

MBCA BOARD MEETING **APPROVED MINUTES**

Thursday, November 11, 2021 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm Via Zoom

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

Regular Meeting Called to Order at 5:05 P.M.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruth Rieman
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Doolittle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cathy Zarakov
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch	
<u>Social media consultant:</u>		<input type="checkbox"/> Aimee Buyea

Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Steve welcomed visitor Gary Stiler who also joined us last month.

Agenda approval

Steve moved to approve the agenda. Pat seconded; all were in favor. (9-0)

Minutes from October 14, 2021 BOD meeting

Steve moved to approve the October 2021 minutes. Sarah seconded and all were in favor. (9-0)

Treasurer's Report

Cathy reported two new memberships in October, but due to timing one will be reflected in November's financial report. The checking account balance is \$54,923.36; the CD balance is \$22,766.23. We accepted the Treasurer's report *by consensus*. Steve noted that we need to discuss the best use of our accumulated funds beyond the necessary funds for Desert Wise events, scholarships, and operational expenditures.

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) By Laws and Board Handbook up-date Climate Change - CZ

We discussed and edited the draft that Cathy presented and especially liked the list of actions to take that she had researched. Arch brought up the problem that some "investments" in climate change are large scale projects on desert lands and that we should emphasize keeping the desert intact, to minimize surface disturbance for carbon sequestration/storage. Pat said the state is ignoring this though we are working to educate them by signing onto a group letter. Arch suggested we specifically add "educating public agencies and the public on the value of maintaining intact desert soils." The lead paragraph will be on placed on the home page as part of our Mission, with a link to another page for the list of bulleted actions (to be expanded). *Laraine will send out today's version for another review.* Steve wants to include it in a soon-to-be-sent Eblast.

Stacy reported on her contact with the Marine Base. She talked with Jonell, who is in charge of educational programs and cultural resources. She suggested we talk with her boss. Steve clarified that he was interested in pursuing cross-

referencing our Top Ten Tips with a similar item he saw on their website and may contact Jonell to explore this. Steve also mentioned the Defense Department paper about climate change as it impacts military mission. *Laraine volunteered to find it and post it on our website.*

MBCA native lands statement - LT

Laraine presented the draft and after discussion and editing of the final sentence, the statement was *approved by consensus*. Whether to include the map of tribes that Laraine had found in a JTNP-related context drew concerns about accuracy and tribal reactions. *We will contact NALC and run it by them and hopefully further develop our relationship with them.*

2) Social Media update– Aimee / Stacy

Stacy noted there have been more than 500 views on the Daggett post. She suggested we need to clarify the proximity to the Basin and the Mojave Desert of some of the sites we mention for our wider audience unfamiliar with our area.

NationBuilder upgrade to Leadership Plan– SB, LT, CZ, SK
Steve summarized the recent Web Team discussion of the expanded NB plan. Steve particularly liked the ability to have petitions within the website and the ability to purchase gift memberships. Nora, Stacy, Cathy and Laraine are in favor for a number of reasons, Cathy especially for automatic renewals of membership. It roughly doubles our cost, from a bit under \$500 a year to about \$960. **Steve moved that we change from our current enrollment in NationBuilder’s “Leader Legacy Plan” to the offered “Founding Leader Plan” at an increased cost of about \$40 more a month. Sarah seconded** and reminded us that Nora’s many volunteer hours constitute a big financial gift and this is stepping up to match Nora’s high value work to keep us going and improving. Laraine added that Stacy & Nora working together has been a terrific match of skill, knowledge and creativity for MBCA. **The motion was approved by all present. (9-0)** *Steve will contact Nora* and we hope to have gift memberships available for the holidays.

