

**MINUTES  
BOARD MEETING  
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (WCA)  
January 16, 2020**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Chico at approximately 1:37 p.m. The meeting was held at: The Garvey Community Center in Rosemead.

**2. FLAG SALUTE**

**3. ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr. Dan Arrighi (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)  
Ms. Sandra Maravilla (for Supervisor Barger)  
Ms. Herlinda Chico (for Supervisor Hahn)  
Mr. Vincent Chang (for Supervisor Solis)  
Mr. Roberto Uranga (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Ms. Karly Katona (for Supervisor Ridley-Thomas)  
Mr. Julian Juarez (for Mr. Pestrella)

**STAFF PRESENT**

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer  
Jennifer Fierro, Board Secretary  
Debbie Enos, Deputy Executive Officer  
Nicole Law, Fiscal Manager  
Jane Tsong, Project Manager  
David Edsall, Jr., Deputy Attorney General

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Minutes were from November 21, 2019 meeting.

**Board members voted. There were 5 Ayes, 0 Nays and 0 Abstentions. Minutes were approved.**

## 6. CHAIR'S REPORT

No report was given.

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

### 7. LIAISON & ACTIVITIES REPORT

Mr. Stanley stated that he would briefly review a few legislative bills.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB209, authored by D. Limon, has been chaptered but will still be tracked. He stated there are many bills including a part of the Governor's budget which includes outdoor access, particularly for the disadvantaged communities.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB926, authored by E. Garcia, in association with AB1298, authored by D. Mullen, and SB45, authored by D. Allen; are all related to climate change, water bonds, and park bonds. These will be tracked to see how the funds will be spent, how much will be appropriated to parks or water bonds as the Governor is interested in having something on the November ballot.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB968, authored by Cristina Garcia, is a Naturalist/Educational program for college systems throughout California. Although it was tabled in the last session, it may come back and he will track to see if this will move forward.

Mr. Stanley commented that AB1694, authored by Assemblymember O'Donnell, failed the deadline. He explained that when a bill comes back it is given a new legislative number and this one will be coming back with a new number. Currently Assemblymember O'Donnell is looking for co-writers for the bill.

Mr. Stanley stated that SB367, authored by D. Hueso, is an educational program bill specifically for the Coastal Conservancy. This bill will provide the Coastal Conservancy with additional funding for programming activities and educational opportunities for children K-12 and even adults. This bill was chaptered and will be tracked to see if funding will come from the Governor's budget as no dollar amount was set.

Board Member Uranga asked what chapter implies regarding legislation? Mr. Stanley responded that this meant the legislation is law once the Governor signs for it.

Mr. Stanley explained that construction to the Duck Farm is moving quickly. The seat walls, pathways, and seating throughout the east and west side of the park is being put in. He stated that construction is due to be completed in the next few months and extended an invitation to the Board Members to visit the site while still in construction. He added that there was a site visit performed by the State Park Department in November since WCA applied for a Prop 68 grant in the amount of \$8.5 million for demonstration gardens and renovations to the Duck Farm House itself. He anticipates receiving notice of award for the grant within the next month.

Mr. Stanley stated that Emerald Necklace meetings are taking place and brings together nonprofit partners and county departments. The focus is on the water channel that flows through the San Gabriel Valley and Emerald Necklace (a 17-mile loop) and the enhancement of those projects that can potentially come from this.

Mr. Stanley stated that the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition will include a biological study of the foothills along the city of Azusa. Jane Tsong added that there is a Biological

Opportunities Report that is being put together by a biological consultant and that WCA will be hosting a kicking-off meeting in the next week. Mr. Stanley explained that only three (3) consultant companies applied for the RFQ, and it was awarded to 'Psomas'.

Mr. Stanley quickly mentioned that recently the Park Rangers and WCA staff were on site at the Mount Baldy Wilderness Preserve to propose some opportunities and challenges that comes from the property. He stated he would provide a report as it comes along.

Board Chair Chico asked if there are any suggested challenges? Mr. Stanley replied that it's the typical issues that come from having visitors: usage, trash, graffiti, etc.

Mr. Stanley mentioned that Parque dos Rios is also in construction and extended an invitation to the Board Members to visit the site while still in construction. He explained that the overlook and park entrance area have had rock work in place and that the park vegetation is yet to be done. He stated that WCA applied for a Measure W grant for the v-ditch to help with the stabilization of the area, and this v-ditch is controlled by Cal Trans. WCA will be presenting to the Measure W Board within the next few months.

Mr. Stanley concluded by explaining that the River Ranger Program is under consideration for management by WCA. RMC awarded \$250,000 in funding to the WCA to provide oversight of the pilot programs which will kick-off in the Summer of 2020. In conjunction with the MRCA who oversee the upper portion of the river, both conservancies have four (4) pilot programs: two (2) in the upper reach and two (2) in the lower reach; only one pilot project is funded.

