

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

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Directors Present: Peter Fuhrer, Donna Flower, Holly Fuhrer, Peter Bryant, Virginia Hayter, Sarah Kimball, Jean Whitaker, Danielle Zacherl

Directors Absent with Apologies: Howard Cork, Frances Cork, Michelle Clemente, Dick Zembal

Staff: Heather Cieslak, Operations Director, Jeanne Stein, Volunteer Coordinator, Krista Sloniowski, Watershed Coordinator

Attendees: Jack Keating, Peter Ridley (arrived at 2:10 pm), Buddy Cox, Cathey Bertot

The meeting was called to order by VP Fuhrer at 2:06 pm.

2. Secretary's Report

The Minutes of the March 18, 2014 Board Meeting were presented. Sec Fuhrer reported that Mbr Cork had requested three corrections to the Committee Membership list. Mbr Hayter made a motion to approve, seconded by Mbr Zacherl. The minutes were approved unanimously with the requested corrections.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Flower was not ready to present her report. Mbr Bryant requested approval to present the Research Committee and Symposium Committee reports. Request granted.

5. Report on Health of the Bay Monitoring Symposium – Krista Sloniowski and Peter Bryant

Mbr Bryant has written an update of the Research Committee's current projects and minutes from the March meeting. These will be sent to all Board members for review.

Mbr Bryant reported that the Symposium Planning Committee met prior to the Board Meeting to discuss the upcoming symposium on the health of the Bay now titled "Monitoring for Sustainability". This event is being organized collaboratively by the Research Committee and the Watershed Coordinator, Krista Sloniowski, and will be part of the scope of work described in the watershed grant which ends in June. There will be three speakers in the morning, lunch provided, and a program in the afternoon. Ms Sloniowski outlined plans for three additional workshops/symposia on the same theme of monitoring which she hopes will be undertaken by the Research Committee following the same format.

This agenda item is to be continued.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treas Flower presented the 2014 Budget requesting that Board members look it over and contact her about any committee needs that have not yet been reported. The income and expenditures show a shortfall of \$8,400.00 which she feels does not present a problem given our financial reserves at this time.

Mbr Hayter called on the Board to approve a budget as soon as possible since it should have been in place at the beginning of the year and we should be operating from it. Treas Flower requested that the Board not approve the budget until after the closed session in which we will be discussing possible changes.

Motion made by Mbr Zacherl to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, seconded by Mbr Kimball. The motion was passed unanimously.

4. NBC Response to OCParks/IRC Agreement – Heather Cieslak

OD Cieslak reported on the status of negotiations with OCParks regarding the contract signed in June 2013 by Mark Denney, then Director of OCParks, with the Irvine Ranch Conservancy. This is a large and comprehensive agreement, part of which involves IRC developing and administering an on-going training and deployment program for all volunteers working in any of the OC parks including the UNB Nature Preserve. This will affect NBC volunteers who work at the front desk and help with school groups at the IC, as well as those who participate in the Roots Restoration program which constitute 30% of our volunteer hours. The intent of the contract is to manage volunteers consistently across the OCParks system and encourage them to work in other parks as well as their home parks. Since NBC is site specific, has a long-established mission and organizational structure, and trains and manages its own volunteers, negotiations have been on-going to enable us to maintain our own identity, integrity and autonomy while at the same time trying to cooperate with the intention and requirements of the contract between OCParks and IRC. NBC has a Memorandum of Understanding with OCParks signed by the Board of Supervisors in 2008 which is still in place which addresses our specific relationship with OCParks. To date this relationship has been mutually beneficial for both parties and provides important benefits for NBC (an office, the gift store, IT, a venue for activities). In return, NBC provides valuable services to OCParks and thousands of volunteer hours.

Pres Cork and OD Cieslak have met with senior management of OCParks and presented NBC's concerns and desires. Meetings are on-going now with Dennis Shaffer, the Operations Manager of the Park Operations Administration who reports to the new Director Stacy Blackwell. Up to this point, the parties have been talking but OCParks has not yet presented a proposal for NBC to respond to. NBC has also been communicating with the Laguna Canyon Foundation which is in a similar circumstance to us, unlike most of the OCParks which do not have established non-profit support agencies.

NBC's position is to try to achieve a separate agreement with OCParks and as much as possible get a "free pass" to continue our own operations. At the same time, we recognize that IRC has to meet the terms of its contract with OCParks. Hence we are willing to go along with general requirements that are important to them that will also benefit us, such as training sessions for safety, emergency first aid, and dealing with the public. We need to figure out how we can meet their requirements within our own program and convince them that we can help them meet their contractual obligations.

Discussion followed OD Cieslak's presentation. Mbr Hayter pointed out that IRC is a large land management agency and that we may not share their approach to volunteers. For NBC the cohesiveness of our community and the volunteers' sense of ownership of the site is critical to our success. Peter Ridley, who works as an IRC volunteer, talked about the primary emphasis of IRC programs, and their attention to detail and rules and regulations with 300 volunteers and 40 paid staff to manage. Cathey Bertot encouraged the Board to develop a collaborative relationship with IRC as we seek to maintain our own integrity and identity. OD Cieslak emphasized that there are aspects of this arrangement that could work to NBC's advantage.

