

APPROVED APRIL 14, 2016

MBCA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

*Thursday, March 10, 2016*

5:00 – 7:00 PM, Yucca Valley Community Center

**Regular Meeting Call to Order: at 5:10 PM**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruth Rieman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Claudia Sall (arrived around 5:40)
<input type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seth Shteir
<input type="checkbox"/> Meg Foley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington	<input type="checkbox"/> Marina West

**Introduction of Guests, Board Directors, and Advisory Members**

**Agenda Input and Approval** - At Seth's request, the Board agreed to add 2 items under Old Business/Conservation Issues: #7 - Eagle Crest Pumped Storage and #8 - Eagle Mountain Boundary Study.

**Approval of Minutes from Feb. 11, 2016**

***Ruth moved approval of the minutes, Laraine seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.***

**Treasurer's Report – Steve**

Steve provided summary data. We have \$43,281.58 on hand divided between the Checking account (\$21,995.47) and the CD (\$21,286.11). We've had several membership payments including some extra donations. The 50/50 share of expenses with CDC for the January meeting comes to about \$1000 each. We joined the Desert Protective Council (\$30.00). The Board accepted the Treasurer's report.

**NEW Business/Issues/Possible Action**

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) Finance Committee report: policy & plans - SB, MW, RR

At a recent Finance Committee meeting of Ruth, Claudia, Marina, and Steve, Directors and Officers insurance (D&O) was researched and the choices from Williams Insurance were either \$800 for a half-million dollar coverage, or \$1000 for one million dollar coverage. ***Steve moved that we purchase the \$1000 policy; the motion was seconded and was unanimously approved.***

We have also received a general liability insurance quotation from Williams Insurance that covers all public meetings we might sponsor for \$553 plus a one-time \$100 broker fee, for a total of \$663. Two days of Liability insurance just for the Landscape Tour would be \$400. Steve spoke to the YV staff in charge of renting the facilities and learned that they do not carry insurance for us; the same holds true for the Joshua Tree Community Center. ***Ruth moved that we purchase the general liability insurance for \$663 from Williams Insurance. Seth seconded, and there was unanimous agreement. Ruth also suggested that we should get a printed certificate of insurance to show facility staff at YVCC and JTCC when we schedule their facilities.***

Steve gave Marina 2015 financial data to put into a spreadsheet for a base budget. We can then extrapolate for this year's budget. Insurance would be a new item.

The Finance Committee also discussed the Ruth Denison scholarship. Various titles for it were proposed, including: Ruth Denison Conservation Scholarship; MBCA Ruth Denison Scholarship; Ruth Denison Environmental Conservation Scholarship. Marina has provided a scholarship form as a template. Laraine would like to be a part of it as she has experience working with scholarships. We decided to begin offering it next year with an information campaign starting in the fall, and agreed on our previous commitment to provide it annually for 5 years to see how it goes. We should collaborate with the appropriate administrator in the Morongo Basin School District to implement it.

Other policies are being reviewed and *Steve will send them out between now and next month* and hopefully we'll finish them next month.

Steve also noted our AWAC grants for \$5700 last year, a purchase order against which we can invoice anything related to desert wise living for 2015-2016.

The Edison grant of \$1000 is also for 2015-16 and we can invoice against that as well. Claudia has put in a request for a 2016-17 grant from Edison.

Outreach / Communication → *Steve and Ruth please take a close look on my interpretation of your reports*

1) UC Riverside Solar Conference, 2/25/16 report - SB, CS, RR attended.

Ruth read her summary review. Advancing technology may be getting us toward GHG reduction. "Follow the money" is an important concept and Ruth heard that the banking industry and Wall Street and government legislation are all moving forward toward renewable technology. Tom Hudson and some of his staff were there, as well as the Aspen Consulting (SPARC) people. They met some key folks we might use later.

Steve added that there were academic presentations as well as industry and hands-on sessions. Karen Douglas was there. Tom Hudson and the consultants spoke of social environmental concerns being paramount in the planning process. *(Did I get that right?)* Another takeaway is the importance of battery storage and need for to use it wisely. There is some overproduction of solar, e.g. Anza electric maxed out; during midday it's putting out more power than they can use. There is an issue about using the extra power. IID suggested that they're going to cut off any expansion of their solar. The cost is less than coal now. Steve met someone who works on coatings for solar panels who hadn't heard about the avian mortality issue. Steve informed him and sent him some informational links that Laraine and Pat provided. Dennis Michael, the mayor of Rancho Cucamonga, reported that they had streamlined solar permitting to 2 hours. *(Is that right?)*

Ruth noted we had 50% renewable energy back in 1950 because of hydropower!!