3) Events Committee reports:

a) 2022 landscape tour – DWL committee

At a recent meeting it was determined there will be 5-6 in-person sites on one day, and one or more virtual sites will also be created, all with a strong education component and data about each site’s water usage. The committee is pursuing sites.

b) Thank you to water agencies – SB, AM

Steve will be speaking to JBWD next Wednesday and has connected with MWA but a date is not set. *Arch will contact Golden State Water for a presentation.*

c) Topic for annual meeting – RR

Ruth has continued to communicate with James Hansen but was rebuffed again due to his travel. While recognizing Hansen's importance, Laraine researched his recent activity and found he has not done presentations for quite a few years and has mostly written a blog in recent years. The committee should look for alternatives while waiting for a last try at Hansen, maybe someone younger to bring in that demographic. Steve talked with Yucca Valley and we can use the Yucca Room on January 22 or 29 (and we will also Zoom broadcast). *Steve will reserve January 29 at YVCC.*

d) Potential Fundraiser with Ken Layne – SD

Stacy suggested this idea to Steve based on Ken Layne's desert-oriented entertainment podcast. He has engagements all around the country, but none local, so he might be a good draw as a fundraiser, preferably outside. Steve and Sarah enjoyed hearing him at a Furstworld event. Members could be offered a discounted admission. Steve would like to see a focus connected to climate change. *Stacy knows Ken a bit and will reach out to him.* Desert Oracle Radio is on KCDZ Friday nights.

4) Educational support

a) Denison Scholarship – SK, LT

Steve and Cathy reported that a belated scholarship check was sent to Kahlena Alcantar and she has confirmed its receipt. *Laraine will call a scholarship committee meeting soon.* We usually announce our scholarship in February.

b) Field trips CSA 20 - JJ

Janet has had some additional conversations with potential partners. The concept is still moving, if slowly.

Outreach & Communications

1) Cannabis cultivation environmental impacts – BH

Brian isn't present but we have all heard news reports on the many Operation Hammer Strike actions.

2) Housing Element of CWP – JJ, SB

Janet's letter with some assistance from Steve was completed and sent. Janet learned that SB 477 had elements about collecting better housing data but it was more focused on other issues. The wording was even similar to our letter. However, Governor Newsom vetoed SB 477 because there was already a 2019 bill that similarly asked for better data but there was no focus on the STR problem in that bill.

Janet also noted that Yucca Valley is using a median house cost that is \$100,000 less than reality; such houses just don't exist. Twentynine Palms is also using too low a median amount, perhaps because of the consultant PlaceWorks. There shouldn't be funding based on bad information.

The data strategy person said they are considering adding STRs. Whether it will be in legislation or not is uncertain. She asked and Janet explained how we gathered the data on local STRs. Maybe the state requiring that communities give them data may mean they'll do a better job of policing. Some areas don't require STR registration.

Yucca Valley has recently put a STR moratorium in place and Twentynine Palms is considering one. Several Supervisors should recuse themselves on the STR issue but they don't. Paul Cook even asked why they weren't recusing themselves. Dawn Rowe said they are open to suggestions but don't have a formal comment period planned, so any action is a moving target.

Steve talked to Terri Rahhal yesterday about the Light Trespass Ordinance and brought up the STR issue. Terri said revisions are coming very soon. Steve suggested that the existing transfer of rental approval when an STR property is sold should be reexamined and Terri seemed to agree, at least that there should be a window of time for it to be reapproved instead of automatically.

We all complimented Janet's extremely well-crafted letter. Steve reached out to reporter Mark Olalde but as he has left the *Desert Sun*, Steve will contact the next person in that position.

Janet commented how supervisors who have no unincorporated areas in their districts are making all these decisions for us in unincorporated areas.

Gary commented on how agency stakeholders such as the Forest Service related to Sand to Snow are affected by rentals and visitor activities. Engaging them would widen the stakeholder conversation. *Janet and Gary will work on developing this.*

3) Cadiz - DF, PF

David reported that Cadiz is in legal limbo with two federal lawsuits in play related to the 217-mile pipeline from Cadiz to Bakersfield. Parties to the lawsuits include CBD, Sierra Club, NALC and NPCA.

4) Info sheet to Realtors-CA welcome center – SD, CZ, SB

We've talked about creating an information sheet to connect newcomers with desert-wise living, working with our Top Ten Tips and the new Climate Change actions list. Steve connected Gary with Steve Reyes in Dawn Rowe's office. We have talked about asking Melissa to do some graphics for this. Decisions have yet to be made about content and distribution. Sarah suggested linking marketing to membership. *Gary believes the explanation of codes could be expanded and he will draft something for the next meeting.* Steve said Terri Rahhal said Ignacio Nuñez is the new Code Enforcement chief replacing Andy Wingert. Steve met him at the Light Trespass workshop and believes we can successfully work with him. *Steve & Gary will work on this.*

David suggested we should recommend avoiding excessive fencing. Pat will send us information about a fence type that is great for wildlife. Arch said that MDLT uses a barbed wire that isn't barbed. We can put recommendations on the website. Laraine asked about the rumors that the City of 29 Palms is interested in taking over the Water District. Pat says it would be problematic, as it's a good water district; they pay attention and act appropriately.