## **8. EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Ms. Law explained that Exhibit A reflects the balances of the Fiscal Year 2019-2020. The lease revenue for December 2019 has not been received from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy as they are waiting for the new lease agreement with the increased monthly rate to be approved. The Authority is awaiting reimbursement from several other grants and professional service contracts; thus, revenue from Grant and Special Projects has been minimal. Property Tax line item is higher than the YTD budget projections as the parcel tax has increased for a new annual fire service fee which approved by The Board of Directors of the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District to expand the boundaries of Service Zone FP-5. All other expenditure items are projected to be within budgetary limits except for those line items previously reported in prior meeting such as Fiscal Services, wireless phone and office supplies.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- 9. FUND BALANCE REPORT**
- 10. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT (WCA18512) WITH BLUEGREEN CONSULTING TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FIELD A/E SERVICES FOR THE DUCK FARM PHASE 1A IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT.**
- 11. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO RATIFY A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH VASQUEZ RANCH LLC FOR VASQUEZ OVERLOOK (AIN 8684-024-001).**

**12 CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE SUBMITTAL OF GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR GAP FUNDING FOR THE RIVER WILDERNESS PARK ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT.**

**Board Member Uranga motioned to approve items 9 through 12. Board Member Chang seconded the motion. Board Voted. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.**

**REGULAR CALENDAR**

**13. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR DESIGNEE TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACTS FOR PROJECT SUPPORT MANAGEMENT.**

Ms. Enos explained that since the November 2019 board meeting two full-time Project Managers have provided notice to accept positions with local City and County government entities. As a standard recruitment process can take up to 6-months or longer, the ability to augment existing staff with interim consultants will aid in completing projects and keeping processes active. Professional service contracts for project support management may involve the hiring of Individuals or firms as independent consultants/contractors and/or short-term project hire staff.

Ms. Enos explained that if approved WCA staff would engage individuals, consultants and/or firms to provide immediate project management resources equipped with the expertise necessary to manage, but not be limited to, the above identified work. This may involve both recruitment of consultants who have previously provided consultant or staff services to the WCA; are familiar and have worked previously as a consultant or provided services to the above projects; and/or has a strong expertise with similar work to lessen the learning curve needed to complete the projects within their designated timeframes.

Board Member Maravilla asked if there would be an effort made to find long term staff aside from contracting for consultants? Ms. Enos responded that as they bring in consultants for the four projects they would also be recruiting for permanent staff. She stated they would be seeking employees with the appropriate skills sets based on the portfolio of projects that will develop in the next six (6) months.

Board Chair Chico asked if losing multiple staff has ever happened before? Ms. Enos replied that staff working for the WCA are trained well and with many skills sets that are found valuable to other departments or agencies. Mr. Stanley provide comment that this was not an atypical occurrence given the well rounded experience WCA provides staff.

There were no further questions from the Board.

**Board Member Uranga motioned to approve this item. Board Member Chang seconded the motion. Board Voted. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.**

**14. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION 1. APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT FOR FIFTH**

**SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT PROPOSITION A FUNDING FOR WALNUT CREEK SITE IMPROVEMENTS; AND 2. APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PLAN.**

Ms. Enos stated that this was related to two properties that are in the Fifth District. In May 2019 WCA reached out to the Fifth District to consider funds for both properties: Mount Baldy and Walnut Creek. Both properties were acquired without a funding stream to aid with the operations and maintenance such as Ranger services to deal with park issues. As a result, the operational funds have been drained.

Walnut Creek is now under development and is funded through Proposition A. Ms. Enos explained that the park is having issues with dead/dying trees that have fallen during heavy wind and rains and has damaged neighboring properties and the community surrounding the park has voiced concerns. Along with lot line adjustment issues this makes Walnut Creek a critical site.

She explained that the First and Fifth District allocated \$85, 000 for use at Walnut Creek, but WCA must formally apply in order to identify the project, its name, and the accomplishments. Funding under Proposition A would address lot line adjustments and \$30,000 has been identified for payment of work to be done by an authorized youth employment program such as California Conservation Corps, or San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps. WCA anticipates a May time frame to receive the grant with an estimated 18-20 months to complete the project.

