

DRAFT
NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Back Bay Science Center Conference Room
Tuesday, May 20, 2014 2:00-4:00 pm
OPEN SESSION

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Directors Present: Howard Cork, Peter Fuhrer, Donna Flower, Holly Fuhrer, Michelle Clemente, Frances Cork, Sarah Kimball, Jean Whitaker, Danielle Zacherl

Directors Absent with Apologies: Ginger Hayter

Directors Absent: Peter Bryant, Dick Zembal

Staff: Heather Cieslak, Operations Director, Krista Sloniowski, Watershed Coordinator

Attendees: Jack Keating

The meeting was called to order by President Cork at 2:02 pm. Mr. Keating requested that agenda item 5 regarding the Watershed Grant be discussed first. There were no objections.

5. Status of Watershed Grant and Application for Extension

The advisability of applying for a six month extension of the Watershed Grant was discussed. As described in the draft letter circulated to the Board, Ms. Sloniowski is proposing to use the 6 month grant extension to identify specific opportunities to introduce drought-resistant/native planting in place of regular traditional landscaping, and capture additional storm water runoff within the watershed. There was discussion about how to avoid appearing to tell the agencies involved in water stewardship how to do their job and hence creating resistance. Ms. Sloniowski replied that she would be presenting opportunities, not making directives, which others would be free to accept or reject. Given the pressure on these agencies to deliver greater water conservation, her proposals should be seen as constructive. It was also confirmed that Phase 2 of the existing scope of work has still to be completed by the end of June.

Dick Zembal arrived at 2:15 pm.

Peter Bryant arrived at 2:18 pm.

Mbr Zembal stated that watershed management agencies have worked for decades to make improvements in the watershed, that a large volume of work has been done, and that results have been significant but there are still huge challenges to be met in the face of the magnitude of the problem.

Motion was made by Mbr Bryant that we accept the proposal that Ms. Sloniowski has presented and proceed with the extension. Seconded by Mbr Zacherl. The motion passed with 10 yeas and 1 abstention (Mbr Zembal). Amendments were suggested by Mbr Zacherl, Mbr Kimball, and Mbr Zembal. Ms. Sloniowski will send the amended proposal to Pres Cork to be submitted to the Department of Conservation.

2. Secretary's Report

The Minutes of the April 15, 2014 Board Meeting were presented by Sec Fuhrer. There were no corrections or amendments made. Motion made by VP Fuhrer to approve, seconded by Mbr Whitaker. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Flower presented the 2014 Budget. She confirmed that, as is expected, we will spend more than we bring in this year, due mainly to our decision to move the OD onto fulltime working at least until October. We must do more on the fundraising side, which was the main reason for increasing the OD's hours. Question was raised how our current income compares with other years. Reportedly we are "way down" at this time but our usual fundraising events and income streams are yet to be fulfilled, e.g., corporate donations being pursued by OD Cieslak and Mbr Hayter, the membership drive which will be carried out by Mbr Cork and her committee, the SOCalPAPA Plein Air exhibit and sale scheduled for July, and summer kayak tours which are typically sold-out. Grant applications have been submitted to Gimbel, Marisla, and REI. Volcom just donated \$1,500 after we participated in an outreach event. It was suggested that we could do more advertising for the Opportunity Drawing at Earth Day. OD Cieslak will be putting more of her time and energy into fundraising now that she is full-time. It was suggested that the full Fundraising Committee should meet together to discuss overall its strategy.

Overall, Treas Flower feels that our cash flow is potentially healthy at this time. Pres Cork stated that he is comfortable with our working budget. He commended Treas Flower and thanked her for her hard work. Motion was made by VP Fuhrer that we accept the budget as presented by Treas Flower. Seconded by Mbr Bryant. All were in favor.

4. Committee Updates

Research Committee – Peter Bryant, Chair

The Research Committee is considering broadening its programs to include biology, chemistry, and phytoplankton. The City may develop a monitoring program with which the RC can collaborate. The annual symposium this year will be replaced by the watershed symposia series being organized by Mbr Clemente and the Research Committee, supported by Ms Sloniowski.

Restoration Committee – Sarah Kimball, Chair

Mbr Kimball is leading a field trip around the Bay on two separate days. The objective is to develop an overall restoration strategy for the Bay, based on an assessment of the effectiveness of past projects, and the identification of priorities for action.

