

**MINUTES
BOARD MEETING
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (WCA)
October 25, 2018**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Madam Chair Chin at approximately 1:33 p.m. The meeting was held at: The Garvey Center in Rosemead.

2. FLAG SALUTE

3. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Janet Chin, Chair (for Supervisor Solis)
Ms. Herlinda Chico (for Supervisor Hahn)
Ms. Debra Mendelsohn (for Supervisor Barger)
Mr. Roberto Uranga (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)
Mr. Dan Arrighi, Vice Chair (Rivers & Mountains Conservancy)
Mr. Julian Juarez (for Mr. Pestrella)

MEMBERS ABSENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
Debbie Enos, Deputy Executive Officer
Dena Williams, Board Secretary
Salian Garcia, Fiscal Manager
Nicole Law, Fiscal Analyst
Michelle Tarian, Project Manager
Joseph Gonzalez, Project Manager
Alex Linz, Project Manager
Jane Tsong, Project Manager
Sally Gee, Project Manager
David Edsall, Jr., Deputy Attorney General

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Robert Gross filled out a request to speak but chose not to make a public comment.

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes were from July 19, 2018 meeting.

Vice Chair Arrighi motioned to approve minutes. Mr. Uranga seconded the motion. Board members voted. There were 5 Ayes, 0 Nays and 0 Abstentions. Minutes were approved.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

No report was given.

7. BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION

Madam Chair Chin was recognized for her hard work and time served with the board as this was her last WCA board meeting. Vice Chair Arrighi presented gifts to Chair Janet Chin on behalf of the board members and WCA staff.

8. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTATION

This item was presented later in the meeting due to The Weideman Group arriving late.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

9. LIAISON & ACTIVITIES REPORT

The Executive Officer stated that AB1558 was signed by the Governor and staff was given an extension for the second phase of this bill to March 2019.

Mr. Stanley stated that SB5 was signed by the Governor and became Proposition 68 which passed during the June 2018 primary and will be presented to the board members in January for final approval.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB1918, AB2534 and AB2614 were all vetoed by the Governor by wrongly asserting that the actions of the proposed office duplicated the California Department of Parks and Recreation's activities and also suggested that Proposition 68 provided the necessary funding to carry out the activities captured in AB2534 and AB2614. Mr. Stanley welcomed any questions regarding any of the bills and there were no questions from the board.

Mr. Stanley stated that team meetings for the Emerald Necklace project have commenced and will be held the 4th Wednesday of every month at 3:30pm in the South El Monte Office of Supervisorial District 1.

Mr. Stanley mentioned that the Lower Los Angeles River Advisory committee held its first meeting on August 22, 2018 and the next meeting will be in November 2018. Mr. Stanley stated that the role of the Advisory committee will be to provide guidance on issues presented before them, but ultimately, individual entities with jurisdiction along the river corridor will continue to have decision-making authority. Mr. Stanley stated that staff is currently uploading content into a Beta version of the portal in conjunction with the Gateway greening Plan and staff is looking to reengage the services of web developers prior to public soft-launch in spring of 2019.

Mr. Stanley stated that for the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Master Plan a conceptual design and imager for the Greenscape tool is underway with all 12 greenscapes in production and the last Advisory Committee meeting was held on October 16th and the next meeting will be held January

15th, 2019.

Mr. Stanley stated that construction is scheduled to commence in December 2018 for the South Gate Habitat Restoration Project but that homeless encampments on the property will need to be removed first with the help of Caltrans, City of South Gate, County Flood Control, Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority (MRCA) and others before permits and a ground-breaking event can occur.

Debbie Enos stated that an item was brought before the San Dimas City Council on October 23, 2018 which was to award a contract for the design team, BlueGreen Consulting, for the trail loop connection over the Tzu Chi Foundation property which will allow WCA to implement a Metropolitan Water District's Innovative Conservation Program grant to test planting technologies to support native revegetation of the Walnut Creek Habitat site.

