

MBCA Board Meeting **APPROVED** Minutes

Thursday, February 13, 2020 / 5:00 – 7:00 PM *** Mesquite Room Town of Yucca Valley Community Center

Regular Meeting Call to Order at 5:02 pm.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer (phone)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Lipsitz
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meg Foley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruth Rieman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marina West

Welcome to new Director Brian Hammer.

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Stacy Doolittle, MBCA event social media consultant

Agenda approval

After adding #9 to Conservation Issues (a recap of the Sierra Club Desert Committee meeting by Pat), Steve moved to approve the agenda, Marina seconded, and all were in favor.

Minutes from January 9, 2020 BOD meeting

Steve moved to approve the January minutes, Marina seconded, and all were in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Marina passed out current data and a profit and loss statement for 2019. We may have netted about \$1800. She is still preparing a 2020 budget. She estimated the annual meeting cost at around \$1475. There are still some invoices coming in and *Meg will submit an invoice for the cakes*. Marina also mentioned some confusion about the annual invoice for Green Info and will investigate. All costs associated with the Book are paid.

We have \$22,076.16 in the CD, \$29,565.34 in checking, for a total of \$51,641.51. We agreed to accept the Treasurer's report by consensus.

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) Business cards - Melissa Sabol re-design

Steve has acquired all of Dave Miller's past MBCA artwork. We discussed creating new MBCA business cards for Directors, including most preferring to have MBCA's email printed on the card (info@mbconservation.org) and allowing them to choose to give out personal emails (can be written on the back). Steve and Laraine keep an eye on incoming mail to the website and can answer or forward appropriately. We agreed to continue using the 50th anniversary logo including on the business card. *Mike will follow up with Melissa on card design.*

2) mbconservation.org / E-blasts / Social Media – Strategy presentation by Stacy Doolittle and Aimee Buyea

Aimee was unable to attend but had worked with Stacy on this social media strategy and budget review presentation. Key points included:

We need to tie posts to mission and goals, be clear on details, and keep content in alignment.

Organizational goal	Social media goal	Metric
Grow our brand	Awareness	Followers, shares, etc.
Create/inform advocates	Engagement	Comments, Likes
Increase membership	Conversions	Website visits/new members
Maintain membership	Satisfaction	Testimonials/sentiments, renewals

With social media we can encourage action, disseminate information and educate

Stacy shared some data from our Annual Meeting promotion.

Facebook: The cost per event response was \$.48. She encouraged Board members to do more commenting and/or liking. The after-event post with people photos reached 1445 people, with 217 engagements. Images of people always help. The audience on the after-event post was about 2:1 female/male, highest age categories 45-54 and 65+ (highest).

Instagram: It's still early but we have 102 followers, 30% in the 35-44 age group, 24% 25-34. Locations include JT, YV, LA. For Annual meeting promotion there were more women than men, and 65+ was the largest age group but there were more in the 35-44 age group than on Facebook.

Stacy will submit a budget on behalf of her and Aimee and we'll consider using the MBCA credit card instead of a reimbursement system for paying online "boosting" costs.

3) Grant status: DWL - Edison & AWAC – 2021 landscape tour? SB, MW

AWAC grant application is due March 28. Steve asked whether we should apply again and continue on a yearly basis. Laraine expressed a strong preference to apply again and continue annual tours than go to every other year (which had been proposed), and there was consensus for that. *Marina and Ruth will work on the grant.* AWAC provides the majority of our funding. Janet noted that the low cost of tickets is helpful to those on tight budgets as opposed to other local "tours." Ruth noted we're having better and better site examples, and more education content, and it seems we're beginning to gain a younger audience. *Laraine will send Marina the final reports on last year's tour. Steve will reach out to Jennifer Cusack to see whether or not we might have any chance for continued funding from them.* Sarah spoke about a San Diego landscape tour that pairs local artists with a landscape site, something we might consider in the future.

4) Air Quality Monitoring: CARB update. Location of Purple Air units - AM, PF

Pat has been talking to Resource Conservation District people; she responded to their letter and contacted a monitoring person, asking them to come and see the Hi Desert sites. AQMD is not doing anything helpful. Their stance is that PM levels are region-wide and they don't trust other sources.

Pat will be working with a 6th grade class at Friendly Hills and will try to get a monitor for them from AQMD, or we might have to buy it. Arch and Pat will continue to look for good venues for monitors. We further discussed the value of providing AQMD with information despite their reluctance to acknowledge or deal with our concerns, and agree that if we do so and show lots of data with problematic numbers, they should at least pay some attention and see that they should be monitoring other areas. Pat said AQMD currently has both "official" and Purple Air monitors at both the locations of interest to us, but more locations are needed.

5) Events Committee reports:

Annual meeting - Recap of annual meeting. Laraine handed out the evaluations summary. The number of attendees was close to 150. Evaluations were very positive. Steve's efforts to reach out with invitations seemed very helpful. Steve spoke about Utah's big advertising campaign for their Parks, and how problems resulted similar to our local sustainable tourism issues. We discussed Chris Clarke's comments about creating a campaign to inform visitors. Meg is on his list and will share when she learns anything new.

DWL Committee – Spring 2020 landscape tour planning. Advertising for landscape tour, reception conflict with JBWD water ed day. Marina said all sites are confirmed, Stacy and Melissa are working on the program, there's a committee meeting on February 20. We discussed the problems with the March 29 reception being the same as Water Education Day and discussed alternatives. Should we include SCE even though they're not \$\$ supporting us this year? *Steve will discuss with Jennifer Cusack the status of SCE support.* Bob Stephenson provided 2 CDs of his video; Laraine took one for the historical files.

