

MBCA Board Meeting APPROVED Minutes
Thursday June 11, 2020 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Regular Meeting Call to Order: 5:06 pm Via Zoom

Blue Italics = action commitment

Black Bold Italics = Board vote

Board of Directors

Steve Bardwell
 David Fick
 Pat Flanagan
 Meg Foley

Brian Hammer
 Janet Johnston
 Sarah Kennington
 Arch McCulloch

Ruth Rieman
 Laraine Turk
 Mike Lipsitz
 Marina West

Social media consultants

Aimee Buyea Stacy Doolittle

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Agenda approval

Meg asked to add a discussion about an organizational inclusivity statement, which was added as #6 under Capacity Building.

Minutes from May 14, 2020 BOD meeting

Ruth moved to approve the May minutes. Meg seconded and all were in favor (12-0).

Treasurer's Report

Marina sent financial documents via email prior to the meeting. We have paid officer insurance for the year and covered additional book mailing expenses. There have been new memberships and donations. Regarding the DWL Tour, Marina sent the water districts explanatory invoices about our virtual tour, and they have responded. We have already received \$6000. We've also received a check for \$154.74 from the now-closed Alliance for Desert Preservation that chose to donate their remaining funds to us. This connection occurred thanks to Pat via Steve Mills. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) Membership reminder letter-LT & All

50th book: - Distribution list, mailing of book

Laraine and Sarah have been working together to coordinate sending the books to 2020 members and those listed in the book since we weren't able to distribute it at spring events. They will begin work on distribution to media and other institutional/organizational partners. Ruth passed on kudos about the book from Julie Monson. Pat has some books and will hand them out as opportunities arise.

2) Business cards - Melissa Sabol re-design

Mike will work with Marina on payment and will take care of getting cards to everyone.

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

Stacy noted that Aimee has been posting and sharing our news and that of other similar organizations. We paid \$20 to promote the MWA contest. Both showed good response.

Laraine described her hope to digitize the “Comment Letters Binder” that holds the printed first page of over 80 comment letters we have sent over the last decade or so. She’d also like to develop a “scorecard” webpage that would indicate the results of the various projects we’ve commented on, but will need help to find digital copies of all our letters. Brian reminded us that there are copies of our letters as part of the public record on government projects, and linking to those sites would provide even more context. Sarah said she has a similar list and can help. Ruth noted how this will help substantiate our claims that we’ve been influential. Steve added that more organizations are approaching us to sign on to their letters. *Sarah & Mike will help Laraine with the Comment Letters project.*

4) Events Committee reports:

DWL Committee –2020 virtual landscape tour update

Stacy updated us. There are 4 “rough cuts” so far. She is working with Heather on editing to enhance the artistic video work with our essential content (water use, native plants, etc.). There was a review of Snake Jagger’s draft video with a few Board members and everyone was pleased, especially with the effect of the aerial shots. They’re working with Laraine and Nora on setting it up on the website, and hope to begin promotion in late June and launch after July 4th. Melissa has developed an animation for advertising. Marina suggests sending [the draft link](#) to everyone (noting that we’ll be adding more content). Stacy added that there’s enough video to do more projects. Heather is interested in doing something on the Joshua tree listing. Marina noted that Mike gave a lot of help, too.

2021 DL tour at same time as art tour?

Laraine had suggested trying to connect with the Art Tour organizer [MBCAC](#) to share information since one of their spring 2021 Art Tour weekends (April 17-18 and 24-25) will undoubtedly overlap with our Tour. There will likely be people interested in both overlapping events. We discussed possibilities such as having artists staged at some of our Tour sites or just doing some joint advertising. Arch pointed out that either tour is a very full day. Some of our sites coincide with likely Art Tour sites, e.g. Jagger, Rieman, Wold, and Fredenburg. Ruth noted that the Reimans’ art tour site is as much about desert-wise living as art. Ruth is willing to contact MBCAC President Marcia Geiger. Also, Aimee is the MBCAC gallery director. Stacy added that size-wise we’d be “second fiddle” to the Arts Tour and she (and others) felt that just trading advertising would be enough. Sarah offered the idea that the Landscape Tour could have a focus on artists and landscape. Arch liked the combination idea. *Marina will schedule a committee meeting to talk this through.*

Topic for fall DWL program - JPL speaker (?)

Stacy found a possible speaker and Steve’s JPL friend agreed that person would be good. Steve will contact her. But we may still have to make it a virtual event.

5) Esther Herbert 100th report – RR

Esther called Ruth and expressed her gratitude and enjoyment for the messages, cupcakes and flowers. She was ecstatic that David Smith called. Although Anne Staley couldn’t visit her after all, her nephew came and helped with the birthday events, and we’re also grateful to Joan Robey (via Ruth) for her assistance.

6) added – inclusivity statement?

Meg noted that many organizations have already done this, and she feels we should consider stating support or solidarity, perhaps working with other groups. Mike agreed we should make a statement that’s simple and straightforward. Arch noted that environmental Justice is more specifically within our purview. Other ideas included making a donation to

the new George Floyd scholarship at CMC, and/or facilitating an inclusive event at BMCP. *Mike, Meg, and Arch will work on devising a statement for us.*

Conservation Issues

1) CDFW Joshua Tree listing

We have done a comment letter and put out several [News Updates](#) about the issue. Steve got confirmation that our comment letter was received before the deadline. Thanks to Mike, Brian and Pat for contributing.