2) Joshua Basin Water Distr's Water Education Day, Sun. 4/3/16, 1-4PM – CS – NO.  
Claudia felt that this is not an effective venue for selling Tour tickets.

Conservation Issues

1) Marines plan move of 1,400 tortoises from 29 Palms Marine Corps training expansion area (Johnson Valley) to federal land SE of Barstow (Ord-Rodman critical habitat area); relocation needs final approval from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - SK

We wondered why this didn't seem to come up in the earlier negotiation.

2) Harrison House Music and Arts adds "Ecology" name / first major event to host three-day permaculture lecture in April (see Community Reports below.)

This information is on our home page calendar.

### **OLD Business/Issues/Possible Action**

#### Conservation Issues & Updates

1) NextEra proposed JT Airport solar project: JBWD denies will-serve letter – DF

David clarified that the denial is of the amended letter, saying they can't do it in summer due to volume of water and there can be no service to this project until after drought restrictions are lifted (first possibility in October 2016). NextEra has a very old PPA, bought from British Petroleum in 2011. It was sold to them for \$130/megawatt hour and that's higher than what they would get now. The deadline is the end of this year. If they don't start by then, they lose the project. They threatened to drill their own well. The Planning Commission hearing will be in April. They know it will be appealed. If they don't have all permits by July it's a dead project.

David noted that the Water District Board members who voted for offering the will-serve letter were basing it on caution for the viability of the District, not in support of the NextEra project.

2) NPS funding / Centennial Challenge: sign on letter + plan to demonstrate desert stakeholders want more funding for the NPS Centennial period – SS

We signed onto NPCA's letter. Seth said that Senate and House committees have a bill and there are other bills in Congress, and opportunities to support those bills will be happening this spring. We may get requests to support and will do so.

3) Alta Mira Housing project: March 17, 2016 goes before Planning Commission w/ requested CUP for the construction of Sewer Package Treatment Plan – SK for PF

Pat alerted us to this, and David pointed out it was on very short notice. The Staff report is supposed to come out tomorrow (3/11) and therefore there's less than a week to review it. David is working on a resolution for the MAC, rewriting and updating the one Pat wrote a year and a half ago. Terra Nova is their consultant. They wanted a 20-year will serve letter, but JBWD only gives 1-year letters. Again, the drought mandate pertains, although they already have the permits.

We discussed regional sewer treatment issues and how Terra Nova's approach of building a small number of houses at a time with "package plants" is problematic. Joshua Basin has sewer authority and a designated area in central Joshua Tree (sewer escrow is paid), but of course that's a long way off.

David noted that video conferencing for the Planning Commission meeting next Thursday is set up thanks to Mark Lundquist. In 2006 they received a mitigated negative declaration, so there was no EIR. There is NO MENTION of the Joshua Tree Community Plan, nor of the Park, in their plans, and just one mention that it's a gated community. *Sarah will send an Eblast urging supporters to attend the Planning Commission meeting on March 17.*

4) SPARC Forum: *March 16 @ JT Community Center, 6-8 pm* to report “significant progress” made in PHASE 2 since October 2015.

Claudia and Ruth were invited to a pre-meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup> intended to seek input about the March 16 meeting. Ruth said they’re zeroing in on what they learned from the public and now will define and focus on community-oriented energy, issues of local production and local consumption. They will review SPARC’s first round and will focus on “what are the solutions.” There were quite a few of our allies at the meeting (Pat, Chuck, Lorrie, Carol Miller, Carol’s boss). Ruth and Claudia are encouraged about the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

5) Cook’s CA. Minerals, Off-Road Recreation and Conservation Act compared to Feinstein’s CDCRA– SK w/ report from Frazier.

Sarah was on a phone conference and people thought probably neither bill would make it through. Sierra Club hasn’t endorsed either of Feinstein’s bills. Seth thinks Cook’s bill may be reintroduced but doesn’t have details of either yet. Mining issues are the focus.

6) YV Planning Comm.: Mesa Verizon cell tower + subdivision commercial lot, hwy 62

This was on the YV Planning Commission last week, but they didn’t have a quorum and therefore no decision was made. But they’re working with people on the Mesa and considering creative ideas.

7) JBWD ratepayers meet water conservation target: *June 2015 – Jan. 2016*

8) *added: Eagle Crest Pumped Storage.*

Seth said that BLM is getting protests about the DRECP, especially the ACECs, some of which were inappropriately selected. So there will be a reopening of the comment period. Teri Raml (BLM) said they aren’t going to address Eagle Crest until after the DRECP 60 day extended comment period and after those issues are resolved. The EA for Eagle Crest will be 45 days but there will be no public meetings. They don’t think they have to do an EIS. Transmission line is the issue. FERC EIS was challenged by Interior that it was inadequate and inaccurate, but BLM is still relying on it. *NPCA will be generating advocacy; Seth will alert us.* The line goes along south side of Park, 12 miles from the project to I-10 transmission lines.

