

## MBCA BOARD MEETING **APPROVED** MINUTES

Thursday, November 10, 2022 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm Via Zoom

**Black Bold Italics = Board vote**    *Blue Italics = action commitment*

### **Regular Meeting Called to Order at 5:04 P.M.**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gary Stiler
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Doolittle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cathy Zarakov
<input type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan (advance notice)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch	

- **Introduction of Guests and Board Directors**

Steve thanked Helen Jeong for joining us again.

- **Agenda approval**

After a few additions, ***Steve moved to approve the revised minutes. Sarah seconded and all were in favor. (10-0)***

- **Minutes from October 8, 2022 BOD meeting**

***Steve moved to approve the October minutes. Gary seconded and all were in favor. (10-0)***

- **Treasurer's Report**

Cathy reported that the new QuickBooks online program is working and has enhancements that should benefit us. She's on a learning curve but should be able to generate reports soon. She thanked Gary and Arch for only requesting \$500 reimbursement each for their 30x30 conference travel expenses, allowing a \$200 savings over the \$1200 approved. There have been 2 member renewals and 2 new memberships in the last month, as well as a \$250 donation. Our bank balance is \$20,376.08.

Claudia emailed Steve about expenses for the CDC cosponsored event and he will report back after conversing with her. Laraine suggested that in future cosponsored events we agree to what we will cover prior to the event. This one was rather last-minute.

### **Conservation Issues**

1) JT listing – AM, DF

At the recent California Fish and Game Commission meeting, action was again delayed until their February meeting, in part to allow the new Commissioner time to review the voluminous materials about the issue. Sarah and Laraine recommend listening to the [\*recent 90 Miles from Needles podcast\*](#) on which CBD staff and local resident Brendan Cummings is interviewed. Steve said that when he talked with YV Town Manager Curtis Yakimow at a recent Basinwide Foundation event, Curtis expressed a hope for a legislative solution. Note that the new Commissioner has legislative background and could be a key to that development.

2) Aurora Solar and Calcite substation – PF

[AB 205](#) and [SB 122](#) streamlining permitting via CPUC as lead agency. Steve, David, Sarah and Laraine listened to a webinar via CE-CERT on “Solar Valley” that focused on the status of transmission and large scale solar and the importance of SB County lands for it. Laraine noted the comments of several speakers about there not being enough available land due to the protections of DRECP and RECE. Claire Cozad of Supervisor Rowe’s staff made a good presentation defending the passionate communities that are protected by “RECE 410” ([Policy RE-4.10](#)). They noted that the state is looking at Central Valley land but they don’t see it as truly available because “we need it for agriculture.” Arch spoke about how much of the Central Valley land is not arable, so there IS room for solar. Brian noted they’ve had the subsidence problem even before the drought. An interesting topic was “the bowling alley” of projects north of Kramer Junction, on part of which the Mojave ground squirrel is a threatened species. Kourtney Vaccaro, CEC Commissioner, outlined how much land will be needed to meet SB 100’s goals, i.e. about 20,000 acres per year. But they didn’t at all address or include rooftop and distributed solar, and when Steve asked about it, they insisted it won’t be enough. The need for extensive battery storage was another theme. *Laraine will write up a summary of the meeting and send.*

3) Air Quality Monitoring – GS, AM, PF

Gary reported that when he called AQMD about the lack of notice in SB County of the October 6 haboob, the staff member (soon to retire) acknowledged that there are too many agencies not communicating well. The warning ended at the Riverside County border. Their suggestion was to rely on apps from weather services and other county AQMDs. AQMD has a stated objective to increase communication but improvements aren’t apparent. Cathy noted that lower desert Channel 3 TV has a [notification app](#). Congressman Raul Ruiz has an interest; we should make a contact. Sarah mentioned Marjorie Smith, the local Volunteer Emergency Coordinator, as a resource. There should at least be connective monitoring for contiguous AQMDs. What is the state agency under which this falls? Office of emergency services? (No one was assigned to do further research.)