5) MBCA advertisements Desert Moon Pictorial – SB, SD
We might ask Melissa to do another graphic for this purpose.

Conservation Issues

1) Update on JT listing as candidacy for threatened – DF
Fish and Game extended the moratorium by 90 days. David suggested that since the Joshua tree is the first plant or animal to possibly be designated as threatened by climate change in California, we might consider asking Brendan Cummings to speak on it at the Annual Meeting. David recently gave an interview about the listing to a Long Beach State grad student who is writing a paper on it. *David will send us the student's solicitation for interviewees and his questions.* Maybe we could pair the student with Brendan for the Annual Meeting.

We discussed the recent NBC piece about housing that quoted Sarah (inaccurately) and agreed that the reporter missed the point, but she said she'd do a follow-up. Janet talked with someone from Big Bear Lake and they're at 50% rentals.

2) Air Quality Monitoring: Location of Purple Air units – SK, AM
Steve is still hoping to get a monitor installed at their home. Sarah has a contact person with Mojave AQMD, Allen Disalvio, for information on business/organization installation regulations, and will work on getting one in Yucca Valley, maybe at the Library. *Sarah will talk to the Town Manager and forward any information to Arch.* JBWD and City of 29 Palms each have one.

3) Light Trespass Ordinance – SB
It is likely that the ordinance will be presented at the December 7 BOS meeting. We need to encourage people to contact the County in favor of it. Dawn Rowe is in favor, and probably Paul Cook. There is one slight change related to safety lighting, an exclusion added to existing ten but probably not a deal breaker.

New lighting for 29 Palms athletic field – SB
Intermediary Ann Congdon has provided information that it will be well shielded, with sharp cut-off lights, and won't spill light like the prior ones. They will be 5700 Kelvin. Steve asked Tom O'Key if he'd take a look and give an opinion, also IDA. Pat asks that we pass along information to the Base for their overly-lit fields, even though they've done well with other Base lighting.

4) 30x30 Carbon sequestration in the desert. – PF, BH

We signed a 30x30 group letter. They've extended time for comment letters until November 24. *Pat will get the final version to Laraine to publish on website.*

5) Scenic 247 – SK

Sarah reported this is still in process, not yet scheduled for any action.

6) Save California Solar NEM 3.0 – sign the [petition](#) - SB

David Rosenfeld and his group are trying to get as many signatures as possible to the government in December. Steve will include a request in the next Eblast and draft a letter from MBCA. Arch suggests asking people to edit the letter to personalize it to their own situation.

7) HR 5355 Desert Community Lands Act - BH, SB, PF

This applies to an 80-acre parcel in Twentynine Palms that would connect the southeastern end of 29 Palms with a County area (or maybe City) where they do yearly OHV races. Pat feels it's OK for a once-a-year OHV event but if it becomes an open area it'll be a problem. Pat requested maps as there were none in the bill and she has received them. Eric Hamburg of Wonder Valley COW is watching it. Another big parcel is near Apple Valley, possibly near their habitat conservation area, so Brian can probably help investigate.

Re: Daggett Solar 66 letter listed below:

There is another Daggett project by Ralph Laks, and the same issues from the 66 project are there and to be mitigated, such as less "lake effect" due to stationary panels. Laks is also inviting Victor Valley College students to do research at the project/s. Planning Commission Chair Jonathon Weldy held up MBCA's letter in the Daggett 66 meeting saying "we've never had anything like this before" (a compliment). Pat's meeting with Laks has been very fruitful.

Letters created / signed onto:

[Letter](#) re: effects of Short Term Rentals, Coalition Letter re: Brightline wildlife overcrossings, [Letter](#) in support of Daggett Solar 66, Coalition [Letter](#) re: Climate Smart Strategies and Working Lands.

Adjournment at 7:09 pm.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, December 9, 2021 - 5:00 – 7:00 PM

We are set for an in-person meeting on Dec. 9 at the YVCC Mesquite Room.