

MBCA BOARD MEETING **APPROVED** MINUTES

Thursday May 14, 2020 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Via Zoom

Regular Meeting Call to Order: 5:05 pm.

Board of Directors

Steve Bardwell

Brian Hammer

Ruth Rieman

David Fick

Janet Johnston

Laraine Turk

Pat Flanagan (advance notice)

Sarah Kennington

Mike Lipsitz (advance notice)

Meg Foley

Arch McCulloch

Marina West

Social media consultants

Aimee Buyea Stacy Doolittle

Blue Italics = action commitment

Black Bold Italics = Board vote

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Our Denison Scholarship winner Annie Hilderbrand was present; we congratulated her and introduced ourselves.

Memorial of David Freeman

Ruth spoke about David being one of her heroes for his pioneering work in renewable energy. He was surprisingly responsive to our requests for his assistance and was a presenter at our 2019 annual meeting. Steve added his gratitude. Stacy suggested reporting it on our social media; *Ruth agreed to put something together and will send to Aimee.*

Agenda approval

We will add #8 in Capacity Building/Organizational issues for Ruth to brief us on surprise birthday plans for Esther Herbert's 100th birthday. All agreed to the revised agenda.

Minutes from April 17, 2020 BOD meeting

Steve moved to approved the minutes; Sarah seconded, all were in favor. (10-0)

Treasurer's Report

Marina reported that as of today our CD total is \$22,447.92, and there is \$18,122.20 in our checking account. Our total income from memberships paid since January 1 is \$1788 plus about \$1035 in cash donations. We also added \$335 in interest income from the first quarter of the CD.

Our general expenses have been about \$2400 (Green Info payment, all bills paid, insurance, and PO box). MDLT provided their half of the \$600 annual maintenance fee for Green Info.

The cost of producing and mailing the 50th Anniversary book has been \$9050 so far.

Expenses for the virtual tour have been about \$2900 so far from a budgeted plan of \$4100. (The annual budget for all three Desert-Wise programs is \$9000.) We had already paid about \$1550 on the "live" Tour for program design, Desert Regional Tourism ad, rack card printing and some supplies. Marina stated that all DWL expenses still are within our grant budget, and we received commitment from MWA to use the grant for a Virtual Tour. Marina

noted that production of the Tour Book was about 70% complete, so we will be “ahead of the game” and can use that template for next year.

The Treasurer’s report was accepted.

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) Letter writing committee –

The committee is currently Meg, Steve, Mike, and Pat. With both Mike and Pat recently unavailable at the same time, Steve requested we expand the letter writing committee because of the frequent occurrence of short-term deadlines. Steve noted David’s extensive knowledge of issues and asked if he would consider joining, but David had to decline due to personal commitments. Steve asked Brian; Brian said he’d be honored. The agreement of at least 3 committee members will still be required in order to “sign on” to a comment letter.

2) Membership reminder letter-LT& All

50th book: - Distribution list, mailing of book

Laraine reviewed how she and Sarah have been working on keeping track of book mailings with the intent to be sure every possible person who has been involved with MBCA as member, volunteer, or donor will receive the book. After another review, they will send everyone the list for a final review. The digital book version has taken a back seat to this effort but we’ll work on that when the mailing project seems as complete as possible.

3) Business cards - Melissa Sabol re-design

Mike sent us a draft of design options from Melissa. Ruth suggested Option 1B for the front, and D for the back. Brian had the same preference and by consensus we agreed.

4) mbconservation.org / E-blasts / Social Media – Stacy and Aimee

Aimee is looking forward to posting the virtual tour. Near-term posts will be a video about native plants that Stacy forwarded, and a post about our Denison Scholar.

Aimee has been considering posts to encourage people to get out and hike but knows there are concerns about broadcasting information and posting photos about some locations. Some specific issues came up with the *Hi Desert Star* and there have been particular concerns in the Sand to Snow and BLM areas with parking problems and OHV activity. Meg and others agreed that sensitive areas need to be protected and the message should simply be: go outside, enjoy the outdoors, but for now stick to your neighborhood and follow regulations. Aimee will draft something and have Meg review it. Stacy promoted MWA’s contest.

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

Marina reiterated that MWA will continue to fund our DWL series of events including the virtual tour. She also noted that there needs to be a finance committee meeting to fund the learning path project. Stacy will meet with Meg to see if there is content from the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve that might be incorporated.

6) Events Committee reports:

DWL Committee –2020 virtual landscape tour update

Stacy reported that production is finished, including drone photography for all 5 locations, plus interviews, ground video, and still photography. Stacy will work with Heather on editing. The first site video looks to be about 3 minutes 20 seconds. All will be done before

the end of June. Stacy is also working on the website page with her design consultant and Nora; all 5 videos will be on one Nationbuilder webpage.

Steve suggested adding a message to join MBCA. Stacy said that will be done at the end of each video with a graphic. There will be leftover video content to use in other ways, such as videos specifically for social media and the website.

Topic for fall DWL program

Steve had tried to connect with someone from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory to talk about climate change but hasn't heard back. Stacy said she has a contact in the media department there and will ask about climate change speakers. Sarah noted that the CMC/SLR committee is pursuing another meeting at CMC about the Susan Luckie Reilly legacy energy project. When that moves along it would be a great program to profile. We realize that a fall gathering may be subject to size restrictions.

7) Ruth Denison Environmental Scholarship LT

Laraine again acknowledged Annie, thanked her for digitally attending our meeting, and asked her to talk about her plans. She will be a Yucca Valley High School graduate and will enroll at CMC both in summer and fall. She is interested in attending an environmental program at Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo. She has applied for a job at the Park as a visitor youth assistant.

