

## MBCA BOARD MEETING **APPROVED** MINUTES

Thursday, January 11, 2024 / 5:00 – 7:00 pm Via Zoom

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

### **Regular Meeting Called to Order at 5:04 PM**

<u>_x_</u> Kerrie Aley	<u>_x_</u> Brian Hammer	<u>_x_</u> Allan Songer
<u>_x_</u> Steve Bardwell	<u>_x_</u> Janet Johnston	<u>_x_</u> Laraine Turk
<u>_x_</u> Stacy Doolittle	<u>_x_</u> Sarah Kennington	<u>_x_</u> Bob Wold
<u>_x_</u> David Fick	<u>_x_</u> Arch McCulloch	<u>_x_</u> Cathy Zarakov
<u>_0_</u> Pat Flanagan(advance notice)		

- **Introduction of Guests and Board Directors**

Steve thanked Justin Merino, Jennifer Rendon, Bob Wold, and Helen Jeong for attending.

- **Agenda approval**

***Steve suggested adding a discussion of graphic design needs, then moved to approve the revised agenda. Sarah seconded and all were in favor. (11-0)***

- **Minutes from December 12, 2023, BOD meeting**

***Steve moved to approve the December minutes. Brian seconded and all were in favor. (11-0)***

- **Treasurer's Report**

Cathy reported 1 new member, 7 renewals, and several donations. The (2) \$1,000 scholarships have been given to the recipients but they have not yet cleared the bank. Our checking account holds \$23,321.27, and our CD is \$62,476.33. The Treasurer's report was accepted by consensus.

### **Outreach and Organizational Issues**

1) Board Nomination Committee – LT, SK, SD, PF

a. Recap of terms of Board

Sarah briefly reviewed the nomination procedure and our vote in December for Kerrie Aley and Allan Songer as new Board members. Each will start in Year 1 of the 3-year term.

2) Nominations of Officers for 2024 Revised slate - SB

Steve noted that the slate of officers nominated at the December meeting included Cathy as Treasurer, but that in consideration of her wish to retire from the Board as soon as a replacement and training can be completed, Steve chose to contact Bob Wold, who had earlier declined Board consideration. Bob agreed to serve if elected. Several members spoke enthusiastically in approval.

***Steve moved to appoint Bob Wold as a new Board member. Laraine seconded, and all were in favor. (11-0)***

**Steve moved to approve a revised slate of officers:**

**Steve Bardwell, President**

**Stacy Doolittle, Vice President**

**Laraine Turk, Secretary**

**Bob Wold, Treasurer**

**David seconded and all were in favor. (12-0)**

3) Confirm, Committees and their members - LT

Laraine reviewed the Chart of Board Terms and list of committee memberships.

A few changes were made including that instead of a combined Tour and Events Committee, there should be an ad-hoc committee convened for each Annual Meeting and other special events.

**Added:** Graphic design needs (SB)

Stacy has arranged for Martha Weir to do our design work; she was recommended by Melissa Sabol who is currently working overseas. Stacy shared the contract and asked for input; the conditions and reduced non-profit rate were seen to be reasonable. Additional needs include business cards and a 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo. **Stacy moved to approve the graphic design contract with Martha Weir. Steve seconded and all were in favor. (12-0)**

4) Events Committee reports:

a. *Annual meeting*

Arch, Brian, Pat, Steve are working as an ad hoc Annual Meeting 2024 committee. Steve reported we are still waiting for Wade Crowfoot's availability and hope to hear tomorrow. Potential topics include rural-wildlands interface, pressures for development, climate change, 30x30, Chuckwalla National Monument, carbon sequestration and presentation of the Inland Desert Working Group's report, *The California Desert's Role in 30x30; Carbon Sequestration and Biodiversity*. A working title is "Climate, Carbon, and Biodiversity in California Deserts." Stacy suggests we have someone from the Native American community; *Steve will reach out to NALC*. Arch spoke about the small mining operators focused on losing their rights in the JTNP proposed addition. We need to have answers to potential participants in that group.

b. *DWL Spring Tour*

Stacy reported that the Committee is making good progress. Cathy is working on getting a billboard ad in Yucca Valley. This is an alternative to rack cards and newspaper ads.

5) Educational Support

a. Funding – All three 2024 scholarships are funded.

b. *Field Trips – JJ*

Janet reviewed last year's 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trips for the new Directors. Overall, the emphasis is on jobs and training in the Basin, a theme of

“Navigating Your Way” or “Navigating Your Future.” Some additional stops are planned for this year’s field trips.

