3.A Facilities & Resources Manager's Report, David Aguirre – 3:08

- 30 pine trees, roughly 6-7 feet tall, are being planted at the Community Park site.
- Crews performed repairs to a fence damaged by a falling tree near the Victoria Way entrance to Fiscalini Ranch Preserve.
- Graffiti remains an ongoing problem.
- Training staff for herbicide spraying. Will take place on East Ranch in work area.
- Repairs to the flooring at the Veterans Hall will begin. Work on the building's roof is dependent on weather. Met with JM Construction regarding renovations to the kitchen.
- Working to upgrade the locking systems for the dog park's gates. Current system is not adequate.
- The CCSO might receive another 50 pine trees next year.
- Greenspace president Karin Argano said she has received calls asking whether the pines that are being planted are native trees. Manager Aguirre said he was told they were Monterey Pines but there's a chance they're White Pine. Argano said that in the future, CCSO could reach out to Greenspace for Monterey Pines to ensure that native pines are planted.
- Kitty Connolly, executive director of Friends of Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, said the trees were originally described as being Monterey Pines and asked whether they are in fact Monterey Pines. Manager Aguirre said the paperwork indicates that the trees are Monterey Pines and suggested that he and Connolly take a look at the trees to confirm.
- Manager Aguirre responded to question about the restoration of handicap parking signage at the north entrance to the Bluff Trail and said it will be reinstalled once he receives the brackets.

3.B Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve Report, FFRP Executive Director Kitty Connolly – 3:17

- Thanked Manager Aguirre for the work on dry trail crossings along Dolphin Trail and Forest Loop Trail.
- Planted 300 Monterey Pine trees grown from seed collected on the ranch.
- Planted native plants to enhance monarch butterfly habitat.
- Gave credit to the "endless" and "thankless" weeding work done by volunteers and anticipates another really good bloom year on the ranch, in part because of the removal of non-native species.

- Annual meeting coming up on January 24.
- Expressed gratitude for a grant from the Cambria Tourism Bureau to complete the trailhead sign project.
- About 250 plaques have been dedicated on the new linking boardwalk.

3.C Skatepark Project Update Report, Juli Amodei – 3:20

- Described the success of the December 14 community event. A post on social media received 23,000 hits.
- Thanked Manager Aguirre for providing a generator and barricades for the event.
- General Manager McElhenie said there were no significant updates to the project effort. Waiting for engineering calculations. A draft RFP is ready and will go out once all required permit conditions are satisfied.
- Community member Tina Dickason raised a question about the April 11 expiration for the Skatepark's County Planning Department permit. Questioned the need for an extension. Monte Soto of Civil Design Studio said he was aware of the deadline.
- Amodei remarked that the organization is excited about the modified plan and new design for the Skatepark, especially the inclusion of a bowl.

3.D Friends of the Cambria Dog Park, Shelly Becker – 3:26

- Mentioned the need for shelter and water and raised a question about the status of the murals on the bathroom.
- Vice President Sutherland commented briefly about the mural project.

3.E Forest Committee, Laura Swartz – 3:28

- Mentioned that the monthly meeting on Zoom was taking place the next day.
- Expressed thanks for everyone's ongoing efforts.

3.F Greenspace the Cambria Land Trust, Executive Director Karin Argano – 3:29

- Annual 1,000 Tree Planting reforestation project with California State Parks is taking place on January 24. The trees were grown by Greenspace and Cuesta College. These trees will mark 8,000 planted on the site, with a total goal of 10,000.
- Busy at the native plant garden at Pocahontas Park and Creekside Reserve.
- Dealing with a lot of graffiti. In the process of installing new security lights.
- Speakers Series has started.
- Fuel reduction effort at Strawberry Canyon has ended. Sheep and goat grazing plan is being written.
- Planting understory plants in Strawberry Canyon.
- Four property donations are in process.
- Retreat will take place in February.

3.G Lampton Cliffs Adopt-a-Park Iceplant Removal Project, Suzanne Fiedler – 3:32

- Chairperson Thomas reported that ice plant removal and restoration continues.

3.H Reports from other Affiliated Community Groups

4. CONSENT AGENDA – 3:33

4.A Consideration to Approve the November 20, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Vice Chairperson Sutherland moved to approve the minutes.

Committee Member Stephenson seconded the motion.

The motion was approved: 3-Ayes; 0-Nays; 0-Abstain; 0-Absent

5. REGULAR BUSINESS – 3:33

5.A Community Park Phase 3 Planning Update

- General Manager McElhenie reported that the visual assessment required by the County will cost between \$1,200-\$1,500.
- Reported that Monte Soto has been in touch with the County. All Community Park features will need to be permitted, including potential lighting and accessibility requirements.
- Permitting costs could exceed \$8,000-\$10,000.
- Community Council still has \$29,000 dedicated to the disc golf course. Think it should cost less.
- Reiterated the importance of a Community Park maintenance fund.
- Vice Chairperson Sutherland raised a question about lighting, explaining that the original park plan didn't call for lighting because the park is supposed to close at dusk.
- Vice Chairperson Sutherland mentioned that the quote for the disc golf course was well under \$29,000.
- Soto reiterated that the County is requiring permitting for each park component.
- Vice Chairperson Sutherland raised a question about maintenance requirements and what components would actually be CCSD responsibility. She also mentioned the prospect of establishing a 501©(3).
- Vice Chairperson Sutherland drew a distinction between a “sports field” and a “playing field.” The park will include a playing field that the public can use for sports and games but this feature won't have the kind of grass that a true sports field would require.
- Chairperson Thomas said there might be an advantage to permitting each component of the project and then proceed with separate development of the individual elements.
- Soto said there was likely a three-year window to complete the individual projects once the permit is approved.
- Chairperson Thomas said one of the important future conversations will center on the exact nature of the maintenance that needs to be funded at the Community Park.
- FFRP Executive Director Connolly said that her understanding is that the park EIR doesn't require night lighting and only might require lighting that remains on for roughly half an hour after sunset.
- Vice Chairperson Sutherland raised a question about signage for the Community Park and asked whether it would be possible to establish a Community Park sign that would raise awareness. She also brought up the idea of naming the park and thought it would be helpful to have an informational board featuring the name of the park.
- Vice Chairperson Sutherland reiterated that the park, while not fully developed, does exist and is not merely a proposal.
- Chairperson Thomas said that these suggestions could be brought to the Board level.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – 3:53

Chairperson Thomas asked for any future agenda items. A discussion ensued about changing the starting time for future meetings to 3:00.

7. ADJOURN – 3:57

Chairperson Thomas adjourned the meeting at 3:57 p.m.