Mr. Stanley concluded his discussion of projects, unless the board had any questions. There were no questions from the board.

10. EXPENDITURE REPORT

Nicole Law stated that the FY 2018/2019 budget with balances as of October 18, 2018 was attached as Exhibit A for view. Ms. Law gave a brief synopsis of the revenues received and expenditures made and stated that the Statement of Receipts and Disbursements for the quarter ending June 30, 2018 was attached as Exhibit B. There were no questions from the board.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- 11. FUND BALANCE REPORT**
- 12. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE SIGNATURE AUTHORITY FOR FISCAL MANAGER.**
- 13. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT A BUDGET AUGMENTATION GRANT FROM RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CONFLUENCE WITH CATTLE CANYON IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT.**
- 14. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN UPDATE TO THE WCA BILLABLE RATES FOR FY 2018-2019.**

Vice Chair Arrighi motioned to approve items 11 through 14. Board Member Uranga seconded the motion. Board Voted. 5 Ayes, 0 Nays & 0 Abstentions.

REGULAR CALENDAR

- 15. CONSIDERATION OF 1) A RESOLUTION CERTIFYING THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT PREPARED FOR THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CONFLUENCE WITH CATTLE CANYON IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT; AND ADOPTING FINDINGS OF FACT, AND A MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORT PROGRAM PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT; AND, 2) A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AND APPROVING THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CONFLUENCE WITH CATTLE CANYON CONCEPT SITE PROGRAM REPORT.**

Mr. Ron Jones made public comments on this item and stated one of his concerns is that Angeles National Forest and WCA failed to comply with California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements in responding to comments made during the 45-day public review and commenting period of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Another concern Mr. Jones mentioned was that the agencies failed to comply or discuss many of the components required by CEQA & NEPA such as the measuring of baseline conditions, traffic circulations and parking impacts in the project area, providing reasonable alternatives in which there have been proposed actions or no action at all, or providing a cost benefit analysis in which a sufficient disclosure of the analysis of the proposed action for informed decision making needs to be made available.

Mr. Jones states that this project illegally blocks at both public and private, federally protected, statutorily protected access to the private inholding property known as the “Bridge To Nowhere” and is in violation of the Wilderness Act of 1964, among other acts, and though the project is divided into five (5) different areas, his main focus is on the Cattle Canyon Bridge Northward to the trailhead which is approximately 1500 feet off Camp Bonita Prairie Forks Road.

Mr. Jones states that what this project is trying to accomplish is to decrease public access to public land by decreasing parking spaces by fifty percent (50%). Mr. Jones concluded his comments by stating, “I am the guy you’re going to fear the most”.

Ms. Gretchen Jones made public comments on this item and stated that her concerns were that WCA is reporting 270 “new” parking spaces in the Cattle Canyon Plan when in fact it is taking 417 parking spaces and reducing it to 270 parking spaces. Ms. Jones also stated that a “parking study” had not been conducted but that an “educational survey” was done back in 2014 which was actually an informal vehicle count.

Ms. Amy Wong of Nature For All made some comments on this item and stated that this project addresses severely inadequate recreational facilities, it is a critical opportunity to fulfill a vision President Obama had back in 2014 and it is “the” defining project for the first decade of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument (SGMNM).

Joseph Gonzalez stated staff is recommending that the governing board consider a resolution to certify the FEIR, adopt finding of fact, adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Report Program (MMRP) and if the FEIR is certified, consider a resolution to adopt and approve the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project Final Concept Site Plan and Programming Report.

Mr. Gonzalez introduced Lynne Dwyer from BlueGreen Consulting and May Lao and Tom Barnes from ESA as the consultants on the project to give a presentation of the San Gabriel River Confluence with Cattle Canyon Improvements Project’s assessment of the present conditions.

