

MBCA BOARD MEETING **APPROVED MINUTES**

Thursday, January 12, 2023 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm Via Zoom

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

Regular Meeting Called to Order at 5:07 P.M.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch	

• Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Steve thanked Helen Jeong for joining us again.

• Agenda approval

After adding the required annual vote on installation of officers to the agenda, ***Steve moved to approve the amended agenda. Pat seconded and all were in favor. (10-0)***

• Minutes from December 8, 2022 BOD meeting

Laraine commented that we have not been keeping track of completion of the “action commitments” noted in *blue italics* in each month’s minutes. Sarah suggested they be included in the related agenda item in the next month’s agenda. *Laraine will start sending out the action commitment sentences in an email about halfway between meetings.* ***Steve moved to approve the December 2022 minutes. Pat seconded and all were in favor. (10-0)***

• Treasurer’s Report

Cathy reported that December was another good income month following on the November membership campaign. She reported new and renewal memberships and donations totaling over \$2000. We have \$21,844.10 in checking and the CD investment remains at \$60,000. We accepted the report by consensus.

Vote on officers

Arch moved to accept the current slate of officers for continuation in 2023, and all agreed to serve.

Steve Bardwell, President
David Fick, Vice President
Laraine Turk, Secretary
Cathy Zarakov, Treasurer

Pat seconded and all were in favor. (10-0)

Capacity Building & Organizational Issues

1) Events Committee reports:

Annual meeting: Seeking Housing Solutions for the Morongo Basin

The committee has met numerous times to work on the PowerPoint presentation, plan speakers, and design the program. We expect around 100 participants, with a lectern on the stage for one speaker at a time, with Steve

as presenter and emcee. There will be some large posters around the room to illustrate some of the issues such as the proliferation of STRs in Joshua Tree, and there will a paper program and/or handouts. We'll have reserved seats in the front row for speakers.

Stacy showed and explained each slide of the latest version of the PowerPoint. Comments for additions or changes included:

- Gary suggests providing more data and growth projections.
- Cathy commented that it has become more concise and clear to a less-knowledgeable audience than an earlier version she viewed.
- Pat was also positive, and hopes it will be available on our website. Yes – Bob Stephenson will record the entire program and it will be placed on our YouTube channel via the website. Pat liked that it was well presented and non-emotional, and added that its content could be helpful for other local jurisdictions to view to help them see the overall picture.
- David commented on our proposal to develop a committee to work with Program 4 and then expand. He noted that committees are not always effective and he's concerned that STR caps should be a focus.
- The status of the proposed MB Housing Action Committee isn't clear; is it a nonprofit? Laraine thought it might be either under the "umbrella" of an existing non-profit or an unofficial collaboration similar to the Dark Skies Alliance of some years ago. We must keep track of its progress first through involvement in the Program 4 study and then continue as a watchdog so that it doesn't "go away." Monique's presentation about the proposed Housing Trust said they will partner with non-profits.
- Steve noted there will probably have to be a non-profit to work with the building foundation and other contractors.
- Cathy asked for clarification on MBCA's role. We hope some Board members will be on the Program 4 Advisory Committee and continue when it expands to be a Housing Advisory Committee.
- *Steve said that the committee will review how the money topic is portrayed.*

Laraine expressed concern with the difficulties of presenting the meeting via Zoom as well as in person and there was consensus to just do it live.

We will hold a Silent Auction with the items left from the FurstWurld fundraiser.

Sarah and Laraine will bring computers to help Cathy with a membership table.

Pat mentioned Twentynine Palms resident Greg Mendoza's passing - his home was on last year's Video Tour – and *suggested we send a letter or card. (Who?)*

Spring DWL program –

The Events Committee will reconvene after the Annual Meeting to design this year's hybrid Desert-Wise Landscape Tour.

2) Memberships – CZ, LT, SB

Cathy reported the memberships earlier during the Treasurer's report.

3) Social Media and Website updates – Stacy / Laraine
Nothing new.

4) Educational support

Scholarships – LT, JJ, SK, SB

The Committee has met and will again give 3 scholarships and is slightly revising the application. STEAM majors are preferred but almost any major that a student can tie to their environmental/conservation interest is OK. Ideally we would confer 1) a “general” MBCA scholarship; 2) a female STEAM major (bequest) scholarship; and 3) a Steve Rieman arts scholarship. Two committee members committed to donate funds for the Rieman scholarship.

Field trips – JJ – Not addressed today.

Conservation Issues

1) JT listing – AM, DF,

David reported there is no agenda yet for the Fish and Game Commission Meeting for Wednesday/Thursday, February 8-9. As there is no longer any opportunity for input, we'll just have to wait and see what happens.

