

NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES

Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 5:30 PM, In Person and **ZOOM**

Attending:

President – Bryan Tsu (virtual)

Board Members – Mario Cuevas, Diane Daruty (virtual), Julia Powers, Yugina Yun (virtual), McKenna Wegner, Peter Bryant (virtual)

Staff and guests - Heather Cieslak

OC Parks – Molly Waldram

Excused Absence: Maureen Flanagan, Lori Methenate, Bettina Eastman

5:35 Call to order/roll call: Bryan

Approval of Minutes: February 2026 Board Meeting Minutes
Mario moved; Molly seconded; Unanimously approved

1. Operations Report: Heather

The Operations Report was provided ([see attached](#)). Welcomed new staff members, including a new Administrative Assistant. Volunteer celebration on June 4th at the Back Bay Science Center. Said goodbye to Damian, but will be hiring new interns for this fall. The Osprey camera is now live on YouTube. Heather shared that the YMCA put forth a plan to develop senior housing on their parcel. Heather and the board will monitor for additional information and developments.

2. Restoration Committee: Yugina

No formal report for this month. Big Canyon is moving along and all the plants have been delivered.. The contractor who was supposed to be dredging the canyon found that their equipment kept sinking; alternatives are being discussed. The contractor can still work on the canyon part of the project, so this shouldn't be too much of a delay if any. The restoration committee plans to provide an update to the board within the next two weeks on the contractor issue.

3. Treasurer's Report: Julie

The Finance Committee Report was provided ([see attached](#)). The legacy Bank of America account that was the subject of check fraud is now closed. The finance committee is to present a budget for next month. For the audit, they haven't received a formalized engagement letter yet. At next month's meeting they will have a couple of policies to approve from the board as well as board approval for staff salaries increasing.

4. Education Committee: Mario

The Education Committee Report was provided ([see attached](#)). The Taste of Back Bay will be June 2nd tentatively at Back Bay Science Center. Naturalist program beginning May 16th, and Drawn to Nature May 17th. Drawn to Nature is a recreational art program for people to experience the Back Bay. 21 volunteers showed up for volunteer orientation, and there are two new staff members at CA Fish and Wildlife. 10 participants made it to UCLA on 3/22 for the Fowler Museum tour. The committee is creating new fliers for interest in Muth Tours and is still looking for a way to work with OCTA for assistance with busing for Earth Day. Had 80 attendees at our scavenger hunt event at the Muth center, where topics were assigned to students.

5. Fundraising Committee: Bryan

The Fundraising Committee Report was provided. The Gourmet by the Bay has kicked off planning, meeting bi-weekly. The committee decided on \$125 for members, \$150 for non-members. Planning on using the same chef as last year, who's been secured for that date for this year.

6. Research and Advocacy Committee: Peter

The Research Committee Report will be provided at the next meeting. Peter proposed that he would like to set up a World Wetlands Symposium Day on February 2nd and include Bolsa Chica. Any ideas or improvements on how to get more traction or support was discussed. .

7. Board Recruitment: Diane, Maureen

The Board Recruitment Committee Report will be provided at the next meeting.

8. Community Outreach Committee: Bettina

The Community Outreach Committee Report will be provided at the next meeting.

9. Audit Committee: Diane

The Research Committee Report will be provided at the next meeting.

6:14 Adjournment: Julie moved; Mario seconded.

Respectfully submitted,
McKenna Wegner, Secretary and Bryan Tsu, President