

NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Back Bay Science Center Conference Room  
Tuesday, March 18, 2014 2:00-4:00 pm  
OPEN SESSION

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

**Directors Present:** Pres Howard Cork, VP Peter Fuhrer, Sec Holly Fuhrer, Peter Bryant, Michelle Clemente, Frances Cork, Virginia Hayter, Sarah Kimbal, Jean Whitaker, Danielle Zacherl, Dick Zembal

**Directors Absent with Apologies:** Treas Donna Flower

**Staff:** Heather Cieslak, Operations Director (arrived at 2:25 pm)

**Attendees:** Jack Keating (arrived at 2:25 pm)

The meeting was called to order by Pres Cork at 2:09 pm.

**2. Secretary's Report**

Sec Fuhrer presented the Minutes of the January 21, 2014 Board Meeting. Mbr Hayter made a motion to approve, seconded by Mbr Zacherl. One correction was requested by Mbr Clemente. The minutes were approved unanimously with the amendment.

Question was raised by Mbr Cork regarding the length of the Board minutes and whether they should be condensed. Mbr Hayter, Board Parliamentarian, advised that the minutes represent the official record of the Board's business and that three pages is not excessively long. They can, however, be condensed for the Website if desired.

**3. Treasurer's Report**

No financial report was presented. Treas Flower is incapacitated with a broken arm.

**4. Review of Out-put from Board Retreat**

Refer to the attached Report from the Break-out Groups at the Board Retreat February 5, 2014 regarding priorities, projects, and goals.

Mbr Kimball discussed the results from the Restoration break-out group. Mbr Hayter made a motion to approve the Restoration Plan as presented. Seconded by Mbr Zacherl and adopted unanimously by the Board.

Pres Cork reported for the Advocacy plan presented at the Retreat recommending that it stand as is but that the items need more discussion by the committee. At Mbr Kimball's suggestion, he also added a third item to the overall plan regarding the need for the committee to respond to issues as they arise, but emphasized that the focus will be primarily proactive. Mbr Hayter made a motion to approve the proposal. Seconded by Mbr. Zacherl. The motion was not voted on by the Board.

Mbr Bryant spoke for the Research Committee. He distributed copies of a two year Operational Plan devised by the committee in 2012. He also reported on a meeting that he attended recently at SCCWRP (Southern California Coastal Water Research Project) regarding the monitoring that is being done in the Newport Bay Watershed. There is a huge amount of work going on in the Newport Bay, thirteen different programs. Newport Bay is designated an "impacted waterway" by the EPA with regard to

pollution. However, tremendous improvements have been made to the water quality. SCCWRP is working on the human bacterial content of the water with the Orange County Health Agency. Mbr Bryant wants to continue to attend the meetings of this group and incorporate their work into the activities of the Research Committee. He thinks it would be beneficial to create a partnership with SCCWRP. The committee wants to post all of the research data related to the Bay onto a website where it can be shared and compared so that redundancy can be avoided. The Army Corps of Engineers is currently monitoring the levels of sediment in the Bay in the areas where they conducted the dredging. The Board agreed that it is not ready to adopt a Research Plan until the Research Committee has delineated its priorities and goals more specifically.

VP Fuhrer will be chairing the Education Committee. He will present a plan to the Board as soon as he has called the committee together.

#### **5. Budget Proposals from Committee Chairs and Operations Director**

OD Cieslak is currently working with Treas Flower to finalize the administrative budget. One item that she is requesting is a projector for presentations. The audio-visual systems at the Muth IC and the BBSC are unreliable and unpredictable. The difficulties presented by this problem were discussed. VP Fuhrer and Mbr Clemente volunteered to explore this issue further with OCParks and DFW. NBC might be able to help fund repair and up-date of the equipment. An overall improvement plan for the IC will be discussed by the Education Committee. There are funds already designated for this in the NBC budget.

Funding for Tracks was also discussed. Each publications costs \$1,200. The plan has been to produce it four times a year but that could be reduced to three.

