

MBCA BOARD MEETING APPROVED MINUTES
Thursday July 8, 2021 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm Via Zoom
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 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"/> Cathy Zarakov

Social media consultants: ☐ Aimee Buyea ☒ Stacy Doolittle

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

No guests.

Agenda approval

Pat asked to substitute “Solar 66 near Daggett” for #4 under Outreach as she has not heard from Jen. The revised agenda was approved by consensus.

Minutes from June 10, 2021 BOD meeting

After discussion initiated by Steve, we agreed to edit part of Outreach Item #3. ***Steve moved to approved the revised minutes. Ruth seconded, and all were in favor. (12-0)***

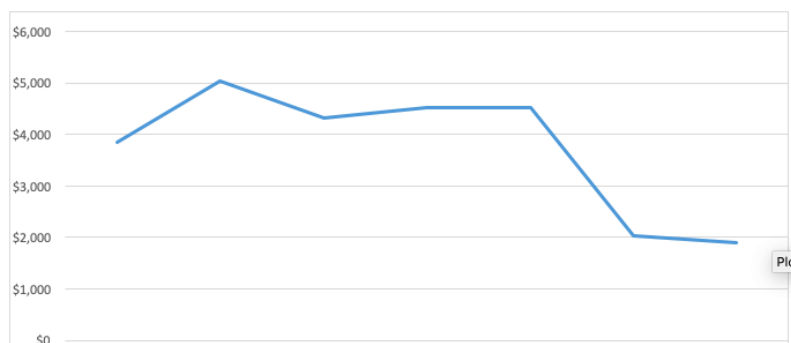
Treasurer’s Report

Cathy reported we have recently received \$1000 Landscape Tour grants from Twentynine Palms Water District and Hi Desert Water District, and \$750 from Joshua Basin Water District. We have received two memberships with extra donations. The final payment to videographer Cole Gibson was made (total = \$8300 as contracted). Steve thanked Stacy for connecting us with Cole. We also paid our annual fee to Nationbuilder (\$460.20). Our checking account balance is \$51,172.04 and our CD is at \$22,766.23.

Laraine shared a chart demonstrating the drop in our usual January-July income of the last five years, due to not having the income-producing in-person Landscape Tours nor the 2021 Annual Meeting. The income figures in the chart represent memberships, donations, and Tour registration income, not grants.

MBCA January – July Income, 2015-2021
(NOTE: Does not include donations/memberships between July & December)

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
\$3840	\$5030	\$4325	\$4510	\$4527	\$2039	\$1900



Pat suggested we publicly share the income drop to trigger additional donations. Stacy suggested a specific campaign.

Steve mentioned we've received notice for our annual liability insurance payment and the amount has remained the same, about \$600/year. We accepted Cathy's report by consensus and Steve added thanks to her for acting so quickly and efficiently on the water district grant payments. Cathy said we can expect the Mojave Water Agency payment soon.

Outreach & Communications

1) Flamingo 640 Glamping - SB

Steve summarized the project status; it is under County review and we believe a full EIR is required. Marina has suggested to Steve that MBCA consider a direct discussion with the developer. We agreed that a "quiet" discussion of our concerns could be useful, including asking whether they have reviewed the HVCC Community Plan and/or Action Guide, and what input there has been from CalTrans and the Sheriff. *Steve will get back in touch with Marina to see if she can help set it up. Steve will also check with NPCA, CBD and MDLT about joining such a meeting, and also Ben Loescher of the Friends of Pioneertown, and possibly Chuck Bell on Hwy. 247 traffic issues.* Ideally, the developer would abandon the plan and sell the land to MDLT at a reasonable price.

2) Cannabis cultivation environmental impacts – SB, PF

Marina has shared with MBCA through Steve a draft letter to state officials requesting more resources and attention to the illegal cannabis industry due to the negative effects on water, public safety, and the environment. We discussed signing on to Marina's proposed letter and also creating our own.