6) 50th book: - Distribution list

Laraine handed out and reviewed a suggested list of priorities with a focus on making sure that people in the book, members, and other key people receive copies. Ruth mentioned and everyone agreed that Directors should each have some to pass out personally to appropriate people. We discussed more about what kind of public venues would be appropriate without “wasting” books. We will invite current and renewing members and people in the book to pick up their copy at either Earth Day or Water Education Day. We will need to “snail mail” some copies. Mike noted that there is a lower-cost media rate if we only send the book. *Sarah & Laraine will work on an overall plan for distribution. Laraine and Cathy will work on a specific email to non-renewed 2018 and 2019 members with the book offer.*

7) Ruth Denison Environmental Scholarship – Email List, Paper Mailing later

Meg had some ideas about getting the application in as part of the local school scholarship application system to provide wider access rather than just our specific application. The page is up on the website with access to the PDF application. Laraine thanked Mike for help with getting updated emails and addresses. *Laraine will send out the email PR.*

Conservation Issues

1) Solar projects

Daggett – Newberry Springs appeal-PF. Pat said the latest legal hearing will be at State Court on March 9.

Crimson Solar is closed for comments. The letter we signed on to with many other groups was excellent, written by Kevin and Laura of Basin and Range Watch. Pat said we will continue to work with them in similar situations and that they very much wished they could have attended our Annual Meeting.

2) Countywide Plan & Community Action Plans - SB

Janet hasn't found any updates. Steve referenced Attorney General Becerra's letter criticizing the lack of environmental justice focus. Pat said there's a County study on environmental justice but it's not part of the Countywide Plan. There have been continued delays over many years.

3) Cadiz water harvesting proposal – SB

Pat said the new director for BLM in California has written to Cadiz saying they can go forward. But California passed a law requiring an EIR which should be a road block. We heard from Chris Clarke at Annual Meeting that there are fiscal problems for Cadiz.

4) Dark Sky ordinance – ordinance update SB

Steve still hasn't seen the draft that has supposedly been prepared and reminded us it will only address light trespass, not lighting levels. We also have questions about lumens in the new street lights in Morongo Basin.

5) Scenic 247 - SK

Sarah reported that after a recent meeting it's becoming clear that the parts of the highway fronted by communities cannot be part of the designation. David suggested it will probably start at mile post 4, outside of YV limits, through Pipes Canyon, stop at Flamingo Heights, begin again after the Landers sign, then go through Johnson Valley and Lucerne Valley. It will require a lot of signs! The focus is on natural scenic beauty, so any/all development is limiting. Sarah thinks LUS will be OK with the eventual proposal. It is already a (state) County Scenic By-Way. Sarah added that the new Countywide Plan has dropped a lot of protection for such things, and they become unfunded mandates.

6) Eagle Mountain pumped storage –DF

Nothing new.

7) NEPA revisions comments

March 10 is the deadline to respond to the proposed federal changes. Janet noted there was a helpful [recent NPR story](#) about this. *Janet will draft or find content for an MBCA comment letter, making at least broad statements in opposition. Meg remembered a coalition that signed a similar letter last year, and she'll let us know if she finds something helpful.*

Outreach & Communications

1) CMC SLR – RR, SB, LT

We received a communication from Sandy Smith that CMC personnel have met again with Schneider Electric and we are now communicating with Alfredo for a March meeting. Ruth briefly reviewed the legacy of SLR's bequest to the college. We're suggesting they use the SLR funds as seed money to get additional funding for the right kinds of projects including storage and microgrids.

2) MAC - SB, PF

The Governor reappointed Dawn Rowe as Supervisor.

3) Chambers of Commerce –SB, PF

Steve noted we joined both YV and 29 Palms chambers, and was disappointed in receiving no response from YV about our annual meeting. Pat suggests we join the Joshua Tree National Park Association in order to get a discount on books that she wants to buy for the school classes she's involved with. Pat thinks it might be about \$200 to fully fund one class library and add to the other that we've already provided with some books. We discussed eventually doing this on a broader basis, maybe with the Denison money after we finish our commitment to provide scholarships for 5 years. *Marina moved we grant \$200 toward purchase of books by Pat and buy a \$50 membership to JTNPA. Steve seconded, and all were in favor.*

4) Short Term Rental ordinance-local housing shortage-JJ

There was a recent [LA Times article](#) on our issue. People aren't getting permits because the County is doing extreme enforcement, being very nit-picky. There's a huge online dialogue about this. Brian added there was a piece on KPCC public radio about the issue.

5) JBWD water education day 3-29-20 - SK

Sarah, Laraine, and possibly Stacy and Pat will cover this.

6) Follow up on MBUSD on solar install is it saving \$\$\$? JJ -- Table this for the next meeting.

7) Recycling what really happens to our recyclable? JJ -- Table this for the next meeting.

8) Support for Friendly Hills Elementary PF

Discussed in item 3.

9) Pat recap Desert Committee -- Table for next meeting.

Letters signed onto:

Letter of recommendation for Angelina Galiteva; Letter of comment re: Crimson Solar Thanks to Basin and Range Watch; Eagle Crest opposition letter

Adjourned 7:10 PM

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, March 12, 2020, 5:00 – 7:00 PM

YV Community Center / YV Community Center / Mesquite Room