

MBCA BOARD MEETING

DRAFT Minutes, Thursday, March 20, 2020 / 10:00 am
Via Conference call - 605-313-4179 Access code 630592

Blue Italics = action commitment

Black Bold Italics = Board vote

Red = LT's questions in draft minutes

Regular Meeting Call to Order:

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

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Aimee Buyea & Stacy Doolittle, Social Media Consultants

Agenda approval

Ruth asked to add the topic of her recent communication with Cindy Zacks, and Pat asked to add a discussion about food bank support. ***The revised agenda was approved unanimously. (11-0)***

Minutes from February 13, 2020 BOD meeting

Ruth moved to approve the February minutes. Meg seconded, and all were in favor. (11-0)

Treasurer's Report

Marina reported a total bank balance of \$21,665.26, with the CD balance at \$22,551.57. *She will work toward providing a more complete report hopefully next week. Steve and Marina will call a Finance Committee meeting soon to create the budget.*

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

(Added) Pat regarding food bank support.

Pat is concerned about the effect of COVID-19 circumstances on local food banks. Supervisor Rowe's representative Mark Lundquist informed Pat about plans for a new food distribution hub at the old Joshua Tree Elementary School. While it's still in the planning stages, the goal is to have a central Morongo Basin source for local food pantries, rather than numerous local pantries having to travel to San Bernardino or Indio to pick up food. They are waiting for estimates on reconfiguration of the facility. Pat wishes MBCA to consider supporting our communities through this project, possibly creating an online fundraiser. Janet and Meg spoke of other food pickup programs and that it's important not to duplicate effort. While there is nothing to do immediately, *Pat will pursue this with Mark, Vala Stults (CMC faculty and project coordinator) and Supervisor Rowe. Janet is interested in helping, as are our social media consultants Aimee and Stacy.* Steve emphasized the need to keep in touch with Mark.

1) Board of Directors Information Handbook-LT & All

Laraine went over the changes she has made since last sending out the Handbook and will send an update. Steve proposed adding a person to the Letter-writing/Document Review committee due to how often a short-notice response is required. He suggested that approvals can be made as long as 3 of the 4 members agree for any document or sign-on. The current members (Steve, Pat, & Mike) agreed to this provision. He asked Meg to join the committee and she is willing. Steve added that Meg's contacts with many of the external groups with related interests will be especially helpful.

2) Membership reminder letter-LT & All

50th book: - Distribution list, mailing of book

Laraine has been working online with Cathy, Ruth, and Sarah. They earlier planned to send a message to 2018 and 2019 non-renewed members to encourage renewal by emphasizing the Tour discount and offering a copy of the book. But in light of our new COVID-19 reality, the plan changed to focus on providing a copy of the book to all our current 2020 members. Due to all the event cancellations where we planned to make them available, we will mail them instead. Sarah has found a right-sized envelope, and Steve took a sample to the Post Office and learned the mailing cost would be \$2.00 at the Media Rate. Laraine said there are 48 current member households, so the cost would be less than \$100. There was consensus to go forward with this plan and spend the money. *Laraine will send labels when they're ready* and *Steve and Sarah will send out the books*. Steve received an updated bank card so will activate it to pay for the mailing. Sarah noted there are others we intend to send books to, e.g. local officials. *Sarah will start a list and send it out for review*.

3) Business cards - Melissa Sabol re-design, Mike

Mike went over the details he discussed with Melissa, but noted that the cost for highly professional cards in color and 2-sided is expensive. Twelve sets of 1000 cards = \$420; 12 sets of 100 = \$400. Laraine felt this is too much to spend on cards. We discussed options that Melissa had provided for cheaper printing and issues such as personal preferences for how many cards to order and including one's email and/or phone number. They would be produced on a 10-card sheet and could be ordered in personally-desired multiples of 10 or 20. MBCA's name, logo, PO Box and email will be on all cards. *Mike will send an email requesting each Director's preference for number and whether to include personal information, and then will order them for us*.

