

MBCA Board Meeting DRAFT Minutes
Thursday, October 7, 2020 / 5:00 – 6:30 pm
(meeting shortened due to webinar on Joshua trees at 6:30)

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

Regular Meeting Call to Order at 5:05 PM

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Mike Lipsitz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marina West
<u>Social media consultants:</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aimee Buyea	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Doolittle

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Cathy Zarakov, Volunteer Coordinator and Web Team
Columba Quintero, Native American Land Conservancy

Memorial for Stan Zarakov

Cathy was on the call and we expressed our condolences to her on Stan's passing. Steve talked of knowing him via his store and his music. Cathy said Stan always enjoyed the landscape tour and the part they played in it and appreciated MBCA.

Agenda approval

Aimee noted that Gov. Newsome signed the rat poison law and wondered if we would be interested in working on it because enforcement may be problematic. She'll forward the email to us and we agreed to discuss this at a future meeting.

Minutes from September 10, 2020 BOD meeting

Steve asked for a revision to clarify that the new versions of the County's Community Action Plans are called Community Action *Guides* rather than *Plans*. ***Steve moved to accept the minutes with that revision. Marina seconded and all were in favor. (9-0).***

Treasurer's Report

The Finance Committee met and reviewed all financial documents, including 2019 revenues and expenses, and all questions have been resolved. ***Steve moved that we accept the committee's documentation of expenses and income, the "audit" for the 2019 calendar year. Ruth seconded and all were in favor. (9-0)***

Marina emailed the current financial reports to us. The CD is at \$22,757.72, checking at \$48,973.38; for a total of \$71,731.10. Through September 30th there was a \$100 donation and a membership. Steve thanked Marina for putting all the audit information together.

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) Nominations Committee - All

Treasurer

Steve again thanked Marina for her service as Treasurer, which will end as she leaves the Board at the end of the year. Ruth is willing to handle basic Treasurer duties for up to a year but we need someone to fully take over treasurer duties eventually. Thanks to Ruth for her intermediate help.

Events Committee members

There is some uncertainty about who is on the Events Committee and on the Landscape Tour (DWL) Committee. After some comments on the history from Ruth and Laraine, Steve suggested we should simply have one Events Committee. Members will be Ruth, Laraine, Sarah, Steve (ad hoc), Cathy (Volunteer Coordinator), and adding Miriam. Meg also volunteered. *Steve plans to set a meeting.*

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

We will send another batch of books out to recently added 2020/2021 members. Laraine will send the latest list to Sarah. Steve also gave 5 copies to MDLT.

3) mbconservation.org / Social Media update – Stacy and Aimee

Aimee reported Facebook action is “pretty solid,” and most are from either Morongo Basin or Los Angeles, with about 4% from outside the country, including 1% from Canada. Instagram continues to have some good traffic and continues to have a younger audience.

Website appearance – LT, SK

Nothing new.

Comment letter history – LT, ML, SK

Nothing new.

4) Events Committee reports:

DWL Committee –2020 virtual landscape film –SB

Steve reported that producer-director Heather has been ill so nothing is happening.

JPL speaker Annmarie Eldering – SB

Steve talked with Annmarie, who is a Deputy Project Scientist at JPL for reporting on a satellite that is tracking carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. She would consider making a presentation to us. Steve spoke to her about our chief issues, especially carbon sequestration within the landscape, hoping she could address this within her presentation. The satellite has been in orbit since 2014, replacing one from 2010. Ideally it would be a presentation of about 30-40 minutes with graphics and information followed with Q&A. She can't provide pinpointed information for the Morongo Basin, but told Steve there are some ULCA scientists that might be able to help with that. Steve suggested we

contact other conservation organizations to get a broad audience. The Events Committee can work out more details.

Anyone who has ideas about a topic for the 2021 Annual Meeting in conjunction with a spring virtual DWL Tour should send them to Steve.

5) Inclusivity reach-out to NALC or...?- All

Steve expressed our appreciation for Columba joining us today. Steve spoke about the Governor's proclamation ([Executive Order N-82-20](#)) today regarding biodiversity, climate change, and community engagement that also mentions the importance of native wisdom.

Conservation Issues

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

Sarah reported on her continuing efforts to get a Purple Air unit at Joshua Basin Water District. In addition to communicating with Kathleen Radnich at JBWD, she has tried to contact AQMD. There are concerns about where to place it to avoid diesel vehicles in parking lot, etc. Pat talked to Meredith Plummer (Chief Business Officer at Copper Mountain College) about it, and *she'll keep asking until they're ready*. They would like one (or maybe two).

2) Dark Sky ordinance – update –SB

Steve reported we are getting closer on the Light Trespass ordinance. There's been one more back-and-forth and editing with Chief Code Enforcement Officer Andy Wingert, who has been an advocate and is concerned about mandating LEDs. We'd like to stick with the LED mandate.