Ms. Dwyer stated that the project is broken down into five project areas, presented photos of each area and gave a brief description of the area and explained that the 165-acre project site is in need of improvements to provide access to sustainable recreation and support the protection of natural and cultural resources including improvements for public day-use with recreational trails, river access, interpretive areas, scenic overlooks, picnic areas, a pedestrian

bridge, habitat restoration, right of way improvements, loading area/shuttle stops, parking, refuse disposal, restrooms and USFS visitor kiosks and a “Geology Hut”.

Ms. Dwyer also stated that due to current conditions, there is damage to vegetation, soil compaction and erosion, there is on-site litter, there are high levels of litter deposition both in and adjacent to the watercourse that the Regional Water Board determined that the level of trash has exceeded the existing Water Quality Standard necessary to protect the beneficial uses of the river.

Mr. Barnes stated each area contains various project enhancements including the development of new picnic areas, pedestrian trails, river access points, upgrades to existing facilities, improvements to paved and unpaved roadways, parking improvements or formalizing informal parking, restrooms and refuse disposal improvements, restoration of riparian and upland vegetation communities of the East Fork San Gabriel River and Cattle Canyon Creek, and implementation of a Forest Closure Order to prohibit overnight camping.

Board Member Chico asked if there were any comments that opposed the project. Mr. Gonzalez answered that there were some comments with some concerns regarding the project but Ms. Chico clarified her question regarding oppositions to the project. Ms. Chico expressed that she did not feel comfortable enough to vote on this item without knowing how the general public felt about the project and requested a fifteen minute recess for staff to look for the comments to review at a later time in the meeting.

Board Member Mendelsohn stated that she would have to review comments before voting on the resolution and also suggested tabling the item until she could review the comments. She asked if there was a way she could take a look at them. Mark Stanley suggested that the board members have the opportunity to review the comments and Mr. Gonzalez stated that he could bring up the comments online. A board member mentioned a possible recess. Deputy Attorney General David Edsall stated that a recess could only be taken to allow staff to pull up the comments, but that the board should only review and deliberate on the comments in open session. It was agreed that this matter would be set aside momentarily to allow staff time to bring up the comments online to show the board. The board moved on to additional agenda items.

After this agenda item was recalled for discussion, Mr. Gonzalez came back to the podium.

Board Member Uranga stated that he wanted clarification about what the discussion is all about. Mr. Uranga also stated that from what he saw and heard (referring to BlueGreen Consultants), was that a parking study and a traffic study were done and that the consultants were recommending additional parking along the trail to provide greater access to the river. Mr. Uranga expressed his concern as to why a project needed to be halted from moving forward if there was just the issue of parking involved. Mr. Uranga made a motion to approve the item.

Board Member Chico seconded the item so that they could discuss further. Madam Chair Chin asked if the board would like to review the comments before voting and both Ms. Mendelsohn and Ms. Chico stated they would like to review the comments before moving forward.

May Lao from ESA presented the comments online and skimmed through the ones they found and gave a brief synopsis of each one so that the board members would be informed more clearly on the views of the public. After discussion concluded a vote was taken on the item.

Board Member Uranga motioned to approve this item. Board Member Chico seconded the motion. Board Voted. 4 Ayes, 1 Nay & 0 Abstentions.

16. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AWARD A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT TO *FAST-TRACK CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION* IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$4,000,000 TO IMPLEMENT THE DUCK FARM PHASE 1A-STEP 2 PROJECT.

Mr. Larry Smith stated that the process for this contract began 9 months ago with WCA board approval in July to move forward with the bidding process and to apply for and accept gap grant funding up to \$1.2 million therefore a Request for Bid was published on August 3, 2018 with only one (1) bid that was ultimately submitted and rejected.

Mr. Smith continued to state that inquiries were made to the firms that attended the mandatory bid walk on August 15, 2018 but did not submit a bid to get feedback on why they chose not to submit. Mr. Smith stated that as a result of the feedback, the team proceeded with an alternative contractor solicitation protocol, and invited only two (2) firms that attended the mandatory bid walk from the initial bid solicitation requirement who met all of the qualifications and requirements listed in the initial bid to submit a proposal to provide “value-engineering design-build services” in the context of a not-to-exceed lump sum contract valued at \$4,000,000.