9) *added: Eagle Mountain Boundary Study.*

Will be posted in the March 15 Federal Register. Of the 32000 acres, the best alternative is a return of 28,000 acres. The EA will highlight the alternatives. There will be a 30 or 45 day comment period and public meetings. For the land to be returned, two processes are going on at same time: 1) NPS process (the boundary study) reviewing the feasibility of returning lands; and 2) at the same time, the “segregation” process that would withdraw land for 2 years while being studied and then returned to NPS. There will be 2 comment processes; the BLM process will be longer. Over 10,000 comments were received on the boundary study, the majority of them favorable for getting most of the land back. Neither has any effect on Eagle Crest project. DPS is fighting the right-of-way. *Seth will contact us when dates are set and we’ll set up a pre-meeting to re-inform people for the public comment meetings.*

#### Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) MBCA & YV Earth Day event: Sat., April 16, 9AM-2PM – CS

*LT will send out a request for help with table coverage; Claudia will staff the Tour registration table.*

MBCA FINAL Minutes 3 10 2016

Page 4 of 6



2) MBCA DWL Landscape Tour Committee: report – CS, RR  
Claudia reported we received \$1000 from 29 Palms Water District for the Tour and she has for a contribution from Joshua Basin and Hi Desert Water Districts. Jennifer Poland of HDWD has offered to help with MBCA's Facebook.  
Claudia and the committee are still working on several Tour sites.

3) Website *mbconservation.org*: report – LT  
Laraine handed out a report showing the current events calendar that she's keeping up on the Home page, and the new list of "recommended websites" that has been added.

4) MBCA Membership: renewal report – LT  
Laraine reported that at this time last year we had 46 paid memberships; today we have 86. It is uncertain whether we'll get as many memberships during Tour Registrations as we have in the past.

5) MBCA Emeritus Award: report – RR  
Ruth spoke to Esther and DJ, and Esther is excited to host us for a lunch. There are some scheduling difficulties all around, but we will try for the week of May 22-29. Claudia will see if Terri is available to cater, but she wouldn't have to be there; she could provide the food and we could pick it up. *Laraine will work on historic summaries and certificates for the event.*

6) MBCA Advisors Board: plans to refresh & restart – SK. **Tabled.**

7) Basin & Range Watch Energy Symposium, Morongo Basin: update – SK  
They haven't provided any new information.

#### Outreach / Communication

1) LaurenElloftheHiDesert.com / Desert Peace Symposium, 2/28, Beatnik Lounge ([laurenellofthehidesert.com/desert-peace-symposium-brings-community-together/](http://laurenellofthehidesert.com/desert-peace-symposium-brings-community-together/))-SK  
Sarah made a presentation to an eclectic group and pictures were posted on Lauren Ell's Facebook site that included Sarah and Steve.

#### Community Reports & Events

1) **Science Campus report** – SS, SB  
Steve reported they're trying to get the committee back together. The land being considered for the campus is owned by 29 Palms, and is contiguous with the Park.

2) **High Desert Water Summit** April 13? – "Predicting Our Future by Our Own Design: 2036, Optimization / Culture Change / Investment" –Barstow Community College Performing Arts Center, 7:15AM – 11:30AM, tickets: \$10. Register: [www.mojavewater.org](http://www.mojavewater.org)

3) **Harrison House - 3-day permaculture seminar** - Fri. April 15– Sun. April 17 w/free \$15 lecture on Friday; + hands-on instruction in sustainable gardening, composting, permaculture design, & related topics for ~~fee:~~ \$15 \$200. To register call 760-366-4712.

4) **MDLT Brown Bag Lunch Lecture Series** – new free public series w/ guest speakers, networking & conversations about desert conservation, land stewardship, wildlife, etc. Sat., March 26, 12-1:30 pm : Madena Asbell, MDLT's Native Plant Nursery Manager re. MDLT nursery's role in desert conservation & the community + plans for the new nursery with a walking tour of the nursery grounds following the presentation.

5) **BLM/USMC hosted public meeting** on April 2, 2016, 10:00AM-12:00PM - Marine Corps' plans to conduct a large-scale exercise in Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area: Aug.1-31, 2016. Info on temp land closures & public safety. Lucerne Valley CC

**Meeting adjourned 7:05 PM**

**Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, April 14, 5:00 PM / YV Community Center**