

MBCA Board Meeting APPROVED Minutes
Thursday November 12, 2020 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm, Via Zoom

Black Bold Italics = Board vote *Blue Italics = action commitment*

Regular Meeting Call to Order: 5:09 PM

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

Social media consultants: Aimee Buyea Stacy Doolittle
Guests: Miriam Seger, Tori Reiser

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Tori Reiser joins us for the first time; she works with Meg at BMCP.

Agenda approval

Janet has items to add under outreach and communication about field trips.
Ruth will have something to add in item 4. ***The amended Agenda was approved by consensus.***

Minutes from October 7, 2020 BOD meeting

Steve asked to correct the spelling of the name of the scientist at JPL -Eldering.
Meg moved to approve the October minutes. Pat seconded, and all were in favor. (12-0)

Treasurer's Report

Thanks to Marina for the detailed accounting documents she sent us. There is \$49,560.66 in checking, although this is off by \$35 with the bank and Marina will investigate. There is \$22,757.72 in our CD. Since we last met there have been a few deposits including \$500 from Golden State Water for the 2020 DWL tour and a \$75 donation from Jimmy Biggerstaff. The Board accepted the report.

We reviewed the status of the August 14 CD rollover. It's a 9-month term at .05% interest. We received \$371.75 in interest last year, \$309.80 for 2020. Marina has set an automated alarm on the account for its mid-May renewal so we can decide whether to renew.

Presentation by Tony Tucci of CLAW re: 2nd generation rodenticides.

Tony heads the Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife - aka CLAW - and gave us an overview of the signed [AB 1788](#). What's going to change is that pest control operators won't be able to use 2nd generation rodenticides. The bill's goals were bigger at first but resulted in a moratorium on the use of the products. First generation rodenticides in the 60s and 70s took multiple feedings to kill, and they are still on the market. Rats showed some immunities so they developed stronger, "second-gen," fast-kill products. Since 2014 these have not been available for consumers but businesses can purchase them. So businesses and pest control operators are still killing wildlife as a result. While there is a temporary halt on 4 products, there are a lot of exemptions, e.g. agricultural use, wineries, and where food is stored. The

moratorium that starts on January 1, 2021, is not, as some have perceived, a “ban on rodenticides.” This moratorium will only last until there is a re-evaluation of the products. Unfortunately, that’s a slow process; it took them 14 years to evaluate last time. But the [California Department of Pesticide Regulation](#) has to also consider input from Fish & Wildlife.

In response CLAW will try to emphasize that *any* poison is problematic so people should use snap and electric traps only and take defensive measures to keep pests out of house. There are sterilization products but you have to keep using them. Rodenticides especially affect raptors and owls. The closest thing to a future solution is a poison gas that dissipates quickly. See their [website \(CLAWonline.org\)](#) for more information and data.

Mike noted that 29 Palms is trying a female sterilization/early menopause-inducing chemical to reduce rodent reproduction and it metabolizes quickly. Tony said there’s no clarity on enforcement measures yet. There is an exemption for public health crises with certain protocols.

Steve summarized that we should educate the public, let professionals know that we’re aware of the legislation, and work with other local groups. Pat pointed out that people misinterpret words on packages, e.g. “safe for children and pets” which only means safe to open into the package, not that the contents are safe! CLAW will be adding [an FAQ page](#) to their website. *Laraine will put a news update on our website with their messaging and the link.*

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) Nominations Committee - All

Treasurer – Ruth is willing to do treasurer duties in the short term, and Janet is willing to take it on eventually. Thanks to both!

2) 50th book: - Distribution list, mailing of book – LT

Sarah has sent out books to recent new members from a list Laraine sent, and when we mentioned we want to get a book to Tori, she informed us that her mother was one of the key photographers for the book, Patricia Knight! Since there are no “live” venues to distribute the books, we need to find ways to get more out there. Stacy has some ideas for distribution but she needs some books – *Laraine will get some books to Stacy.*

3) mbconservation.org /

Social Media update– Stacy and Aimee

We’re still getting some viewing and responses to the Virtual Tour. Stacy tried to promote the County Plan meeting but had technical problems, and she believes we could have better managed promotion of getting people to comment. Sara Lee from the MB Democratic Club will talk with us next month to suggest better advertising and how to get complex information into formats to help people quickly grasp the message. Thanks to Stacy for pursuing this.

Website appearance – LT, SK

No action since last meeting.

Comment letter history – LT, ML, SK

No action since last meeting.

4) Events Committee reports:

DWL Committee –2020 virtual landscape film –SB

Steve went through one iteration of the combined film with Heather then after sending it out for review got the input from Ruth that his statements about the state water project needed to be revised as not all of the Basin gets state water. They are trying to re-edit the film around this issue.

JPL speaker Annmarie Eldering – SB

Steve talked with Annmarie more about her JPL project which monitors carbon dioxide around the earth. She is willing to make a presentation and Steve would like to also have a speaker on water and is open to suggestions. Brian suggested the JPL data could be great to share, but Steve thinks it's probably proprietary, although we should be able to get her PowerPoint for distribution. Laraine suggested that whether her presentation is for the January Annual Meeting or at any other time, due to the continuing COVID restrictions on group meetings, everything can be a webinar and maybe we could have 2 separate presentations, Annmarie's and a separate one on water. That could double our chances for wider viewership, too.