There have recently been some major "busts" in the Victorville area and Los Angeles. Marina believes there are at least 100 grows in Landers area. Steve talked with one of Dawn Rowe's aides and he said SB County is making continuous smaller busts and agreed there should be more public awareness. *We will communicate with partners such as MDLT, NPCA, CBD, CNPS, and Wildlands about signing on to Marina's letter. Mike, Pat and Steve will develop our own letter in the next week to 10 days and include a focus on how the grows affect the 30/30 plan. Brian will help with maps. Stacy will be attending a meeting of the California Water Alliance about this issue and will share pertinent information.*

3) Housing Short Term Rentals– JJ, SB

Janet summarized the latest news. The Supervisors agreed to increase fines for violations of the STR code. That resulted in an application boom – 60 or more since the Supervisors' meeting and their office is behind in processing. There is some additional funding for Code Enforcement. Local activist Breana Violante is working on a document including high-quality maps to display the housing problem in detail. Janet has been gathering data related to the Housing Element trying to determine how many plans and build-outs are STRs vs. personal homes. This data and Breana's will be combined with the letter that Janet created in May to send to the County to show how the housing count method harms residents' housing possibilities and increases the STR problem.

4) ~~Request from Jen Kolm of JTNP for possible assistance~~—Pat requested to delete this and substitute: Solar 66 near Daggett – PF

Pat has talked with the owner of this small project. If the owner has a PPA we probably can't stop it because it's so small. He is using stationary tilted panels which has benefits. Pat is encouraging the owner to contact MDLT and have them gather data on the consequences to the land. *Pat sent a letter to the Planning Commission about the project and will send to Laraine for posting on the website.*

5) Climate change. Climate Stewards, loss of plants – LT, BH

Laraine reported that one of the two people who were seriously considering our scholarship offer for the Climate Stewards class is still considering and will decide soon. Cathy can work with her to use our credit card to make the payment if she enrolls. Pat added, related to Climate Change, that she continues to work with Defenders of Wildlife, MDLT, Sierra Club and the BLM on the 30x30 goals. Two of their combined effort [information flyers](#) have been posted on our website and elsewhere.

6) CMC Solar groundbreaking, LT

Laraine, Janet and Pat attended, and reported that MBCA received mention in the speeches related to the Susan Luckie Reilly bequest that funded the project, and also briefly to our other meetings with CMC. Steve noted that news reports indicate they have a shortfall between the cost of the project and the bequest and that might not have happened had they continued to work with us and UCR to get additional funding and expand the project.

7) Cadiz, Eagle Mountain, DF

David and Steve spoke about the Cadiz “end run” of purchasing an unused 220-mile oil pipeline between Cadiz and Bakersfield. NPCA, Sierra Club and CBD will likely be looking for jurisdictional violations in the transaction.

8) MBCA advertisement in Southwest Stories

Steve Brown has offered a free ad for two years in his soon-to-be-published new online magazine. [Stacy and Melissa developed the ad and Steve will forward it to Steve Brown. Stacy will ask Melissa to invoice us for her work.](#) We may add “Join us” to a future version.

Conservation Issues

1) Update on JT listing as candidacy for threatened – DF

The news of the 36-tree destruction in Yucca Valley has spread nationally to the *Washington Post* and *CNN* (David was part of the original story-spreading and commenting on Facebook). The burying of the trees by the tractor operator was a key reason for the expansion of the story. David thinks there should be a third classification of size for the cost of transplanting small Joshua trees, as under current rules it's less expensive to pay the fine than to pay for legal transplant.

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

Nothing new.

3) Light Trespass, Night Sky Festival –SB, LT, PF

MBCA has been offered a table during the Night Sky Festival on September 3-4. [Steve, Arch and Pat will work on this.](#) Steve recently emailed the County about the status of the Light Trespass Ordinance, but has had no response yet.

We will keep an eye on the new lighting project for 29 Palms athletic field. Ann Congdon of Sky's the Limit is involved, so we are hopeful it will be night sky friendly.

4) Carbon sequestration in the desert. – PF, BH

Pat noted that Robin Kobaly will be making a presentation on The Desert Underground tomorrow night via the Desert Institute and the recording will be available on their YouTube page subsequently.

5) Big Morongo Canyon Preserve – MF

Meg reported that the land acquisition is making its way through committees. Votes have been positive and unanimous so far. She also heard there have been mass retirements from the Palm Springs BLM office and along with the planned blend with the Moreno Valley BLM office plus COVID, there are many problems that will add to the slow pace. The big issue in the Morongo Valley area is the presence of multiple bears, probably 3 different ones. So far there's no damage or injuries but more sightings than usual. *There's no news about the cell phone tower; Meg will look into it and let us know if there is anything new.*

6) NEM 3.0 - SB

Steve reported that AB 1139 was defeated so big utilities are pressing their preferences which would discourage rooftop solar and encourage large-scale projects. The RPS standard doesn't count rooftop, so it also supports big solar. Yellow Pine Solar in western Nevada is a terrible project and many relocated tortoises have been killed by badgers. A film company is working with Basin & Range Watch to create a film against the project. We should encourage Governor Newsom to make sure NEM 3.0 encourages rooftop solar. The PUC will hear it early next year. The [Save California Solar](#) website is working to spread the word.

