

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Madam Chair Chico at approximately 2:05 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom.US.

A. 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. Julian Juarez (for Mark Pestrella)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Karly Katona (for Supervisor Ridley-Thomas)
Mr. Roberto Uranga (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)

STAFF PRESENT

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
Dena Williams, Board Secretary
Debbie Enos, Deputy Executive Officer
Nicole Law, Fiscal Manager
Jane Tsong, Project Manager
Joseph Gonzalez, RMC Project Manager
Jeremy Munns, Project Manager
Johnathan Perisho, Project Manager
David Edsall, Jr., Deputy Attorney General

2. PUBLIC COMMENT. [ENSURE THAT ALL THE STATEMENTS MADE ARE CORRECT!]

Christy Catalano stated that the owner from “Baldy Connect” would be contacting WCA with more information about the options available to WCA. This company has a cell & Internet system being used by the residents already. She also had questions about the map that is included with the staff report – asking if the white lines represent WCA property? Also, the white tiny little spot does that also indicate WCA property?

Allison Denning’s comment was read by the Chair and it stated that the cell tower is too big and would like the tower relocated to Spring Hill. A lattice cell tower painted with a non-reflective surface would be far less visible in our natural environment.

Elizabeth Hooyboer's comment was read by the Chair and it stated that the Spring Hill area where an alternative location for a cell tower would be a possible alternative to Hog Back on the Wilderness Preserve. The Hog Back location is very near Mt. Baldy Rd while the Spring Hill site is behind and below a ridge quite a distance from the road. The two sites would offer equal emergency coverage to the area.

Stephen Sacks was not able to make his comment at the meeting but, he too, wants the cell tower moved to Spring Hill.

Maria Soto stated that she is in opposition of the naming of the Duck Farm due to the history and memory of the stench in the area. Maria also stated that she met with Debbie Enos on March 9 and was told that outreach would be conducted. On June 16, Maria met with Michelle Arce and was told that the name would be Duck Farm River Park. Maria also stated that they have started collecting names of those who are also in opposition and have gathered 49 signatures so far.

Laura Santos stated that she had originally agreed to the name proposed for the Duck Farm but that she is now backtracking and is opposing the proposed name. Laura also stated that she never knew why there was an objection to the name until the meeting she attended the day before. Laura also thinks that the outreach has been inadequate and the opponents have an important cultural and historic story and it needs to be included in the Duck Farm.

John Mellon stated that he supported the proposed name for the Duck Farm. John also stated that the name is a part of the history of what the Duck Farm used to be.

John Soto stated that he remembers the ridicule the kids in the area received for living in the area of the Duck Farm and the name of the Duck Farm brings back bad memories and he thinks that the name should be changed and he will continue to collect signatures.

Conrad Carrillo stated that he spoke with Deborah Enos concerning having a security structure at the park, he doesn't think having the park wide open is a good idea. He also stated that he has his pros and cons about the naming of the park and he thinks we should name the park San Fidel Ave. Park.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes were from June 18, 2020 meeting.

There were no comments or corrections, 0 Nays and 0 Abstentions. Minutes were approved.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

No report was given.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

5. WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Mr. Stanley stated that the state has continuously updated our office on Executive Orders such as to not congregate in indoor facilities which extended to the work place as well. The State is asking that each department to have at least 75% employees telecommute. Mr. Stanley also stated that he would keep the board updated as he receives information.

6. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTATION BY HOUSTON MAGNANI & ASSOCIATES

Mr. Doug Houston from Houston Magnani & Associates gave a Powerpoint presentation that outlined all of the State and Assembly bills that had been introduced to Senate prior to the shut down and are potentially of interest to the WCA. Mr. Houston also stated that it has been really challenging to advance new legislature and that 10 to 20% of the bills are being processed due to limited and very specific access to the state.

Mr. Houston mentioned that the good news was that in last year's budget staff managed to secure couple of earmarks for RMC/WCA for Compton Creek restoration work and for planning of Lower LA River project and the funds have been retained but they need to get under contract so that they are not cut from the budget.

7. LIAISON & ACTIVITIES REPORT

Mr. Stanley, on providing an update on activity at the San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative, stated that for the San Gabriel National Monument, the Forest Supervisor, Jerry Perez gave an update on the Angeles National Forest's response to COVID-19 in that they are struggling in keeping up with maintenance capacity, they are experiencing exceptionally high number of visitors. Visitors are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings, practice social distancing and pack out their trash.

Debbie Enos stated that construction work restarted in June and will continue through July, team meetings will resume later this month. Ms. Enos also stated that the Construction Manager is finalizing an update to the project completion schedule including the roadway, parking lot, the metal work and wood related to the shade structures, with the General Contractor and is anticipated to be completed by end of October early November of this year.

Ms. Enos also stated that the photos in the staff report show a new specimen tree at the entrance of the park which is a Coast Live Oak Tree, the steel for the shade structures await their wood beams.

Ms. Enos stated that the Conservation Corps of Long Beach was demobilized from the Parque Dos Rios project due to COVID-19 stay at home orders but are scheduled to remobilize the construction workforce by August and the interpretive signs have been completed and are awaiting delivery to the Conservation Corps of Long Beach.

Jane Tsong stated that she was able to update the RMC Board members at their last board meeting on the report of Biological Opportunities on the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Open Space Acquisition Master Plan. Ms. Tsong also stated that WCA is consolidating research completed thus far, so that Psomas may be engaged to complete the Human Factors research, incorporating stakeholder feedback for completion of the Plan.