*2021 Annual Meeting topic in conjunction with spring **virtual** DWL*

See item above. Ruth had also suggested a possible topic of dust as a health hazard in the desert, and the loss of carbon sequestration by scraping the desert for development. Could we combine that with the 2021 Tour?

Conservation Issues

1) JT listing as candidacy as threatened review County requirements – SB

Steve received information that the county is requiring a "native plant specialist" to review construction within 40 feet of a Joshua tree as to whether the work would endanger it. Qualifications required of that person are listed and restrictive, but Steve is going to contact the County to suggest that any licensed landscape architect should also be qualified. Miriam thinks the 40-foot distance was assumed from solar development regulations and is excessive, adding that Mike Branning has told her that even a 5-foot distance can be acceptable in some circumstances. She added that she's heard the term "midnight gardening" for Joshua tree destruction done illegally. YV is referring all inquiries to Fish & Wildlife. Maybe the County's document wording was to provoke backlash. "Even conservationists think this is unreasonable." *Steve said that when several Board members will be meeting with Dawn Rowe later this week they'll discuss this topic.*

Timothy Krantz was mentioned as someone knowledgeable about these issues; he's a botanist who designed the Oak Glen botanical garden of the Wildlands Conservancy. We discussed the possibility that a non-profit could be a clearinghouse for moving Joshua trees. Miriam mentioned this to Madena Asbell at MDLT but she didn't feel they could take it on. If money could be raised to buy a 48" tree spade and find a company to be designated for moving Joshua trees, it might be both beneficial and a productive business for someone.

2) Utility scale solar – Stagecoach comments due 11-13-20

This project of about 3000 acres crosses Highway 247. [Pat's working on a letter from MBCA](#), and we have signed onto a Steve Mills letter. Laraine noted that the Steve Mills letter was incredibly comprehensive. Sarah added there was a County concern expressed by Karen Watkins in earlier scoping meetings related to the 247 scenic highway effort. Brian said that Steve Mills also chastises the State Lands Commission about environmental justice.

3) Air Quality Monitoring: Location of Purple Air units – SK, AM

Sarah reported no further communication from JBWD, but will continue her efforts. With Stacy now a member of the JBWD Board we'll have another advocate.

4) Dark Sky ordinance – update –SB

Chief County Code Enforcement Officer Andy Wingert unfortunately died suddenly last month. Steve reported that Terri Rahhal and Dawn Rowe are committed to getting the revised Code through the County process for adoption, but are scrambling due to Andy's passing.

5) Cell tower at BMCP update –MF

Meg said there's been no action and probably won't be in the next several months. She thanked Brian for providing a map to show the range of the tower's visibility; it's a great tool and very helpful.

6) Invasive plant – stinknet - https://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calreclnum=8492

Steve received notification of this spreading new invasive. Arch will do some research and review how it might affect us locally. It's not here yet but is spreading, especially along roadsides.

Outreach & Communications

1) Countywide Plan & Community Action Guides-ReCap - SB, JJ, PF

Janet reviewed the disappointing outcome where despite Dawn Rowe's support, the other 4 Supervisors, 3 of whom have no Community Plan areas in their districts, voted against retaining the Plans. But the 2007 development code is still operational, so there could be a decision to reinstate the plans and update them, or pass them as a general plan amendment. Janet will focus on reviewing the Joshua Tree Plan. [A meeting is set for November 18 with Dawn Rowe for Pat, Steve, Janet, and Thomas Fjallstam](#) (who has long been involved in downtown Joshua Tree issues). They hope to educate Dawn about the history and suggest possibilities for updating the development code and including the plans. In 2007 they adopted all of it together and it was consistent; now it's separated and they may try to gut the development code as well.

Another option could be a desert overlay in the development code that would address some of the items in the community plans. An overlay is good but doesn't provide everything we need. Meg noted that an overlay could be part of the development code and at least have more teeth than the community action guides. Janet agreed.

Brian said that Terri Rahaal actually said they didn't want to keep promises made in 2007. Pat noted we lose community history that's in the Community Plans. If we get to update the plans, we need real boots on the ground evaluation of community

growth, housing, lived-in vs. rentals, etc. *Laraine has some 2007 JT Plan copies and will deliver to Mark Lundquist's office.*

2) MAC – PF, SB

Pat commented about Wayne Hamilton's presentation at the MAC on homeless issues. Their program helped 85 people stay in their houses, but they had to relocate others to faraway places because no local housing is available even though there are funds and programs.

3) Discussion of 2020 election

We congratulated Stacy for being voted onto the Joshua Basin Water District Board of Directors.

4) UCR climate change activist – LT

Tabled until next meeting.

5) ADDED item: Janet about Field Trips

Janet took her family to Section 6 and sees it as perfect for field trips. She envisions a program where we could tie in with the College and have trips to Section 6, Coyote Hole, the JBWD Demonstration Garden, some birding and animal-focused trips, and also recommends the Museum of Tolerance in Palm Desert.

It was suggested that *Laraine add Annie Hildebrand, our 2020-21 Denison Scholarship winner, to the Zoom invitation list for Board meetings.*

Meeting Adjourned at 7:04 PM

Letters signed onto:

MBCA letter re: CWP, XpressWest High speed rail,

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, December 10, 2020, 5:00 – 7:00 PM, ZOOM
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