

NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING
Open Meeting, June 6, 2012, Back Bay Science Center 6:00 pm
Minutes approved 6-20-2012

Board Members present: Debbie Moore, Rita McCoy, Steve Bender, Laurel Mann, Peter Fuhrer, Peter Bryant, Holly Fuhrer, Dennis Kelly, Cecelia Patterson

Board Members Absent: Catherine Hollinger, Anthony Christopher, Kristine Simon, Rob Ellis

Staff: Patrick McCaffrey

Attendees: Jack Keating, Don Millar, Betsy Flynn, Frances Cork, Judy Booth, Jean Whitaker, Gale Whitaker, Donna Carroll, Connie Bean, Dennis Baker

President Debbie Moore called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm and introduced Howard Cork, a member of the Strategic Planning Team who delivered an hour long presentation. Howard explained that the Team, consisting of himself, Catherine Hollinger, Cecelia Patterson, and Holly Fuhrer, had been assembled by the Board to follow-up the recommendations that emerged from the Strategic Planning Retreat in February 2012. Howard proposed a business plan model that the Team could utilize in its information gathering and assessment efforts to produce an action plan for the next six months and extended for three years. He produced a handout for the Board and attendees showing the methodology and the results to date. This will be attached to the Board minutes.

Simply explained, the Team took what it identified as the four core goals of the NBC as put forward in the 10 Year Strategic Plan adopted by the Board in 2009 based on our NBC mission, and the shorter modified version produced subsequently by Krista Slonioski in 2010 - Education, Restoration, Research and Monitoring, and Watershed Management. The Team then asked the committee chairs and people responsible for these areas to set forth their priorities and goals, and the volunteer and financial resources needed to fuel them, both in the short term (6 months) and the long term (three years). Alongside of assessing the volunteer and financial needs of these programs sponsored and administered by the NBC and its partners, the Team simultaneously attempted to evaluate the present state of our volunteer force and our financial resources.

The Team learned some interesting, though not surprising, information from our review of the volunteer hours posted in 2005, 2009, 2010, and 2011. There are approximately 70 active volunteers. Of that number, a core group of 21 report enough hours to meet their yearly Naturalist and Associate requirements. Approximately 25% of our volunteers do 70% of the work. This core group is made up mostly of retirees. An evaluation of the hours needed to fulfill all of our current programs shows that we need approximately 12,000 volunteer hours a year. At this time, around 7,000 hours are being reported. Interestingly, these figures have remained fairly consistent over the last few years. All of this explains why Patrick has difficulty finding available volunteers, particularly in those jobs that are labor intensive (e.g. the Outrigger Program) and require the level of Naturalist Training. It is abundantly clear that we need more volunteers, more recruits for higher level training, and more follow-up with volunteers so that there is more activity and less attrition. We also need to expand our sources of volunteers and appeal to a wider range of age and demographic groups.

The state of the NBC Treasury will be made clear at the next regular Board Meeting on June 30, 2012 by our Treasurer Cecelia Patterson. As we continue to work through this evaluation process, decide what programs to focus on, and determine what monies we need and can realistically expect to have available, we will also determine how to organize our revenue-raising efforts more effectively through memberships, large donors and grants, and special events.

There was discussion of the status of each of the core areas: Education, Research and Monitoring, Restoration, and Watershed Activities with input and suggestions from all attenders. The Team hopes that in our continuing evaluation process, we will hear from many voices, including members, volunteers, staff, our partners, and members of the community. Debbie announced her goal of having focus groups to flesh out all of the core areas in July and bringing our final plan together in August.

Judy Booth talked about a similar process held by the NB Library when she worked there that produced a five year plan.

Dennis Baker brought up the idea of having a well-managed internship program to help with the administrative work.

Frances Cork reminded the Board that we need to become a part of the Marine Protected Areas monitoring program. Jack announced that he had made an appeal to the Council to include the NBC. Training for the volunteers is available. We need someone to organize this effort.

A number of attendees left the meeting at 7:00pm. Those remaining asked that the Treasurer's Report be shared as part of the Open Meeting as the agenda indicated it would be. Cecelia reported that the 2012 Budget is almost complete. January and February are finished. March, April, and May are being processed and reconciled. One of the Naturalists, Pam Winkler, who is a very experienced and capable person in these matters, has agreed to help Cecelia maintain the accounts.

The issue of restricted and unrestricted funds was raised, how much has been borrowed and how much needs to be repaid. Cecelia said that we have to watch our expenditures now because the budget is currently "bare bones". Based on the last three years, if we are careful, we should be able to repay the restricted funds that have been borrowed. The Board will have to make these decisions. Cecelia is attempting to clear up a number of issues surrounding our finances. It is her intention to present an honest and forthright budget to the organization that everyone can trust and understand on an on-going basis. But everyone should know at this time, that unless and until we have found ways to raise more revenue, we have to continue to cut back.

Betsy Flynn made a statement about the work that Roger Mallet has done for the organization, both paid and voluntary. It was recognized that Betsy has done a lot of work in trying to get our finances on track.

A motion was made by Cecelia that the 2012 Budget be presented to the Board and the members at the June 20 regular Board open meeting. Second by Peter Fuhrer. All approved.

Secretary Rita McCoy requested that the March, April, and May Minutes which Board Members have all received and had opportunity to review, be approved. Dennis Kelly made a motion to approve. Holly Fuhrer seconded. There was no discussion. All were in favor.

A suggestion was made that we send out all of the 2012 Board minutes to the membership and also post them on the Website. It was agreed that minutes from the last six months of 2011 should be posted as well. Rita, Steve Bender, and Dennis Baker agree to work on this.

Debbie Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7.45. Catherine Hollinger seconded. Approved unanimously.

Submitted by Rita McCoy, Secretary