3) Cell tower at BMCP update –MF

Meg reported no recent actions, but thinks that they'll have to open the process or amend the DRECP LUPA because it wouldn't be in compliance at 196 feet high. They did not contact Morongo or County Fire Departments despite that the tower is supposedly for them, to improve emergency contact capability. It's not appropriate for a residential area and probably wouldn't even do what they say. The community should have a chance to revise it. *Brian offered to calculate the viewshed and create visual representations as to where it will be visible, as he's done for some of Pat's projects*. Meg was very appreciative for that offer. *Meg will send him height of tower and GPS coordinates*.

4) Pioneertown Motel expansion – SB

Steve explained that there a significant expansion of the Pioneertown Motel in the works. Steve met with the owners; they sounded agreeable to some ecological improvements but he got no commitments, and there are no plans regarding renewable energy or energy-saving elements. *Steve will continue to stay in touch with them*.

Pat just received information about 2 solar projects in Riverside County, 2000 acres apiece, with a Zoom scoping meeting on October 21. She thinks they're the ones that could destroy the intaglios and *will investigate and send the*

Board and guests the information. NPCA and CBD will probably have the information and we can pursue which ones are in our desert. *Meg will check with CLF.*

Outreach & Communications

1) Report on UCR Palm Desert Climate Stewardship class – SB, LT

Steve and Laraine are taking this course. A lot of the readings are right along the lines of what we do.

2) Report on UC-CERT solar conference Sept 14 – SB, LT, PF

Alfredo Martinez Morales was part of it, and 3 of us viewed it. Pat commented that there was too much emphasis putting large solar projects across the desert. Steve relayed the Governor's recent [executive order](#) (same as noted above) to Dr. Martinez Morales, which emphasizes the need for biodiversity and concern for desert ecology while considering renewable projects. Pat said they aren't acknowledging how much the desert holds carbon. Janet said the Governor's order had reference to carbon sequestration but not specifically to the desert. Maybe we should make a direct pitch in Sacramento (after COVID). Steve added that the order does talk about the value of soil, but Pat thinks they probably don't even consider desert soil. Ruth suggests asking the speaker that Steve proposes to include this topic in her presentation.

3) Report on CDC webinar 9-17-20 impacting local decision making –SB

There were 30 or so attendees at this program that we helped support. Chris Carrillo emphasized to make presentations focused and succinct. We think a recording of the event will be on CDC's website.

4) MBCA supported the 2020 BIG READ report – Aimee

About 40 people have visited JTAG every Saturday, many from out of town, and Aimee gave out some of our books. *(Laraine will get another box to her.)* Laraine noted that Juniper Harrower's Big Read presentation on Joshua Trees and mycorrhizal soil was fabulous.

5) Countywide Plan & Community Action Plans – SB, JJ, PF

The new plans are scheduled for a vote at the Supervisors' October 27 meeting. They're poised to pass the Countywide Plan and certify the EIR, repeal Community Plans and recognize Community Action Guides. Janet's been working on this diligently and we're working on a comment to supervisors. We need to get the word out next week for people to comment.

There's so much information that trying to get it graphically and with meaning to get our points across to supervisors will be hard. She's working on the premise of stating support for the Countywide Plan, but strongly stating opposition to repealing Community Plans. They are in the Development Code and they'll be updating it soon to make it consistent with the new Policy Plan, so the Community Plans could be updated as part of that. We can say they didn't fully engage the community. In 2007 they made the argument that we needed Community Plans. We might have an argument to the Attorney

General. Steve is certain the Supervisors will pass it all as presented. Steve checked with Chris Carrillo to see if we could get a legal opinion about repealing Community Plans, but Chris could not provide any legal advice on the issue at this point.

Janet thinks we might argue them into not repealing the Community Plans by getting them to see they could avoid problems by not repealing them. The Community Plan is the heart of our problems with the County. Janet feels we may have some leverage via the Attorney General since planning law in California is citizen enforced and the AG is “our” attorney. Environmental justice issues are important to the state. She will also be trying to reach out to other Community Plan communities.

Governor’s new Executive Order may have a thread of possibility in argument. In the County’s discussions with the AG’s office about EJ, they haven’t justified how the CAGs help the community, but that’s a secondary argument. Steve reiterated our main point is that we are opposed to the repeal of CPs.

Another possibility is buffer zones to provide protections for certain areas. Steve, Pat, and Janet will be talking with MDLT about this (Suzy Boyd, Policy Director and Geary Hund, ED). Suzy was surprised about all of MDLT’s “assignments” in the CAGs as was Jacqueline Guevara for Joshua Tree National Park Association. Stacy suggested we might host an online conversation about these issues. Engagement would probably help get more minds into it and new ideas. Pat suggested we should just go forward taking action as a citizen committee. Janet added that a general plan amendment would be stage two. Columba appreciated learning about these issues and will look into whether there are tribal issues. They appreciate our support. They have applied for a big grant, and she’ll keep Pat up to date.

No letters signed onto

6:30 pm Yucca brevifolia candidacy as threatened. Zoom call with Chris Clarke and Brendan Cummings.

Adjournment at 6:29PM

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, November 12, 2020 - 5:00 – 7:00 PM ZOOM stay tuned!