Mr. Smith stated that Fast-Track Construction Corporation was the only firm that submitted a complete proposal by the deadline of October 12, 2018 with the Not-to-Exceed value of \$4 million and therefore seeking approval to negotiate a final Capital Improvement Project Agreement with Fast-Track Construction Corporation so that the project could move forward.

There were no questions from the board.

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

17. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT A GRANT FROM THE RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR GATEWAY CITIES AND RIVERS URBAN GREENING PLAN.

Alex Linz gave a brief background scope of the project for those unfamiliar with the project and stated that the acceptance of additional grant funding from RMC in the amount of up to \$135,000 would constitute additional funding to the WCA to complete tasks associated with the Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Plan through the performance period ending December 31, 2019.

There were no questions from the board.

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

18. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE ENTERING INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH *LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS* FOR SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GREENWAY INITIATIVE PLAN AND ON-CALL SERVICES.

Jane Tsong stated that the WCA wishes to enter into a professional services agreement with LA County Public Works to implement the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Initiative and special project requests with the WCA's territory to support the development of a regional strategic implementation plan for the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Network and green infrastructure improvements along the waterways and associated facilities owned or maintained and operated by LA County Flood Control District.

Ms. Tsong also stated that Exhibit A was the Concept Plan for the Greenway Initiative and Exhibit B was an example of the actual agreement which would not exceed the amount of \$2,050,000 but would constitute a minimum additional funding stream to the WCA of \$250,000 a fiscal year starting FY18/19 through FY22/23 and additionally, LA County Flood Control District has the discretion to augment funding up to a maximum of \$500,000 for added services and can extend the performance period for up to two (2) additional fiscal years.

There were no questions from the board.

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

19. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO 1) ACCEPT A GRANT FROM RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR RIVER RANGER PROGRAM STUDY; AND 2) AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR, OR DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH *PLACEWORKS* TO COMPLETE THE RIVER RANGER STUDY.

Sally Gee stated that the staff recommends the governing board accept a grant from the RMC for the River Ranger Program Study and to authorize the chair, or designee, to negotiate and enter into a professional services contract with PlaceWorks to complete the River Ranger Program Study, Phase 2, for an amount not to exceed \$200,000.

Ms. Gee also stated that Phase 2 of the study will focus on long term plan establishment and sustainability, including recommendations for a governance structure, identification of funding sources to sustain a river ranger network, and pilot program implementation strategy. Ms. Gee concluded with the FY18/19 capital budget would be updated to reflect the \$250,000 grant from RMC and the Placeworks contract value would not exceed \$200,000.

Mark Stanley added that WCA was exploring whether WCA has the capacity to hire the Rangers directly with the help of Counsel Richard Padilla.

Board Member Debra Mendelsohn asked if the study were to move forward, when would the results of the study come back to the board for review. Mr. Stanley answered that there would

be an update to the WCA and RMC board in January. Board Member Mendelsohn asked if the consultant would meet the timeline as stated in the staff report. Mr. Stanley answered that they would meet the timeline and Ms. Gee also stated that the board could find the timeline in Exhibit F.

Board Member Chico made a suggestion that when WCA is exploring their options in hiring Rangers, could the Rangers/Law Enforcement already have experience in patrolling the area so that we understand the scope of what we are asking our Rangers to do. Mr. Stanley answered that there is an ongoing advisory committee that is looking into all of the law enforcement agencies in the cities all along the river and all of Los Angeles County and includes LASA.

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

20. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 1:30 pm. The meeting for November is being cancelled.

21. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Madam Chair Chin at approximately 3:39 pm.

X

Dan Arrighi
Vice Chair

X

Dena Williams
Board Secretary