4) 30x30 update – PF, AM, GS

Carbon sequester in the desert – PF, SB  
Gary and Arch reported on a meeting last week focused on lithium extraction near the Salton Sea and in an area on Nevada border as part of desert-wide issues, with the question of what technologies can be supported. Presenter was [Dr. Sophie Parker](#) of the Nature Conservancy. There are environmental problems with the Nevada lithium mine, but Salton Sea extraction would be a different method, taking it from the water as part of the geothermal renewable energy production. Leaking pipelines are a potential problem. This is another demand on the desert in addition to the 30x30 planning.

The Inland Desert Working Group has submitted 13 out of 63 proposals to identify land for protection, with more pending, working with both individuals and agencies. It is not clear how state agencies will fund it.

Steve reported that videographer Bonnie Hawthorne suggested doing a video about carbon sequestration in the desert environment. Janet noted how Robin Kobaly's presentation at the CDC/MBCA event was well received and would be great to have a video of it. Paul Smith sponsored Robin's book, so perhaps we could approach him for funding. *Stacy will reach out to Bonnie to begin a conversation about a carbon sequestration video.*

5) [Save California Solar](#) –SB

Steve talked with Dave Rosenfeld of SCS today. Dave is expecting to receive a proposal by the CEC for their intentions soon. Then there will be 30 days to respond. CEC will vote at their December 15 meeting. *Steve will get word out as soon as he hears from Rosenfeld.*

6) Chuckwalla National Monument – GS

Congressman Ruiz has been reelected and will carry the proposal. The [Protect California Deserts](#) group is building consensus, doing outreach with schoolboards, local organizations, etc. before submitting to Ruiz formally. Steve noted we are mentioning Ruiz often and should build a relationship with his office. There is a lot of politics in this proposal so the PCD group is being careful about messaging.

7) [Mojave Water Agency](#) upcoming meeting – SB

The issue of "Additional Morongo Basin recharge and storage" is on the MWA November 14 agenda. Neighbors of Steve and Sarah have reported that wells in Pipes Canyon are diminishing. Brian asked them to connect him with those folks to see if MWA can do some analysis. Stacy attended a recent MWA Board meeting and reported they were dissatisfied with how the County is saying yes to any kind of well. Brian agreed. Marina West will be our new regional Director on MWA. There are a lot of serious drought-related impacts in the MWA area. Melody Bailey is the MWA contact person about local well issues. More water use from added pools and spas at STRs and homes is especially egregious in a limited water availability environment.

## **Outreach & Communications**

1) Short Term Rentals and SBCO Housing Element– JJ, SB

Janet said there's still nothing in the Housing Element about the STRs and suggested legislation might be needed, perhaps with help from newly-elected Assemblymember Christy Holstege. There are more staff changes in Land Use Services, and no responses from Heidi Duron. Janet is trying to get a support letter from MUSD. Steve learned that Supervisor Rowe met with folks in Big Bear and she indicated the County was not going to work on Program 4 (data research) until the state has approved the Housing Element. Earlier we had heard that the County was already looking for a consultant but apparently

nothing's happening. HUD ends up subsidizing STRs because of displacements, so legislation requiring jurisdictions to label rentals appropriately might help.

2) Cannabis cultivation - BH, AM, PF

Numbers are greatly reduced after the Sheriff's year-long Operation Hammer Strike. There are "cannabis restoration grants" from the state for cleanup. A big issue is toxic substances, e.g. rodenticides and insecticides.

3) UCR Climate Steward class- SD

Steve suggested considering Stacy's capstone project as part of our annual meeting if water is the topic.

4) Partnering with Basin environmental groups -SB, PF

The triggering situation for this idea was the County Planning Commission's approval of the proposed trailer motel in Pioneertown over objections of many people after they failed to consider appropriately the MND and simply did not follow development code. The idea is to create a strong response from as many groups as possible, including JTNP, Friends of JT, Friends of Pioneertown, MBCA, maybe NPCA, and MDLT. Initially the coalition might be about this project, but then expand to the larger issues of County malfeasance. We believe there are significant conflicts of interest when supervisors vote on issues that they benefit from as STR owners.