8) ADDED Item: Ruth on surprise birthday for Esther Herbert's 100th on May 25th.

Ruth noted that Esther will be twice the age of MBCA! Ruth has talked with several Board members and several activities are planned. Ruth contacted Z107.7 and is creating a statement for Gary Daigneault to read. Joan Robey, who has been a Tour host and has become a friend of Esther's, will deliver a fruit pie (Esther's choice). Laraine has sent a request to Board members to send Esther individual cards. Former Board member Anne Staley will be visiting and staying with Esther around her birthday and she will read the messages, as Esther's vision is limited. *Ruth plans to ask David Smith to give Esther a birthday call. Sarah and Steve are looking into sending flowers from MBCA. We will ask Aimee to post some of the anniversary book content about Esther on social media.* Ruth added that this all started when Esther called her (she usually calls Esther) to say she was so very impressed with the anniversary book, especially because when she was with the Board in the 80s, things weren't going too well. She was thrilled to read about all of MBCA's accomplishments.

Conservation Issues

1) Air Quality Monitoring: CARB update. Location of Purple Air units - AM, PF, BH
Steve spoke with Pat, who is at home but recuperating. Nothing has been happening with any of the CARB contacts she has developed.

2) Solar projects

Daggett Newberry Springs appeal-PF,BH
Nothing new on the appeal.

Stagecoach (formerly Aurora Solar) State school lands

We [signed on to a letter](#) related to social justice issues for Lucerne Valley and the region.

Yellow Pine -SB

We were asked to sign on to this letter by Kevin Emmerich and Laura Cunningham of Basin and Range Watch (Pat is on their Board). It points out all the problems with this industrial

scale project. It's portrayed as an essential project but the facts don't support that; it seems mostly political. Another important issue is watersheds, for which Brian is helping to demonstrate the problems.

Sarah added that a nonprofit in Lucerne is disbanding and have sent a check of their remaining funds to Pat to support MBCA. We should know more details next month.

3) Countywide Plan & Community Action Plans – SB, JJ, PF
Scenic 247 -SK

No updates on County plan.

Sarah spoke about the latest activities of the Scenic Hwy. 247 committee. They are almost done with the visual assessment of undeveloped sections that might qualify. They continue to work with Sara Fairchild (landscape architect working *pro bono*), and she is also working with Brian on new maps. Developing a corridor protection plan is the next phase. A letter of intent needs to come from the Supervisors and Karen Watkins will share the draft with the committee. The County may eventually do a field check. The Committee has been asked for bullet points for the corridor management plan. They suggest going for maximum protection even though it may be cut back. It's not a budgeted project but they still seem on board. Chuck Bell was on the phone call meeting and asked if scenic projects were exempt from having utility projects. The answer was they won't be prohibited but mitigation may be required. Stacy noted this is a perfect project for a social media campaign. *Brian offered to do maps for social media.*

4) Cadiz water harvesting proposal – DF
No new information.

5) Dark Sky ordinance – update –SB

Light trespass ordinance. Steve continues to be the liaison with County Code Enforcement chief Andy Wingert and John Barentine of International Dark Sky Alliance for the Third District Dark Sky Committee concerning the draft light trespass ordinance. John is impressed with the effort and Steve is hopeful it will be eventually passed by the Supervisors. Definitions are the key issue for finalizing and they are close.

6) CDFW [Joshua Tree listing](#)
Nothing new.

We talked about the recent MDLT property fire on Section 33. David said there's a drone video. *David will send us a link. (Sent during the meeting)*

7) Eagle Mountain pumped storage letter – SB

Steve announced that we have signed with numerous other groups on a message to Assemblymember Eduardo opposing AB 2736, which along with the earlier AB 2255 (which we had sent a prior letter against) “seeks to greenlight NextEra’s Eagle Crest project.”

8) Ivanpah -SB

Steve mentioned the Ivanpah Interconnection project, which relates to SCE reworking power lines, correcting the placement of lines and dealing with electromagnetic field issues.

Outreach & Communications

1) CMC SLR – RR, SB, LT

We'll hopefully have a Zoom meeting with Alfredo Martinez-Morales and CMC administrators soon.

2) What happens to our recyclables? -SB

Steve spoke about a recent experience at the County dump where he was told they're no longer taking mixed recyclables, because of COVID-19. There is a market in 29 Palms for cardboard. Steve emailed Mark Lundquist, who replied to wait until the pandemic is over and then address it again. Janet talked about concerns with the YV sewer project filling old septic tanks with asphalt grindings. The County loaned an inspector to the Town and he's supposed to be there when they put the topsoil back on but hasn't been. Her friend is trying to get the word out. It seems there would be groundwater effects. Brian suggested social media might have an impact.

3) OHV -SK

Steve and Sarah have noted a lot of illegal OHV activity in their area and have also heard the same for Burns Canyon Road. These are private roads where residents maintain the roads, so this is a financial burden on residents. We can broadcast the issue on social media and urge people to call the Sheriff's Department, which has been saying in the media that they want people to report such issues. Laraine suggested linking such a post with the recent [MBCA News Update on OHV issues](#).

Letters signed onto/written:

Aurora Solar (Stagecoach) Environmental Justice letter 4-30-20

Via NPCA Eagle Crest letter opposition to AB2736 (Garcia) 5-7-20

Via MDLT AB3030 Calling for conserving 30% of land and water by 2030 5-6-20

Via MDLT Earth Advocacy Continuation of Habitat Conservation Fund 5-8-20 – possible sun-setting of the funding.

Opposition to Yellow Pine Solar Project Basin and Range Watch 5-4-20

Adjournment at 6:52 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, June 11, 2020 ~ 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Hopefully at Town of Yucca Valley **stay tuned!**