2) [Save California Solar](#) / NEM 3.0 – DF, SB

NEM 3.0 passed and was signed into law. Existing residential solar installations will continue to receive current rates. All new residential solar starting in April will receive only about 25% of the current rate. This is disappointing but we need to continue to push for more rooftop and fewer industrial solar installations.

Gary and Arch reported that Edison has been surveying residents in their area about their need for emergency power as a backup safety net for people who have oxygen or refrigeration needs. There may be funding.

3) Air Quality update –GS, AM, SK

USDA has some non-competitive grants available and Arch will check into these. Steve will reach out to Erin Rode of the [Desert Sun](#) related to the lack of notice on the dangers of the haboob last fall. Gary talked with an AQMD person who clarified that their mandate is only to warn of dust, not its composition. Gary wants to continue trying to find someone who will listen to concerns about the dangerous dust from the Salton Sea that can carry inland in a haboob.
Congressional Representative Ruiz might respond; we should write a letter to him about this. (Who?)

4) 30x30 update – PF, AM, GS

Carbon sequester in the desert – PF

A meeting of the Inland Desert Working Group/IDWG is coming up. Gary expressed appreciation to Brian for his willingness to work on a mapping platform. Pat noted that years ago the EPA put aside places to use for solar but that data seems to have fallen through the cracks. *Pat will research that old*

study to see if we can find a way to resurrect it to keep them from scraping prime desert.

Grant possibilities – AM

Cal Fish and Wildlife announced last month new funding for nature-based solutions. Sarah suggested we work with MDLT to make sure they know about it. *Arch will try to get more information.*

5) Chuckwalla National Monument – GS

Gary sent us a press release about US Representative Ruiz taking the lead on this legislation. Avi Kwa Me in southern Nevada should be approved by Biden. The final stages for moving forward the Chuckwalla NM are getting support from Riverside County supervisors and some lower desert city councils. It will probably be filed by March 1.

Arch noted there have been some legislative activities in Arizona and New Mexico against the Antiquities Act. The MB Historical Society is working on a letter.

6) MWA update re: water - BH Brian not present.

7) Dark Skies - Presentation in Wonder Valley 2-18-23 – SB

Margaret Prescod, a KPFK public radio contributor, is working with Pat on this presentation to talk about the new County ordinance in a workshop style. Topics will include lighting techniques as well as reasons to care. *Steve ordered and received the light meters that we authorized. He will investigate how to use them.*

In a sidebar idea, *Sarah suggested everyone inventory any items we have each purchased or keep for MBCA.*

Outreach & Communications

1) Short Term Rentals – Legislative action to mandate tabulation of STRs -

Steve stated we need to get legislation to mandate appropriate tabulation of STRs and maybe we should approach the candidate who defeated Christie Holstege since that district includes both Palm Springs and Joshua Tree. It has been recommended that this be done by some government agency.

Recap FurstWurld MBCA event

Over \$10,000 was raised and will be given to the MUSD School Board probably on January 24; the Board has to formally vote to accept the money.

2) High Desert Emergency Action Alliance update– SB

Justin Moreno is working on a community wildfire protection plan.

3) Adopt-A-Highway update– DF

David reported the area is reasonably clean and not in need of major attention.

4) Development and CAGs update - SB

Steve attended a meeting with Dawn Rowe in Pioneertown that included Ben Loescher and critical Pioneertown property owners. They walked the area and discussed development issues. A conservation overlay is being proposed. Dawn gave Steve an update on staffing in LUS. The latest Director, David Doublet is now moving back to Public Works. The County is in putting out a nationwide search for a head of LUS. They recognize the need for a high quality leader.

David reported his own recent bad experience with LUS and Code Enforcement. He was sent the wrong application for an updated business license and the number he was told to call for more information refused to take any call “because they’re too busy.”

5) Conservation priorities mapping MDLT – PF, SB, LT, AM

We had a good preliminary meeting with MDLT and need to reach out for another quarterly discussion, especially about mapping. *Steve will contact Kelly to schedule it.*

6) Meet with FOJT- SB

John Lauretig of Friends of Joshua Tree asked Steve to attend their February Board meeting. They are trying to engage more with other conservation non-profits.

7) Goodbye David Smith :(

A farewell event hosted by Rotary at Copper Mountain College on Wednesday, January 18 from 5-8 PM has been announced. We will also thank him briefly at our Annual Meeting while introducing him. *Sarah will draft a letter on behalf of MBCA thanking him for all he’s done for conservation in the Park and Morongo Basin.*

Adjourned at 7:03 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, February 9, 2023, 5:00 – 7:00 PM - zoom