Ms. Tsong stated that the map for the Mt. Baldy property has been outlined by the white lines and was not sure if the property was indeed 3 parcels but that the map shows three different parcels outlined in white and also the tiny white spot just South of the parcels is also WCA property.

Johnathan Perisho stated the Board approved an extension back in May for the Request for Proposal for design services and the response period was closed on July 6th and WCA has received two responses, are being scored by representatives from both the RMC and WCA and based on scores a contractor

team will be selected and a contract negotiated by later this week.

8. EXPENDITURE REPORT

Nicole Law explained that Exhibit A reflects the balances of the FY 19/20 as of June 30, 2020.

Ms. Law explained that lease revenues were budgeted at 95% of total combined leases to allow for tenant turnover and related expenses. Ms. Law stated that the Authority had no tenant turnover costs in FY19/20 and also received three months leases from Unit 96 resulting in higher than budgeted revenue receipts for El Encanto.

Ms. Law stated that the property management contribution is lower than budgeted as the one-time contribution for ADA/seismic upgrade from the RMC is in process.

Ms. Law stated that the funding opportunities and ranger services line items are lower than YTD budget projections as the Authority has only received invoices through May 2020 and all other expenditure items are project to be within budgetary limits except for the line item previously reported in prior meeting such as property tax.

9. DUCK FARM RIVER PARK NAMING OUTREACH UPDATE

Jeremy Munns stated that he would be providing the results of the Duck Farm River Park naming outreach in a power point presentation. Mr. Munns gave a brief history of how the Duck Farm came into the interest with first the Trust for Public Lands in 2001 and then transferred to WCA in 2004.

Mr. Munns also stated that in 2017, the community painted a mural with the name "Duck Farm" in celebration of Earth Day, in 2019, in response to a household in the neighborhood's opposition to the name, the WCA conducted several outreach efforts from July to November of 2019, and in 2020, following a door-to-door survey, WCA hired an outreach specialist to reach out to households who had concerns as well as organizations that support the name.

Mr. Munns showed the flyers that were passed out to the adjacent neighborhoods to the park and also stated that there were no name suggestions returned at that time.

Mr. Munns mentioned that back in October 2019 WCA decided to get additional feedback on the name and to allow opportunity for name suggestions and again, there were very few name suggestions. In November 2019 there was a door-to-door survey done by six SGV Conservation Corps members who spoke with 113 out of 226 residences surrounding the park over two days.

Mr. Munns concluded with that overall, the survey results showed 68% had a strong preference for "The Duck Farm" or "Duck Farm River Park" names, 8% had a strong preference for "San Gabriel River Park at the Duck Farm" name, 6% were neutral towards all name choices, 8 % strongly disliked all name choices and 11% had no opinion.

Madam Chair Chico stated that she appreciates all of the work that has been put into the outreach and the surveys that have been conducted but questioned if we had ever asked if there was a community leader or a historical person that we could have named the park after to give some direction to look into. Jeremy answered and said that we left a blank slate because we didn't want to lead anyone towards a specific name and didn't make any offerings of a name.

Board member Chang wanted to know if from the signatures that were just collected have they been

involved in any of the previous meetings. This question was not answered.

Madam Chair Chico mentioned that Ms. Santos initially supported the name and after some more engagement she decided she was against the name and Chair Chico is wondering how many others are there from the community who also supported the name and now are no longer in support of the name.

Mark Stanley said he would address that concern and commented that this is just an informational update for the board members and that a decision was not going to be made today and there would be more engagement with members of the community before it is brought back to the board.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- 10. FUND BALANCE REPORT**
- 11. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A BUDGET AMENDMENT TO CONTRACT WCA19507 TO THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY CONSERVATION CORPS FOR US FOREST SERVICE PROJECT 15-PA-110501100-020 MOD 2.**

Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve items 10 & 11. Vice Chair Maravilla seconded the motion. Board Voted. 4 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.

REGULAR CALENDAR

- 12. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE FY 18/19 WCA FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE AUDIT AND RELATED FINDINGS.**

Ms. Rachelle Anema gave a summary of the financial highlights which were the Authority's net position had a slight increase to \$27.34 million, cash deposits and the Treasury Pool slightly decreased to \$2.88 million, operating revenues increased to \$2.02 million due to an increase in grant funding and subsequently operating expenses increased to \$1.93 million.

Ms. Anema mentioned that there were no findings noted in the current fiscal year financial report and the Audit received a clean opinion of the Authority. Ms. Anema also mentioned that if the board would like to see a high level summary they can look at pages 4 through 6 of the financial report.

There were no questions from the Board.

Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve item 12. Board Member Chang seconded the motion. Board Voted. 4 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.

- 13. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN UPDATE TO THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK.**

Nicole Law gave a summary of the sections that need to be updated which were Sections 2.3- Equal Employment Opportunity Statement, 2.4- Harassment, 5.6- Break Time for Nursing Mothers, 6.7- Working Remotely and Section 12.2- Family Care Leave.

There were no questions from the Board.

Vice Chair Maravilla motioned to approve item 13. Board Member Chang seconded the motion. Board Voted. 4 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.

- 14. 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.**

There was no closed session at this meeting.

15. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

A. STATEMENTS, RESPONSES, QUESTIONS OR DIRECTIONS TO STAFF PURSUANT TO SECTION 54954.2(A) OF THE GOVERNMENT CODE

B. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

16. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 1:30 pm via Zoom.US meeting.

17. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Madam Chair Chico at approximately 3:27 pm.

X

Herlinda Chico
Chair

X

Dena Williams
Board Secretary