

**MINUTES
BOARD MEETING
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (WCA)
July 21, 2016**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mejia at 1:32 p.m. The meeting was held at: Hall of Admin., 500 W. Temple Street, 3rd Floor, Room 383, Los Angeles, CA, Gateway Cities COG, 16401 Paramount Blvd., Conf. Room, Paramount, CA 90723 and San Gabriel Valley Water Company, 11142 Garvey Ave., El Monte, CA 91734.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Brian Mejia, Chair (for Supervisor Antonovich)
Mr. Armond Ghazarian (for Ms. Farber)
Ms. Connie Sziebl (for Supervisor Knabe)
Mr. Roberto Uranga (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)
Mr. Dan Arrighi
Ms. Janet Chin (for Supervisor Solis)

MEMBERS ABSENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
Debbie Enos, Deputy Executive Officer
Dena Williams, Board Secretary
Salian Garcia, Fiscal Manager
Rob Romanek, Project Manager
Johnathan Perisho, Project Manager
Terry Fujimoto, Counsel

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

There were one set of minutes from June 16, 2016.

Board Member Uranga moved to have the minutes approved. Board Member Arrighi seconded the motion. Board Voted – 3 ayes; 0 nays; 1 abstention. Minutes were approved.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Mejia did not give a report.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

6. LIAISON & ACTIVITIES REPORT

At this time, Board Member Sziebl arrived at the Paramount location at approximately 1:42 pm during the Liaison Report.

The Executive Officer stated that there was a countywide park needs assessment that took place over the course of 14 months which began with a 40-member Steering Committee and a 9-member Technical Advisory Committee. He went on to state that these committees did a 90 park agency inventory which included 3,000 parks, 9,000 amenities that were documented, 750 potential park opportunity site verified, a park metrics of 186 study areas were analyzed and a total of 300 facilitators attended community meetings throughout the county. Mr. Stanley stated that on July 5th the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted in support of advancing a parks funding measure to the November ballot under the name of The Safe, Clean Neighborhood Park, Open Space, Beaches, Rivers Protection and Water Conservation Measure and that it would add an annual parcel tax of one-and-a-half cent per square foot of development for most land uses. He also stated that this measure would replace the 1996 Prop A which expires in 2019 and the categories for funding would be Community based park investment program, safe parks, healthy communities, Urban Greening program, Local agency maintenance and servicing funds, Protecting open spaces, beaches, watershed program, Regional recreational facilities, trail & accessibility program, Youth and veteran job training & placement opportunities programs plus program innovation and oversight. Mr. Stanley mentioned that AB2444 is a State Bond that might be put on the November ballot as well, or pushed back until 2018, but if approved for November, it would benefit WCA given 20% of the funds would be directed to disadvantaged communities and another \$25 million as written is earmarked for RMC. Mr. Stanley briefly mentioned that the Leadership Committee for IRWM Planning will meet on July 27th to outline a proposal for the management framework for the DAC Outreach and Engagement process. Mr. Stanley mentioned that the SGRDCA Design Team is still in the permitting process for Stage 1 and we are waiting on comments from the Army Corps of Engineers and the revised draft of LA County Parks & Recreation license agreement to move forward with this project. Johnathan Perisho gave a brief statement on the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan stating that the WCA is advancing collaborative integration of regional efforts and a second advisory committee meeting was held on July 19th and will continue with these meetings for the third Tuesday of every third month to engage stakeholders, experts, Gateway COG and cities development of assessments and community outreach. Rob Romanek stated that the Watershed Ranger Program is a continuation of the on-site public engagement program developed back in 2013/2014 by the San Gabriel Canyon Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project and is deploying a crew of young adults from San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps to conduct roaming outreach along high-use recreational corridors of the East, North and West Forks of the San Gabriel River from Memorial Day Weekend 2016 to Labor Day Weekend 2016. Board Member Sziebl asked what kind of changes has been seen in 2013/2014. Mr. Romanek answered with that it's difficult to make quantitative measurements of the changes, however we do see a decrease in litter and trash made by the visitors up at the East Fork and the public seems to be containing their trash better. The other issue was the modification of the stream and construction of rock dams. The public is doing better with this issue and we are monitoring this issue more carefully. This year we are counting how many trash bags are being brought up from the river bed just to keep better tracking of trash being thrown away. Board Member Uranga asked if the

members of the crew are receiving credits for the training class they are taking and Rob answered that they receive a formal certification and can apply to receive 4 units of college credit through UC Davis.