7) AB 1183 - Desert Conservation Fund - SB

The bill was heard by the Senate Natural Resources Committee yesterday. Ramos is the sponsoring legislator. The bill would provide funding for desert conservation.

8) DRECP -RR

Ruth and Arch were on a DRECP webinar on July 1, a 5-year review of the Plan. A BLM committee is dismissing all requests for changes that came from the Trump administration. Ruth felt positive about the meeting and noted that tribal voices about protection concerns were heard. Comments are due by July 16. Arch agreed and noted that Ruth made an impressive public comment about dust that's stirred up by the large scale energy projects being a great source of air pollution. Pat asked if there are any projects to be reviewed but the latest projects are mostly on private rather than public lands.

9) RCIS - SB

Steve wasn't able to attend the Resource Conservation Investment Strategy Environmental Element meeting but we hope this group would advocate for a County habitat conservation plan. *Steve will contact Frazier to see if he can learn more about that meeting.*

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) mbconservation.org /

Social Media update- Aimee

Stacy shared Google Analytics for the website and Facebook data. We've had big numbers for the Landscape Tour video, especially the first one. People are sharing the Tour link from Facebook but not as much from our website. Laraine suggested that we create a video as part of our hopefully "in-person" 2022 Tour. *The Tour Committee will be Ruth, Arch, Stacy, Cathy and Laraine. It will be a topic at the Retreat and then the Committee will take over.*

Website - LT, CZ

Laraine shared the current membership number (73 individuals and 3 businesses) and noted it is lower than usual because we didn't have the Annual Meeting or the Tour. But we did receive a healthy number of first-time members (13 since January).

Laraine then proposed, on behalf of Nora and Cathy as well, a change in our membership process, making memberships renewable one year after payment rather than January through December. The proposal was approved by everyone. *Laraine will work with Cathy and Nora to implement.*

*2) Events Committee reports:
2021 virtual landscape tour*

The results have been great, with a number of enthusiastic comments on the website and Facebook.

Thank you to water agencies

Nothing is scheduled yet but as agreed earlier, *Steve will present our thanks to JBWD and MWA, Cathy to HDWD, Pat to TPWD, Ruth to BDVWA, and Arch to Golden State. We will also suggest that the agencies put a link to our Tours on their websites.*

3) Educational support

Denison Scholarship – SK, LT

Sarah sent a letter to the 5 prior recipients asking if they are still on track with their proposed major or have changed. (We have completed our 5-year initial commitment to the Denison Scholarships.) This was in part due to a discussion at a recent online meeting of the Scholarship/Field Trips Committee, where Karin Messaros was interested in further scholarship funding for a Denison Scholarship recipient who was still on track for an environmentally-related degree. Annie Hilderbrand and Isabel Ortega responded so far, and both have changed their majors to social sciences, although they both expressed continued support for conservation and environmental issues. Sarah also asked them for insights on encouraging younger people for conservation but neither responded to that.

Pat brought up MDLT's Women In Science Discovering Our Mojave/[WISDOM](#) research program and suggested we could support those students. This can be a subject at the Retreat.

Field trips CSA 20- JJ

Janet met Tammie at Section 6 and Tammie will continue to plan for the field trips. Janet talked with a local bike company owner. **They are interested, but will have to consider additional investments in order to handle school groups.** Janet will continue to work with partners and then with school personnel in the fall.

4) Agenda for Board Retreat 8-29-21

Steve said this will be a "thinking big" Retreat without a regular meeting component. *Laraine will gather Retreat topics we've mentioned in recent meetings, then send an email to gather more ideas.* We decided on a 10AM -3 PM meeting including a lunch break.

Adjourned at 7:08 PM.

Letters signed onto :

Letter re: cannabis cultivation, Support for JT Community Center EV charging

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, September 9, 2021 5:00 – 7:00 PM in person? stay tuned!