Mbr Bryant raised the issue of equipment needed for research and teaching activities. VP Fuhrer advised that the Pacific Life Grant is designated specifically for this purpose. Mbr Bryant also supports restoring the mini-grants for research projects which have already been approved by the Board.

#### **6. Committee Membership**

See the attached up-dated list of Committee membership. Chairs should be in the process of appointing and activating their committees. Volunteers will be encouraged to participate.

#### **7. Watershed Project/Symposium**

Pres Cork reported on the status of the NBC Watershed project led by Krista Sloniowski. There are three months left in the grant period (it ends in June). Ms Sloniowski has been working consistently since she was hired in November 2012. However there will be funds left over because of gaps in the administration of the grant previous to her hiring. She and Pres Cork have been receiving input from several advisors who are familiar with watershed issues – Mike Welborn, Blake Anderson, Jack Keating, Jean Watt, Peter Bryant, and Dick Zembal. They also had a meeting with Dave Kiff and Nancy Gardner from the City. Ms. Sloniowski has been in contact with various planners and regulators. A symposium was held in December 2013 where some very vocal opposition was expressed by several attendees who did not agree with the proposal to use the transitional eel grass bed as the primary indicator of the health of the Bay and felt that years of previous work done by other agencies was not being properly recognized. At a recent meeting with some of our advisors it was agreed we need to present a more facilitative strategy rather than risk being seen as “bringing the answer.” The first step will be to host a symposium focused on a review of the current body of knowledge about the health of the Bay, identify gaps, and plan action to address these deficiencies.

Ms Sloniowski has substantial bona fides and background. She is trained in urban and environmental planning, has worked in other watersheds, and was on the NBC Board for five years where she initiated the proposal for the grant. She believes that the original scope of work is still deliverable. NBC has also been approached by the Department of Conservation to find out if we would be interested in an extension to our funding if this could be made available. We have replied in the affirmative.

Pres Cork proposed that a small group get together to review where we are with the project and recommend a course of action for the next three months to bring the grant to a reasonable conclusion and discuss goals for a possible extension. That group will consist of Pres Cork, Mbr Zembal, Mbr Clemente, Mbr Bryant, VP Fuhrer, OD Cieslak, and Ms. Sloniowski. It was agreed that our purpose should be to contribute collaboratively to the health of the Bay.

#### **8. OCParks/IRC Subcontract for Volunteer Management**

Pres Cork reported that in June 2013 OCParks signed a contract with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy to take over the training and management of all OCParks volunteers. NBC was not informed about this until October and then indirectly when the County Adopt-A-Park volunteers received notice of the change. NBC and the Laguna Canyon Foundation, both of which have strong volunteer training and maintenance programs tailored to their specific needs, have voiced concerns about aspects of the agreement. We are in discussions with OC Parks senior management to ensure we work out an arrangement which meets the needs of both of our organizations. As IRC and OCParks move ahead with the planned transition, Pres Cork has made it clear that we will cooperate as much as possible but will also look out for our own interests in terms of how NBC and our volunteer program will be impacted.

#### **9. Report of Earth Day Planning**

OD Cieslak left the meeting at 4:00 pm and was not present to report on the progress of Earth Day. Earth Day will be held on April 26, 2014 at the Muth IC. Organization for this event is well underway. OD Cieslak and Mbr Cork are the leads. VC Stein will be organizing volunteer participation.

#### **10. Other Business/Matters Rising**

Pres Cork reported that the second meeting of the DFW/OCParks/City/NBC Coalition was held. The results are discussed in the March President's Report to the Board and will be further elaborated in a letter to the members.

Mbr Zacherl left the meeting at 4:35 pm.

Mbr Clemente left the meeting at 4:45pm.

#### **11. Adjourn**

VP Fuhrer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mbr Kimball. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 pm.

Holly Fuhrer, Board Secretary  
Newport Bay Conservancy