

NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Back Bay Science Center Conference Room
Wednesday August 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, Peter Bryant, Michelle Clemente, Frances Cork, Ginger Hayter, Sarah Kimball, Jean Whitaker, Danielle Zacherl

Directors Absent at Roll Call: Dick Zembal (with apologies)

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

Guests: Jack Keating

The meeting was called to order by President Cork at 2:10 pm.

2. Secretary's Report

Sec Fuhrer presented the minutes of the July 15, 2014 Board Meeting. Motion made by Mbr Hayter to approve, seconded by Mbr Zacherl. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treas Flower presented the Financial Report. The Board was given opportunity to discuss the 2013 990 Tax Report. Mbr Hayter moved to accept the 990, seconded by Jean Whitaker and passed unanimously.

Treas Flower announced several revisions of the 2014 budget.

On the plus side:

1. We have reduced our contribution of \$17,000 to the Bayview Project to \$12,000 because OD Ceislak applied to REI for \$5,000 to help defray that cost;
2. We will be paying \$100.00 less per month for the BBSC phone line because Frances Cork successfully renegotiated our contract;
3. We have not used any of our allotted monies for research grants (\$3,000);
4. Our water programs are raising more than expected;
5. Our overall expenses are significantly under budget;
6. The cost of Tracks has been reduced from \$4,800 to \$4,000 due to the publication of only 3 issues instead of 4 this year;
7. We received \$1,500 from Volcom for Clean-Up Day.

On the minus side:

1. The SOCALPAPA donation was significantly less this year;
2. Our memberships and merchandising profits are running lower than anticipated;
3. Our Administrative Expenses have gone over budget;
4. We have stopped charging for our symposiums and no longer have that income stream.

There is great need now for a vigorous fundraising effort. We particularly need to reinvigorate our corporate donor program.

4. President's Report – Howard Cork

Pres Cork called for discussion of items in his President's Report to the Board.

It looks hopeful that the City will close Back Bay Drive to bikes and cars for Clean-up Day which means that more areas of the marsh can be accessed for trash removal.

Pres Cork was able to get agreement to a joint letter from NBC, Coastkeeper, FHBP and SPON protesting the current concept plans for Lower Castaways and proposing an alternative approach. No formal response has been received but reportedly the Harbor Commission is very invested in their original plan to which NBC is objecting and recommending alternatives. DFW has already made it clear that there can be no building into the Marine Protected Areas as the commission is proposing.

With regard to the activities of the UNB collaboration team, there is interest and energy from the members for a common approach to signage and fixing the Node 1 trail.

We have been trying to find out from the Coastal Commission whether a permit is needed for the additional Osprey nesting platform, so far without success.

The City seems eager to move forward with the Big Canyon Project. We have been asked to help with the planning process, along with IRC. The need to involve DFW has been emphasized and agreed to. Pres Cork sees our role as being primarily to ensure there is a joint approach to Big Canyon so that a viable overall plan can be developed. There will be many levels of planning and permitting required. The City wants to build a treatment facility above the ponds to remove 70% of the Selenium. DFW would prefer to create a riparian stream area since they feel it would be too difficult to restore and maintain viable ponds. These questions will be debated more fully as plans are further developed. Pres Cork will keep the Board updated as the process moves forward.

5. Committee Updates

Research Committee – Peter Bryant, Chair

Ms Sloniowski discussed the status of the Watershed grant, how she will be reporting the first stage, and how she intends to proceed for the six months extension project. The next symposium topic will focus on habitats and indicator species in the Bay. Mbr Clemente reported that the Orange County Lecture Series will try to be relevant to the same issues covered by the symposia which are focused on the sustainability of the Bay. Question was raised re: what role NBC will take in the longer term. Pres Cork hopes that the loose coalition that was initiated at the post symposium luncheon involving leaders in the watershed – Jean Watt, Gary Brown, DFW, David Pryor, Mike Wellborn and others – will continue to meet to push their mutual concerns forward collectively. It was agreed that NBC can play an important facilitating role as there are multiple agencies and nonprofits which need to contribute to achieving a consensus on what a healthy, sustainable Bay looks like, and how we monitor its condition. It was suggested that we use Tracks to communicate with our members about these issues.