Concern was expressed that the Board be more involved with the negotiation process and that we be proactive in attempting to maintain our position. To this point, a motion was made by Mbr Hayter that going forward, the officers deal with these negotiations with OCParks, and IRC if appropriate, with the

assistance of staff, and report back to the Board with recommendations. Motion was seconded by Mbr Zacherl and passed unanimously.

5. Report on Health of the Bay Monitoring Symposium – Krista Sloniowski and Peter Bryant

This item is continuing now in the order of the agenda. VP Fuhrer requested that Ms Sloniowski report on the status of the Watershed Coordinator grant with regard to the possibility of an extension.

Ms Sloniowski reported that there are three Work Phases of the grant. She was brought in to work on it a year and a half after it started, out of three years total. The grant has subsequently been reconfigured for this by the Department of Conservation at our request. She has completed Phase I and will be putting together a report on that within the month (April). She is now ramping up to complete Phase II by the time the grant ends in June. She believes that Phase III, the communication phase, is also doable by the end of the grant. Because of the drought emergency in the state, the legislature has approved a six month extension of grants pertaining to this subject and the Department of Conservation has offered NBC the opportunity to apply. Ms Sloniowski feels it would be ideal for her to complete the grant within the extended time period.

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Watershed Coordinator grant (Mbr Bryant, VP Fuhrer, OD Cieslak, and WC Sloniowski) met before the Board meeting to discuss the justification for an extension. Mbr Bryant reported that this committee recommends that NBC apply for the extension. The request for the extension is due on April 16th (tomorrow), after which Pres Cork and the committee will hone the proposal. Ms Sloniowski wishes to submit the request.

Motion was made by Mbr Bryant that NBC apply for the extension. Seconded by Mbr Zacherl. There were seven yeas and one nay (Mbr Hayter). The motion passed. Ms Sloniowski will send the letter. Board members requested that she circulate the letter to the Board.

Discussion followed. Mbr Hayter expressed doubt that Phase III can be accomplished in the time allotted. Ms Sloniowski replied that she has been engaged in the communication phase all along.

Mbr Zacherl made a motion that Ms Sloniowski submit her report on Phase I, her progress reports, and the application for the extension to the Board before the next meeting in May so that members can do their due diligence. Seconded by Mbr Kimball and passed unanimously.

Discussion then returned to the Monitoring Symposium. Question was raised whether this symposium would be designed differently to achieve a more favorable outcome than the last one in which the theoretical approach presented by Ms Sloniowski was not uniformly agreed upon by participants and provoked controversy. Mbr Hayter also requested that a budget for this event be submitted to the Board.

Mbr Flower made a motion that the Board support the symposium. Seconded by Mbr Zacherl and passed unanimously.

6. Report on Bicycle Master Plan Committee/NBC Submission – Jack Keating and Peter Ridley

Peter Ridley reported on the results of meeting with the Newport Beach Bicycle Master Plan Committee where NBC raised the issue of safety on Back Bay Drive. The meeting was well attended and helpful. Much information was shared. The matter was assigned to a sub-committee charged with coming up with recommendations within 30 days. Mr. Ridley distributed a list of possible options that were discussed. NBC's biggest concern is the possibility of accidents and injuries and the safety of all users. The fundamental mission of the cyclist community is to encourage cycling and ensure accessibility to Back Bay Drive as a preferred safe option for them. Discussion followed. The point was made that speed is the primary problem which is the City's responsibility to enforce. Some would like to see more trail options to divide bikers and drivers from walkers and runners. Mr. Ridley observed that the City appears to be leaning toward this solution. Meanwhile he favors small incremental actions such as increased signage and

enforcement of the speed limit. The sub-committee will be meeting on April 16 to consider recommendations. They will also be taking a bike ride on the BBD on April 18. Mr. Ridley, Mr. Keating and OD Cieslak will attend the meeting and represent NBC. Mr. Keating expressed confidence that good ideas are being considered and we have to wait for the committee to make its recommendations.

7. Other Business/Matters Rising

8. Adjourn

Mbr Hayter made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mbr Zacherl. All were in favor. The regular session was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Motion was made by Mbr Hayter to move into Executive (Closed) Session. Seconded by Mbr Kimball. All approved. Sec Fuhrer reminded new Board members that anything discussed in this session was strictly confidential.

Executive Session was called to order by VP Fuhrer at 4:15 pm.

The business of the Closed Session was conducted and concluded. Motion made by Mbr Hayter to adjourn the closed session, seconded by Mbr Zacherl and passed unanimously. Mbr Kimball left the meeting at 4:35. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

The regular session of the Board was re-opened by VP Fuhrer at 4:50 pm.

Pursuant to discussion conducted in the Closed Session, a motion was made by Mbr Bryant to make Heather Cieslak's position full time effective immediately. Seconded by Mbr Whitaker and passed unanimously. This agreement was reached with the understanding that OD Cieslak will spend additional time seeking funding which she has already begun to do.

Motion to adjourn the Open Session made by Mbr Hayter, seconded by Mbr Zacherl. All were in favor.

Holly Fuhrer, Board Secretary
Newport Bay Conservancy