7. EXPENDITURE REPORT

Mr. Stanley stated that under the revenue portion WCA's lease revenue is higher than budgeted due to no tenant turnover costs in FY 15/16 for the El Encanto. The lease revenue from the Duck Farm property is just under 81% due to the commercial tenant's outstanding rent for the months between May 2015 and January 2016 but that they filed for Chapter 12 and has been required by the Trustee to an Executory Lease Contract stay current thus the tenant has been current between February and June 2016. Mr. Stanley also stated that the tenant is due in court today and if approved by the court, along with the reorganization plan, the WCA will begin to collect the past due balance over the next 3 years in monthly installments of \$1,389.33 that will begin on September 15, 2016. Mr. Stanley mentioned that under the expenses category, the two largest remaining expenditures are the LA County Auditor-Controller services which we have not been invoiced for and MRCA for our ranger services and Staff expects these outstanding expenditures to be at or below their budgeted amounts.

8. FUND BALANCE REPORT

Mr. Stanley stated that in funds V19, V38 & V48 there have been decreases in the fund balance due to payments that needed to be made and in funds V52, V61, V71 & V85 there have been increases in fund balances due to advances being received from different agencies for project labor and expenditures.

REGULAR CALENDAR

9. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT AMENDMENTS TO THE WCA EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND RELATED POLICIES.

Salian reported that the WCA Employee Handbook is being amended to update policies to be consistent with Federal and all state laws, including amendments to California's Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA). Salian stated that the update for Section 2.3 located on page 8 of Exhibit A, is for the prevention of harassment, discrimination and retaliation and pointed out that supervisors, coworkers and third parties are prohibited from engaging in unlawful behavior under the FEHA. Section 2.4 is located on page 9 of Exhibit A, further emphasizes that supervisors are required to report all complaints. Section 2.10 Whistleblower policy, has been extended to comply with the California Labor Code Section 98.6 and AB 1509 which includes the prohibited act of the Authority to discriminate, retaliate or take adverse action against its employees with a family member who has, or perceived to have, engaged in protected conduct under applicable provisions of the California Labor Code. Section 4.5 coincides with Section 5.3, the US Department of Labor redefines and delimits the exemptions for Executive, Administrative and Professional employees, which includes the increase of the minimum salary threshold for full-time worker to be classified as exempt at a minimum of \$41,000 annually, and being raised to a minimum of \$47,476 annually for those who meet a duties test. Section 8.0, located on page 26 of Exhibit A, pertains to the Travel and Per Diem and this policy has been extended to include the process of requesting mileage reimbursement for authorized business-use mileage and the frequency of submitting mileage reimbursement requests which is 30 days of the preceding month. Section 11.15, located on page 37 of Exhibit A, is a new Dog Friendly Workplace policy. Essentially, having a dog-friendly workplace creates a better place to work, the employees feel more inspired and motivated and it forces employees to get out of the office and take walks. Mr. Ghazarian asked if there was a time frame involved with turning in the mileage reimbursements and a requirement for approval and payment. Ms. Garcia answered yes, the reimbursement would need to

be turned in 30 days of the preceding month and after authorization is given, the fiscal manager turns it in for payment within the 30 days. Vice Chair Chin asked how long after an employee files a harassment complaint does the Supervisor have to report it to FEHA. Ms. Garcia answered that it needs to be reported immediately. Board Member Arrighi asked if the dog owner is responsible for biting someone; it states that the owner will be financially responsible for any damage or cleaning costs, but what about if it were to bite someone. Ms. Garcia answered to look at the sixth bullet of page 37 of Exhibit A and it states that dog owners will be completely responsible for their dog at all times including court costs and attorney fees that may incur as a result of injuries to persons and/or other pets. Board Member Uranga asked if there was a policy regarding absenteeism. Ms. Garcia stated that in Chapter 5, page 18 it explains the attendance and the unauthorized absences. Mr. Uranga then stated that he found what he was looking for. No further questions were asked.

Board Member Uranga moved to approve the resolution for Item 9. Vice Chair Chin seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 5 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.

10. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN UPDATE TO BILLABLE RATES FOR FY 16/17.

Ms. Garcia stated that each year staff brings before the Board an update to the WCA billable rates to bring the rates in accordance with the FY 16/17 budget to reflect material changes in personnel, policies, fiscal budgets and grant program requirements. The changes noted in the tables in the report are due to an increase in health insurance cost as a result of the Authority's planned change to participate in CalPERS for health care services in the fall, promotion of a PMI staff member to a Senior PMIII classification and an approved 2% COLA for all staff and budgeted satisfactory completion of new hire probationary period increase.

Board Member Arrighi moved to approve the resolution for Item 10. Chair Mejia seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 5 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.

11. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO 1) ACCEPT CONSERVATION EASEMENTS WITHIN THE PUENTE HILLS TOTALING 12 ACRES; AND, 2) ACCEPT A MONITORING FUND ENDOWMENT MANAGED BY THE SAN DIEGO FOUNDATION.

Ms. Enos stated that back in January of 2016 WCA was approached by the Puente Hills Habitat Authority to accept a Conservation Easement located within the Puente Hills made up of 53 acres. Ms. Enos went on to state that this item is a follow-up to that easement but is located in the City of Monterey Park totaling 12 acres and staff recommends acceptance of the conservation easements and endowment for monitoring funds as a suitable third-party Conservation Easement Holder and also WCA will accept the conservation easements upon receipt of perfect recordable legal descriptions and an executed Fund Agreement from the San Diego Foundation. Board Member Sziebl asked what the \$1000 per month was for, she did not understand. Ms. Enos answered that it was actually \$1000 per year to monitor the easement and file reports and will be adjusted for inflation.

Board Member Sziebl moved to approve the resolution for Item 11. Board Member Uranga seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 5 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.

12. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE FOOTHILLS ABOVE AZUSA, ASSESSOR PARCEL NO. 8684-024-036, FROM THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS REGIONAL CONSERVANCY.

Mr. Romanek stated that this item is an acquisition of +/- 39.79 undeveloped open space acres located within the foothills above Azusa and preserves one of the last remaining private holding along the foothill interface between the San Gabriel Valley and the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument for the purpose of watershed restoration, community-driven stewardship and suitable low-impact recreation. Mr. Romanek went on to state that the property is in threat of going into foreclosure and that a transfer of this property to the WCA would protect significant natural and scenic resources, and help to preserve critical landscape connections to close-by conservation lands, including the River Wilderness Park. The current owners, San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy (SGMRC), have entered into negotiations with the WCA and the property has also been listed for sale as there is no written agreement with the WCA for the purchase and sale. If a written agreement is not executed between WCA and SGMRC in a timely manner, the SGMRC intends to offer this third party an option of the property. Mr. Romanek mentioned that a purchase price of \$600,000 has been offered and a draft agreement is presently under review by SGMRC. If unacceptable conditions are identified, the WCA has the option to terminate the agreement with no further obligation. Mr. Romanek also mentioned that if an onsite mine is verified through further property inspection, Staff will evaluate in consultation with the Authority's legal counsel and insurance agent and decide whether to terminate the purchase agreement or seek further direction from the WCA board. Vice Chair Chin asked if that was the Rosedale Development on the bottom of the page with the illustration. She also asked if the point of access go down to the Rosedale property line. Mr. Romanek answered yes the point of access is adjacent to the proper line. Mr. Stanley also answered that this would most likely not affect the Rosedale property. Board Member Uranga asked if we are already in a purchase agreement for the property. Mr. Romanek answered that SGMRC is waiting to hear of the resolution today and if approved, WCA will enter into a purchase agreement.

Board Member Uranga moved to approve the resolution for item 12. Board Member Arrighi seconded the motion. Unanimously passed. Board voted – 5 ayes; 0 nays; 0 abstentions.

13. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be held on September 15, 2016. Board member Sziebl asked about Mr. Velasquez asking questions at the last board meeting. If that was her Chief of Staff, shouldn't he be present on the minutes? The comment was so noted, and it would be corrected. Mr. Uranga announced that he would not be present for the September board meeting because he would be out of town for a conference.

14. ADJOURNMENT

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

X

Brian Mejia
Chair

X

Dena Williams
Board Secretary