4) mbconservation.org / E-blasts / Social Media Social media budget review.

Steve noted that Board members wanting any particular social media post should do so through Stacy or Aimee for consistency. Steve asked Aimee and Stacy to share how things have gone so far. Aimee & Stacy have had several good meetings and have set a schedule for the rest of the year, expecting about \$550 in ad fees (this was prior to Tour cancellation). Stacy has submitted an invoice and Aimee will do so. They will share the proposed schedule with us. Steve suggested we create a social media committee to work with them. Laraine thought it would make sense to add this to the Web Team's duties (Steve, Cathy, Laraine, and Nora) and that was agreeable. Mike was concerned that a strange page with MBCA's name was showing up when he looked for it on Facebook; Stacy and Aimee will look into this and fix if necessary.

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

Marina has checked with MWA/AWAC about our Tour cancellation and they are willing to work with us. For instance, if we have a replacement fall event, we may be able to use this year's funding (their funding is normally on a July 1-June 30 fiscal year). Reimbursement from the annual meeting is still to be done. They're in their budgeting process and will notify us. Brian said that usually the MWA budget is done in May. Steve emailed Jennifer Cusack at SCE about a month ago to see if there is anything new on their nonprofit funding plans, but has had no response.

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

CA Bureau of Environmental Justice

Pat reminded us that we were part of a letter to CARB requesting air quality monitors in Newberry Springs and Lucerne Valley. After a long series of communications, she talked with Fernando Amador (*Pat – is that correct?*) who is in charge of community monitoring. He told her he wants to meet with local people to determine best placement of monitors. Pat thinks we are being taken seriously now, although we'll have to wait until we can have a meeting after COVID restrictions. She'll be pressing for using new monitors to get baseline data for a dust control plan, and pushing to engage the County since they don't proactively ask for data.

7) Events Committee reports:

Annual meeting

Steve spoke about his interview with online [Mashable](#) reporter Morgan Sun, which will supposedly be published at the end of the month. She's more of a pop culture reporter so it will be interesting to see her take on the sustainable tourism issue. She also interviewed Chris Clarke, Miriam Seger, and other locals. The results may provide posts for our social media.

DWL Committee –2020 landscape tour re-schedule/ planning.

Thanks to Arch for pulling back the rack cards! Sarah wonders if we could mount a virtual tour. **(Who?) will check** with some hosts to see if they're amenable. Stacy and Aimee could help produce and publish. Aimee suggested it be characterized as promotion for a future event, not a replacement. Sarah wondered if we should formally announce our Tour cancellation but several Directors thought it not necessary since we never formally announced it. Steve stopped our ad in the Cal Welcome Center Art Event advertising (and the event will be cancelled anyway).

8) Ruth Denison Environmental Scholarship

In prior years we've always received applications on the last day. If there are none, perhaps we can physically go to the high schools' counseling departments and deliver applications - if they reopen.

(9-added) Communication with Cindy Zacks-Ruth

Cindy reminded Ruth that now the YVHS Principal is paying for their organic garden needs, and Wildlands has been covering their trip costs. But they could use a couple of tents for trips, which Cindy estimates at around \$300. After some discussion about whether to purchase the tents or give the money, **Ruth moved that we authorize the usual \$300 donation to the YVHS Environmental program to be used toward the purchase of tents, and that Cindy Zacks should let us know if the actual cost exceeds \$300 and we will cover the full cost of the 2 tents. Steve seconded, and all were in favor. (11-0)**

Conservation Issues

1) Solar projects

Daggett – Newberry Springs appeal-PF

The civil suit against the County, Supervisors, and the developer continues. The next meeting is in June. Pat thinks it's a good civil suit but there are mixed feelings in the communities about settlement. The litigants are the CSD and Friends of Newberry Springs.