Chairperson Bryant asked the Board to think about what other research projects NBC could be conducting in the Bay. Past projects have always been opportunistic. Are there other projects that we should initiate? How can we make research relevant to the Bay? We don't have research going on regarding birds, fish, or vegetation. It was suggested that the Research Committee look at the list of priorities presented by DFW at the last symposium and draw ideas from that. Mbr Clemente is trying to link research to education in BBSC programming.

OD Cieslak reported on a project that Carla Navarro is initiating in the Bay to measure the oxygen levels in the mud after the dredging.

Education Committee – Peter Fuhrer, Chair

Chairman Fuhrer reported on the committee meeting held recently. One of the topics of discussion was the Friends Tours. Several recommendations came out of that discussion:

1. To revitalize the educational boards at each station;
2. To add a sixth station to include tides and geography;
3. To investigate the possibility of relocating some or all of the tours to either Big Canyon or the BBSC due to safety concerns;
4. To produce a much larger outreach banner for the Friends' Tours and consider using sandwich boards.

It was recognized that certain people who have been involved with these tours historically might find it difficult to change the location because of the symbolism of starting them at Vista Point where the Robinsons held their original meetings to plan their resistance to developing the Back Bay. It was suggested that a unit detailing the history of the Robinsons be added to the curriculum of the tours.

It was recommended that interpretive training be the first session of the Naturalist Training so that new trainees would understand what is expected of them.

Fund Raising Committee – Ginger Hayter, Chair

Chairwoman Hayter spoke for the committee. She reported that the SOCALPAPA Plein Air Exhibit and Sale netted only \$2,800 for NBC this year which is significantly below past years and below our expected budgetary expectation. Possible reasons for this were discussed. Other possibilities were suggested re: fundraising including grant writing prospects, a large fundraising event, and corporate donations. President Cork committed to calling a meeting to brainstorm our fundraising possibilities, determine our priorities, and try to get a concerted effort underway. He stressed the need for us to focus on only those fundraising activities which we can find people to drive forward and which are likely to bring us the highest return for our efforts.

Danielle Zacherl left the meeting at 4:00 pm.

Volunteer Support Committee – Jeanne Stein, Chair

An update of the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner to be held on September 4, 2014 was presented by Mbr Cork.

Board Development Committee – Holly Fuhrer, Chair

Chairwoman Fuhrer presented an update of the committee's activities re: searching for new members of the Board. She also reported that a sub-committee is working on up-dating the Board Handbook and expects to have a new version ready for the 2014-2015 Board. A large portion of this involves an update and revision of Board Policies which the committee is currently undertaking. The first and most urgent part of this is a revision of the "NBC Volunteer Requirements" Policy which is referred to in the Bylaws and needs to be approved by the Board and the Membership at the Annual Meeting.

Restoration Committee – Sarah Kimball

VP Fuhrer, manager of the Bayview project, presented an update. NBC now has permission to proceed with the project which will begin in October/November. Barry Nerhus has been contracted to complete the project. A public meeting will be held to inform residents and obtain their feedback. VP Fuhrer requests that the Restoration Committee assume oversight of the project which will involve continuous maintenance and supervision.

6. Other Business/Matters Rising

Pres Cork announced his intention to have a closed session at the September Board meeting to set a budget for 2015 which will be handed off to the new Board.

President Cork also announced that there will be a ceremony at Vista Point on September 6, 2014 at 4:00 pm to unveil a plaque listing the donors for the project. All are invited to attend.

7. Adjourn

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

Holly Fuhrer
Board Secretary, Newport Bay Conservancy