Other projects to comment on include:

- Indian Cove resort project
- Wonder Inn in Wonder Valley
- Yucca Mesa camping project

Steve and several other Board members will meet with MDLT next week to talk about common issues and potential collaborations.

5) [High Desert Emergency Action Alliance](#) – SB

Justin Moreno, Executive Director of HDEAA, reached out to Steve. He has a grant from CalFire to do assessments for creating a fire prevention plan for the area and has met with JTNP, County, and the Base. A meeting is to be scheduled.

6) Cal Trans Adopt-A-Highway – SK, DF

Sarah talked with a state representative of the program. She believes there's a responsibility to do cleanups at least twice a year. David has the equipment. The area is Highway 62 between Sunfair and the Courthouse and David has been picking things up but says it's really quite clean. There was a question whether the requirement might be 6 times a year. Laraine spoke of the monthly cleanups that Deb Bollinger managed as the "Clean and Green Team" some years ago, in which Cathy also participated. This is an opportunity to get more

people involved beyond the Board. *Sarah will check with the state to clarify requirements. Gary will talk with Sarah about adding an educational component.*

### **Capacity Building & Organizational Issues**

#### **1) Nominations committee – LT, SB**

Laraine spoke about the historic process of naming a nomination committee in October and announcing any nominations for new Directors in November or December. As we have not discussed new Directors in any recent meeting, and our process has been very informal, she suggested we develop a more formal process of recruiting and “onboarding” new Directors, such as requiring attendance at some Board meetings so that they better understand our work and we have some experience with them. *Laraine will talk with recent new Board members about their experience as a basis for developing a more structured program for recruiting and “onboarding” new Directors.*

Laraine reported that the membership campaign letters would be going out soon. The Ad Hoc Membership committee has approved the letters and Laraine is working on the logistics of sending them in batches from Nationbuilder.

#### **2) Social Media and Website updates – Stacy / Laraine**

Stacy reported there were almost 700 visits to website in October. Steve said that Bonnie encourages us to do more to spread the STR video.

#### **3) Events Committee reports:**

*Fall events – done.*

*Tour hosts and docent reception re-cap.*

Sunday’s DWL Tour Thank You Luncheon went smoothly and was very well received. Almost everyone invited attended. We honored David for being a nominee for the Minerva Hoyt Desert Conservation Award by the Joshua Tree National Park Association. Special thanks to Stacy who did most of the organizing with Eva of Harrison House and caterer Terry, and for help from all Directors as the need came up.

#### *Annual meeting topic: WATER*

Steve exchanged emails with Marina about possibly making a presentation at our Annual Meeting about Water in the Morongo Basin. But in her upcoming role as our MWA representative it might be useful to have her present at a later time after she learns more in her new role. Brian has suggestions for speakers on water issues. Laraine suggested we could focus on explaining 30x30, perhaps including field trips. It will be in person on Saturday, January 28 at YVCC if possible. Steve will check with the Town and will also talk with Brian about possible speakers. Cathy suggested we could emphasize other ways of conserving water beyond landscaping. *Laraine will set up the next Events/Annual Meeting Committee meeting. (Arch, Cathy, Sarah, Stacy, Steve, Laraine)*

#### **4) Educational support**

*Scholarships – LT, JJ, SK, SB*

*Field trips CSA 20- JJ*

The Scholarships and Field Trips Committee is meeting next week.

5) Update on 'Google Workspace for non-profits'- GS, SD  
Next meeting.

Steve noted that this is the first month in a while we have not created or signed onto a letter.

**Adjourned at 7:14PM.**

**Next Regular Meeting:** Thursday, December 8, 2022 / 5:00 – 7:00 PM - zoom