There were no questions from the board.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Uranga seconded the motion. Board Voted. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.**

- 15. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO 1. AUTHORIZE THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR ACQUISITION AND 2. AUTHORIZE ENTERING INTO NEGOTIATIONS FOR ACQUISITION OF A PORTION OF ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER 8684-024-035 IN THE AZUSA FOOTHILLS KNOWN AS VASQUEZ III ACCESS PROPERTY; AND 3. ENTER SUCH CONTRACTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO COMPLETE DUE DILIGENCE ON THE PROPOSED PROPERTY. PROPERTY OWNER: VASQUEZ RANCH, LLC. WCA NEGOTIATORS: MARK STANLEY.**

Ms. Tsong stated that during the November 2019 board meeting the board received a report in closed session on acquisition documents then in negotiation for Vasquez II 'Overlook' to both accept a grant from RMC and to authorize negotiations of the acquisition of the property by Executive Officer, Mark Stanley. As part of the purchase of the Vasquez II 'Overlook', the Vasquez family signed an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement that gave WCA right to negotiate terms for the sale of a portion the Vasquez III 'Access' property. She explained that this 'Access' property leads to more than 200 acres of conservation land with funding coming from RMC and Azusa JPA.

Ms. Tsong explained that the purchase of the Vasquez III 'Access' property would require a land survey (estimated to cost over \$10,000) to include the creation of a legal description for the undeveloped portion of the property, a Phase I assessment, and an appraisal. The Vasquez

family intends to keep a portion of the property that contains active orchards, but would like to sell the portion of property that contains steep slopes, hills, and an access road primarily used by Los Angeles County Flood Control District, Los Angeles County Fire Department, and Azusa Water and Power and is not accessible to the public. Although, she clarified that there may be recorded rights in favor of the County/City that might require consent of that party to open the road for public pedestrian use. She concluded that due diligence and negotiation for the purchase of the Vasquez Access property would be funded by RMC19006.

There were no questions from the Board.

**Vice Chair Maravilla motioned to approve this item. Board Member Uranga seconded the motion. Board Voted. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.**

**16. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR AND/OR DESIGNEE TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT TO CONDUCT A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY'S VASQUEZ II PROPERTY AND INTERIM MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VASQUEZ I AND II.**

Ms. Tsong explained that the Vasquez II property acquisition was approved by the board in November 2019 and escrow is expected to close any time soon. Now that it is Springtime WCA would like to document the biological resources on the site. She stated that Tidal Influence, a Long Beach-based ecological consulting firm, had conducted a biological survey of Vasquez I in Spring 2019, and recorded various plant and animal life thriving in the area. A biological survey of Vasquez II is expected to yield a similar wealth of knowledge about local foothills ecosystems. Such knowledge will inform future decisions about trail locations and public access.

Ms. Tsong stated WCA would conduct a competitive RFP process for biological consultants. A consultant will be chosen from candidates who can demonstrate substantial field experience in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills. She explained that a resolution for approval includes a not-to-exceed value of up to \$50,000, which would be funded by the existing grant RMC19006 for the Vasquez Overlook Acquisition Project.

There were no questions from the Board.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Chang seconded the motion. Board Voted. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.**

**17. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO UPDATE BILLABLE RATES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019/2020.**

Ms. Law explained that there were two material changes to the WCA Billable Rates for the FY 2019-2020 budget. First, the Authority plans to hire a Project Manager III to replace a Project Manager I and a Project Manager II that resigned in November 2019 and January 2020 respectively. Second, the Authority's Medical Benefit Plan expense increased 5.08% over our previous budget estimate for Fiscal Year 2019/2020. This involves the Billable Rate, Administrative and Billable Rate, Consultant Rate, and Salary and Employee Benefits Rate. The four rates developed best reflect reporting and reimbursement requirements under the

Agency's current portfolio of projects. If approved, staff plans to make the updated Billable Rates effective January 16, 2020 for the payroll period ending January 19, 2020.

There were no further questions from the Board.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Uranga seconded the motion. Board Voted. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.**

**18. CLOSED SESSION: PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54956.9, THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY MAY HOLD A CLOSED SESSION ON THE FOLLOWING ITEM: SAVE OUR ACCESS – SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS V. WCA, ET AL., LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT CASE NO. 18STCP02904.**

**19. CLOSED SESSION: PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54956.9, THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY MAY HOLD A CLOSED SESSION ON THE FOLLOWING ITEM: PURCHASE OPTION TO ACQUIRE REAL PROPERTY IN THE FOOTHILLS ABOVE AZUSA ASSESSOR PARCEL NO. 8684-024-035. PROPERTY OWNER: VASQUEZ RANCH LLC; WCA NEGOTIATORS: MARK STANLEY, DEBBIE ENOS. UNDER CONSIDERATION: TERMS.**

Closed Session began at 2:20pm and ended at approximately 2:35 pm.

Staff provided updates and the Board provided direction.

**20. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 1:30 pm at The Garvey Center in Rosemead.

**21. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by Madam Chair Chico at approximately 2:37 pm.

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Herlinda Chico  
Chair

X

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Jennifer Fierro  
Board Secretary