Question was raised whether the committee is concerned about developing trails. Pres Cork stated that this was being looked at by the UNB Collaboration team, and a team of naturalists led by Dr Ridley had already submitted an initial study of the potential for upgrading an informal trail below Node 1 into an approved trail with use of boardwalks and a proper stairway down the face of the bluff.

Membership Committee – Frances Cork, Chair

Mbr Cork is proposing that the membership drive be conducted on a yearly basis in the fall rather than quarterly or bi-monthly as it has been in the past. Recognizing that there will be risks and benefits to this change, she believes that it will be more efficient, less expensive, and less labor intensive. Following discussion, a motion was made by Mbr Zacherl and seconded by Mbr Whitaker to accept this proposal. All were in favor.

6. June Symposium Planning – "Monitoring for Sustainability"

Mbr Clemente has taken the lead in organizing and advertising this symposium along with Ms. Sloniowski. It will be held on June 28 at the BBSC from 8:30 to 12:00. There will be three speakers. Reservations will be required since there is limited space. It will be the first of four symposia that will focus on defining the science of sustainability as it relates to the Bay.

Mbr Kimball left the meeting at 2:17 pm.

Mbr Zacherl left the meeting at 2:21 pm.

7. Safety Issues on Back Bay Drive

Pres Cork presented a proposal for further action regarding the cycling safety issues on Back Bay Drive, essentially recommending that the City undertake further studies involving experts to study possible practical steps to improve safety, including enforcement of the existing speed limit. He also recommended that NBC reach out to the Safe Trails Coalition and the OC Bicycle Coalition for further discussions. It is clear our intervention has succeeded in getting the issue out in the open. A new police presence has been observed on the drive using radar and issuing warnings of speeding tickets to cyclists who are exceeding the 15 mph limit. The City Council is reportedly not in favor of limiting anyone's use of the road.

Mbr Zembal expressed caution about any proposals to create a trail alongside the road because it will entail removing/threatening more of the natural habitat and will not solve the underlying problem of chronic bad behavior by certain people.

The issue of NBC's liability with regard to the Friends tours and other groups hosted by our Naturalists was discussed. Pres Cork suggested we look into the possibility of moving our Friends tours to avoid the hill at the top end of Back Bay Drive. The idea of basing the tour at Big Canyon was briefly discussed, though parking there might be a limitation.

Mbr Whitaker made a motion that we accept Pres Cork's proposed position/action regarding the safety issues on Back Bay Drive. Seconded by VP Fuhrer. There were 8 yeas and 1 abstention (Dick Zembal). The motion was passed.

8. Negotiations with OC Parks Regarding Contract with IRC

Pres Cork updated the Board on NBC's current discussions with OCParks regarding volunteer training. They appear willing to compromise with us regarding the "Orientation to OCParks" and "Public Interaction" units of their mandatory training regimen and allow us to incorporate them into our own Associate Training program, but they may not be so flexible with the CPR/AED/First Aid segment. The latter is perceived by several Board members as too extreme and too much to expect of our volunteers. One Board member raised the issue of potential liability to our volunteers should they inadvertently botch an attempt to provide assistance to a visitor.

Pres Cork requested that a small group get together and draft a proposal to OCParks agreeing to include two segments of their training in our own orientation and, after the current volunteers get grandfathered into the medical training, that it then be routinely included in our ten week Naturalist's program. The issue of whether or not the medical training would be mandatory was not decided.

Jean Whitaker left the meeting at 4:43 pm.

9. Other Business/Matters Rising

VP Fuhrer gave an update of the Bayview project. The California Coastal Commission requested a number of supporting documents which he assembled and submitted. We are now waiting for their approval.

10. Adjourn

Motion was made by Mbr Clemente to adjourn the Open Session, seconded by VP Fuhrer, and passed unanimously.

Motion made by VP Fuhrer to open the Executive Session, seconded by Sec Fuhrer and passed unanimously.

The business of the Closed Session having been conducted, a motion was made by VP Fuhrer to close the Executive Session and reopen the regular session. Seconded by Mbr Zembal and passed unanimously.

Motion then made by VP Fuhrer and seconded by Mbr Zembal to adjourn the Open Session. Passed unanimously.

The meeting was closed at 4:55 pm.

Holly Fuhrer, Board Secretary
Newport Bay Conservancy