

NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Back Bay Science Center Conference Room
Tuesday, July 15, 2014 2:00-4:00 pm
OPEN SESSION

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Directors Present: Howard Cork, Holly Fuhrer, Michelle Clemente, Frances Cork,
Ginger Hayter, Sarah Kimball, Jean Whitaker, Danielle Zacherl

Directors Absent at Roll Call: Donna Flower, Peter Bryant, Peter Fuhrer, Dick Zembal

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

The meeting was called to order by President Cork at 2:02 pm.

2. Secretary's Report

Sec Fuhrer presented the minutes of the June 17, 2014 Board Meeting. An amendment was made to include the City of Newport Beach as one of the sponsors of the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on September 4, 2014. Motion made by Mbr Hayter to approve, seconded by Mbr Zacherl. The minutes were approved unanimously with the amendment.

Donna Flower arrived at 2:05 pm.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treas Flower presented the Financial Report. Highlights are as follows:

We have received the following grants and large donations this year:

Marisla - \$25,000

Pacific Life - \$5,000

Volcom - \$1,500

We have \$50,000 balance in our unrestricted funds in addition to the \$30,000 we have in reserves.

Unfortunately our application for the \$25K Gimbel Grant was denied which means that it will be difficult to subsidize Title I schools in the High School Program unless we use our unrestricted funds or generate new grants.

Treas Flower will email a budget vs actual report for the first six months of 2014 for use in amending the budget for the second half of this year at the next board meeting.

Question was raised about the 2012 Tax Return. The Treasurer has filed an extension until 8/15. It is estimated that it will cost \$400-500 to have it done by an outside CPA firm.

Mbr Hayter requested that we have the 2015 budget completed and approved by the present Board to hand off to the new Board in November.

Dick Zembal arrived at 2:11 pm.

Peter Bryant and Peter Fuhrer arrived at 2:15 pm.

5. Upper Newport Bay Strategy Development

Pres Cork requested that agenda item # 5 be moved up so that VP Fuhrer and Mbr Bryant, who could only stay for only a short time, could be included in the discussion. NBC has taken several initiatives recently which relate to our role in the strategic future of the Bay including launching the series of symposia, the UNB collaboration process involving the three landowners in the Bay, and the continuing work of the watershed coordinator. The purpose of the discussion was to consider how we want to move forward from here.

The Symposium on the sustainability of the Bay was well received with good speakers and attendance. Thanks are due to Michelle Clemente and her team for organizing the event, Krista for securing the speakers, and to Frances, Ginger and Donna for organizing the lunch. Judging from the questions and level of discussion, attendees appeared to be interested and engaged. The working lunch following the event to which we invited representatives from Coastkeeper, FHBP, CDFW, members of our Board, plus the 3 speakers confirmed wide support for continuing collaboration to build a consensus view of the ecological health of the Bay. It was agreed that we would take as a starting point the ecological checklist developed by CDFW, tuning this to fit the particular features of the UNB ecosystem.

Pres Cork feels that these efforts have a good deal of potential and invited members of the Board to get involved in moving this forward. It will require a considerable amount of work. He asked how we should link this to the UNB collaboration process involving the Bay landowning agencies.

Heather Cieslak arrived at 2:25 pm.

Pres Cork was recently contacted by City Engineer Bob Stein who informed him that the City wants to move ahead with a major restoration project in Big Canyon. Pres Cork believes it is important that CDFW and the City work together so actions could be taken to address the Big Canyon ponds which are choked with cattails, a breeding ground for mosquitos, and are accumulating selenium from the runoff stream. Vector Control is using a pumping system to lower the level of the water and therefore the surface area upon which the mosquitos can reproduce.

The overwhelming consensus on the Board is that this is a welcome opportunity and that NBC should do everything it can to support this project and offer support and advice from our experience and our experts within NBC.

VP Fuhrer and Mbr Bryant left the meeting at 2:40 pm.

5. Committee Updates

Research Committee

Chairman Bryant was not present to report. OD Cieslak reported that there will be a Research Committee meeting next week. She also announced that Carla Navarro of DFW has requested NBC's help in monitoring the dissolved oxygen levels in the water in the Catch Basins. OD Cieslak will proceed to organize that project.

All of the speakers at the symposium agreed to make their talks available via our website. Planning for the next symposium in our series of four will soon be underway.

Restoration Committee

Chairwoman Kimball reported that a restoration workshop was held recently at UCI at which a series of experiments was devised that will be applied across twenty sites. She is hoping to include the Bay in this proposal which they are currently attempting to fund. She is still planning a third walkthrough around the Bay to complete our inventory of restoration needs. An important part of restoration is planning for trails. Pres Cork will invite Chairwoman Kimball to be included in the next UNB collaboration meeting in which they will be discussing this subject.

Krista Sloniowski joined the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Fund Raising Committee

Chairwoman Hayter made last minute announcements about the upcoming Plein Air event this weekend. She encouraged Board members to attend. Different fundraising ideas were discussed.

Board Development Committee

Chairwoman Fuhrer announced that ten Board members are intending to return next year. One current Board member is undecided. Pres Cork will remain on the Board as past President. We will have either two or three slots to fill. The search for potential candidates is currently underway.

6. Other Business/Matters Rising

It was suggested that the day of our Board meetings be changed to the third Wednesday of each month from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. All were in agreement. Sec Fuhrer will clear the change with DFW.

Mbr Zacherl discussed the Ramsar Convention, a global environmental intergovernmental treaty, the mission of which is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.” We could consider applying to have UNB named as a Ramsar site. It is an honor to be designated as such and brings with it the advantages of opening up funding opportunities, elevating the visibility of our Bay, and building connections with other Ramsar sites internationally.

Krista Sloniowski reported that she is writing the final report for the Watershed grant. She will then focus on water conservation goals for the next six month extension of the grant starting from July 1, 2014.

Pres Cork raised the Lower Castaways development plans which he had forwarded to the Board. He had also forwarded this to Jean Watt suggesting NBC, FHBP, SPON (Stop Polluting Our Newport) and Coastkeeper attempt to agree to a joint response to the City via the Harbor Commission. The Board agreed we should do that. Pres Cork will liaise with our fellow nonprofits.

Pres Cork reminded the Board that Coastal Clean-Up Day will be on Saturday, September 20, 2014. Unfortunately, the tide will be high at 8:20 am and the mud in the salt marsh could be treacherous. It was suggested that we try to engage the cyclists who use Back Bay Drive to help in the clean-up effort. Pres Cork will approach the City regarding the closure of Back Bay Drive during the event to enable the adjacent marsh to be cleared of trash.

Mbr Cork reminded Board members to save the date of September 4 for the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at the Back Bay Science Center at 6:00 pm.

Pres Cork discussed the next issue of Tracks. The committee is considering the use of a lighter weight paper and solicited feedback from the Board.

Michelle Clemente left the meeting at 4:35 pm.

7. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Mbr Zacherl and seconded by Mbr Kimball. All were in favor. The meeting ended at 4:45 pm.

Holly Fuhrer
Board Secretary, Newport Bay Conservancy