Stagecoach (formerly Aurora Solar) State school lands - Pat

There are approximately 2700 acres in this property which was given by BLM who told the developer there was no problem for solar. Pat and Brian have been working with attorney Steve Mills, who is working pro bono. State Lands wants to know about environmental justice as related to this project. There may be a deadline extension to April 15. Brian said we're in a waiting place and then will have to mount a rapid and high quality response to the next step.

Yellow Pine - SB

This is a 3000+ acre project in Nevada. BLM is asking for a short response time. Basin & Range Watch is putting together a comment letter and asked for us to sign on in opposition, asking for additional time to review the project. Pat may be working with B&RW on this (she had to leave prior to this item). **Steve will check with Pat on the status.**

2) Countywide Plan & Community Action Plans - SB

Steve contacted Mark Lundquist but he wasn't able to give any update on the County Plan. There's a lot of uncertainty, especially now with the overlay of COVID-19.

3) Cadiz water harvesting proposal – SB

No update.

4) Dark Sky ordinance – ordinance update -SB

County Code Enforcement head Andy Wingert recently provided the first draft of a revised ordinance to both the Third District Dark Sky Committee and the International Dark Sky Association, asking for feedback. This was in response to the recommendations from the Committee some months ago. The ordinance will only cover light trespass. The committee suggested some additional changes, and Andy responded yesterday with another revision that Steve said looks encouraging. It includes a timeframe for compliance, i.e. non-compliant parties have two years in which to change to a compliant light source. Steve will keep us updated.

5) Eagle Mountain pumped storage NPCA conference call–DF

Steve mentioned there's an effort to put together a conference call on this.

Outreach & Communications

1) CMC SLR – RR, SB, LT

Although the meeting was postponed as COVID-19 was ramping up, Ruth noted that Alfredo was scheduled to be there and he is committed to being involved when it becomes possible again.

2) MAC - SB

Steve noted the March MAC meeting was lightly attended.

3) Chambers of Commerce –SB, PF

No updates.

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

Janet said there is no news on STRs but it will be interesting what affect COVID has. It may show the weakness of having so many STRs. It's harder than ever for low income people. She'll keep us posted if there is news.

5) Follow up on MBUSD on solar install is it saving \$\$\$?- JJ

This will have to be tabled for a while.

6) Recycling what really happens to our recyclables? -JJ

Tabled for future discussion.

7) Support for Friendly Hills Elementary -PF

Schools are closed.

8) Camp 'N Cater -PF

No report.

9) Climate change-carbon neutrality-AM

Arch noted that our interest in finding ways to reduce our carbon impact is a topic also being addressed by CNPS (California Native Plant Society-Mojave Chapter, Arch is President). One suggestion is carbon trading but there is skepticism because it can seem like a shell game. It's been suggested we could do our own carbon trading, perhaps by investing with the Mojave Land Trust. Arch learned from MDLT's Executive Director Geary

Hund that donations can be earmarked for land acquisition only rather than overhead. If MBCA goes forward with something like this, we could do an audit of our own carbon usage via online calculators and determine our carbon impact, then determine the value of carbon sequestration on federal land and land value, and as an organization put some money into this to offset “our” carbon. This would give us chance to “control some of the shells” of the shell game. We should be doing anything we can.

Letters signed onto/written:

Sign on to CBD letter re: proposed NEPA revisions – this is posted online.

Sign on to MDLT letter California Desert Conservancy AB 2839 Eduardo Garcia

We had some discussion about our ability as a 501(c)(3) to advocate for any legislative action. Laraine noted that we are not prohibited from advocating for legislation but it can’t be the majority of our activity and there are limits on how much can be spent on such activity. Ruth confirmed that it’s really about how money is spent, and we spend nothing on such activity. *Laraine will review the guidelines and present at next meeting.*

MBCA letter re: proposed NEPA revisions – this is posted online.

David’s virtual memorial event for Ida is tomorrow and many of us will be “attending.”

Adjourned at 11:44 AM.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, April 9, 2020 5:00 – 7:00 PM venue <i>TBD stay tuned</i>
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