2) Air Quality Monitoring: CARB update. Location of Purple Air units

Pat said the quarantine continues to prevent an on-site meeting. Arch asked about getting individuals to put up the monitors even knowing they aren't AQMD-approved so that we have data where CARB doesn't. Pat said that AQMD has actually cited a lot of Purple Air monitors data to get an idea of the kind of data those monitors are producing. If you go on the [website](#) (click on "View the Map") you can see the great difference between Barstow and Newberry Springs when there's a big wind, the point we're trying to make.

The other ongoing difficulty is with failures with consistent WIFI coverage, which happened in Wonder Valley. AQMD is looking for venues for a few more Purple Air monitors; Pat believes that one on either side of CMC would be a good configuration.

Arch suggests looking at WIFI coverage first, then expanding the network. Brian suggested fire stations could be good locations. Steve suggested we may be able to suggest one at CMC as we work with them on their renewable energy projects. The fire station on Aberdeen was suggested by several, so *Steve and Sarah will talk to them*. Also, Sarah will connect with new Sheriff's Captain Luke Niles about a monitor there.

3) Solar projects

Brian reported that the Calcite I project has been moved to "placed on hold" by the applicant last week. It might be described as a "Zombie stage" but is not completely cancelled. Pat noted that Ord Mountain and Calcite are across from each other and are connected with the transmission station. She suggests checking the [County's Renewable Energy projects page](#) to keep an eye on these and other projects.

Pat made a comment about the Daggett Project and a possible lawsuit and September Court Hearing.

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

Steve said there is nothing new on the County Plan.

Sarah reported there are still problems with the Scenic 247 project. She noted Sara Fairchild and Brian have spent many hours working on it. The latest version was delivered to Homestead Valley and they are now trying to revise it. BLM and the County still need to review and endorse it. Sarah described the situation as still hopeful but frustrating.

5) Dark Sky ordinance – update –SB

Steve reported that a draft of the ordinance has been delivered to County counsel. Andy Wingert feels confident it is in good shape for that review.

6) Eagle Mountain pumped storage letter – SB

MBCA sent our own comment letter and also signed a coalition letter opposing state legislation that would assist the pumped storage project (details in this [News Update](#)). The bill was defeated in appropriations committee.

7) RHDV2 now in Morongo Basin

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease is in the Basin. Steve became aware via news in Rimrock and we put it in the Eblast. Shortly after, we received on the website a thank-you response from Marcia Geiger and a request for more information from KCDZ's Tami Roleff, who hadn't heard of any cases in the Morongo Basin. Our early communication was good PR. Several stories were shared about local situations.

Stacy reported about a recent Facebook post where after David replied to a request for information about the Joshua tree listing, a respondent said they wanted to support the cause and David referred them to join MBCA. She noted that David has long been a voice for MBCA in social media.

Outreach & Communications

1) CMC SLR – RR, SB, LT

Ruth reported on the recent Zoom conference that included her, Steve, Sarah, Laraine, Sandy Smith and Meredith Plummer from the College, and Alfredo Martinez-Morales from UCR. We've taken some small steps forward. A microgrid on campus is unlikely but we could create a single location (probably the Bell Center) that could be energy independent in emergencies. If the Schneider Electric company they're working with agrees (and Alfredo is optimistic), there are some enhancements that could be made to possibly leverage additional grant funding. Alfredo will make a campus visit, hopefully meet with the President and Facilities & Operations Director Kevin Cole. Ruth reached out to Greg Gilbert hoping he can help push the issue in his Board of Trustees role.

2) What happens to our recyclables? –SB

Steve is unhappy that all are going to landfill now, which he was told at the Landers site.

3) OHV –SK

Steve and Sarah put together a letter for the Pioneertown community to alert residents how to report illegal OHVs to the Sheriff's dispatch. Dawn Rowe thanked them for including a focus on contacting dispatch and they have support from the Sheriff's Captain. *Steve will put a reminder in a future eBlast.* The *Hi-Desert Star* reported on the Landers Moose lodge poker run, that had 168 ATVs and 4WDs. Sarah sent an email to Katrina Symons and Jeff Childers (Barstow BLM) to ask if that group had a permit - how could they do it with COVID guidelines? Katrina responded that there was no approval and said she will follow up with appropriate staff and get back to Sarah. *Sarah may write a soapbox on the topic.* It was disappointing that the paper just made it news, with no reference to it happening on National Monuments land, with the result of inappropriately encouraging such use.

4) Local community response to future disasters – SB, SK

Steve and Sarah are working within their community for disaster preparedness via a Pioneertown Emergency Preparedness Network. They are gathering information on who has resources and who might need help. SB County has a VOAD disaster group ([Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#)) that includes volunteer training, food giveaways, County connections, and community organization assistance.

Letters signed onto/written:

MBCA letter in favor of listing of Joshua tree as threatened under CESA
Sign-on to letter to Gov. Newsome re: CDFW funding

Adjourned at 6:48PM

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, July 9, 2020 - 5:00 – 7:00 PM
Hopefully at Town of Yucca Valley - **stay tuned!**