The waiver issue between the County and MUSD related to the Desert View Conservation Area Tour is close to being resolved and it may be held around the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March. No payments for last year’s trip have been invoiced or paid (MBCA is to pay for buses). La Contenta PTO is holding the funds.

6) Website and Social media updates.

Stacy reported that the FB post on dark skies was widely shared. Steve spoke more about the new Light Trespass Ordinance. The County is retaining a media expert to get information about compliance to the public. The plan is to send a letter to each offender and without compliance they will issue a citation.

## **Housing**

1) Program 4 study update–KA, SB

Steve referenced [Kerrie’s letter](#) in reply to the Program 4 report. Kerrie documented years of County comments admitting to the shortage and yet they deny there’s a problem. Steve believes our letter effectively delayed the topic being on the Supervisors’ December 19 agenda. It may be on the January 23 agenda. We had further discussion about the politics of the report. Kerrie believes the data show that we have lost a considerable amount of affordable housing.

2) Morongo Basin Housing Solutions Working Group – JJ – Not discussed.

3) MBCA Support for [Ben Alanoff](#) art install re: housing – SB

Steve introduced Ben, who has received a grant from the California Arts Council, public art that is meant to engage insecurely-housed youth and to publicize efforts to support them. They will be moving a sculpture to the vacant lot adjacent to the Joshua Tree Farmer’s Market, next to the laundromat, for a month. Through decorating it with materials Ben will supply, the goal is to share information and create personal connections. He invited MBCA to be involved. Janet suggests connecting with ARCH and with CMC and their youth struggling with housing. *We will at the least help advertise the event.*

## **Climate Change**

1) IDWG 30x30 status update & Carbon sequester – AM, PF

*Steve* discussed a report from Yale about messaging techniques for climate change and *will send it to Directors*. The reasons for promoting climate change are important to effective messaging, especially saving the planet for future generations. What is emphasized has differential effects. “Later is too late.”

2) Chuckwalla National Monument –AM – See agenda item 4. a. under **Outreach**.

3) Joshua tree ordinance – DF

*David will talk with Brendan Cummings and report next time.*

### **Renewable Energy**

1) Update on industrial scale solar projects in California – DF, BH, Pf

a. *Easley -SB* - Reported in prior minutes (PurpleAir donation).

Steve noted a Bloomberg Law article emphasizing that transmission is the main roadblock.

b. *Solar Rights Alliance* – AM, SB – Not discussed.

### **Water Issues**

1) Cadiz – DF

Democrats of the Morongo Basin are having a speaker on Cadiz this Saturday;

*David will attend and report to us.*

2) JBWD update – SD, DF

Via local resident Bernard Leibov, the [US Water Alliance](#) will be in the area to form connections and alliances to protect watersheds and aquifers.

3) MWA update – BH

“Still putting water in the ground!” The Sierra snowpack is disappointing. The initial MWA allocation was at 10%, quite conservative.

### **County Governance**

1) Update on: [Wonder Inn](#), [Flamingo 640](#), [Eco Dome Landers](#), [Joshua Tree Campground](#), [Yonder](#), Reset Hotel

We’re relieved that the Supervisors voted against Flamingo 640’s appeal. Justin spoke about the Eco Dome project, which is much smaller than 640, and is being proposed by a well-intended young couple who have been naïve about desert realities. At their recent public presentation they scaled down their plan. Steve reiterated the issue of defining campgrounds in a Rural Living zone. Supervisor Rowe made a strong comment at the Supervisors meeting on Flamingo 640 that developers should do their homework, but the County doesn’t help on these campground issues. Justin has talked with Rowe and LUS head Mark Wardlaw, noting we’d like to see a moratorium on campgrounds until there is a better definition. Mark said it’s up to each planner to decide. Justin thinks the County considers the Eco Domes a case study for an acceptable campground. We think campgrounds should be in more centralized locations instead of in RL areas.

Kerrie and David spoke of a proposed 100-unit motel on the Mesa, again on RL land. David expanded on this: it’s a 110-acre parcel, the east half is hilly, the west half has a lot of Joshua trees. It was proposed to be a solar project years ago. Justin added that the developers of 640 have not dropped it; they are “hell bent” on developing that lot.

Kerrie spoke about the lack of traffic planning and safety issues, with Buena Vista and Aberdeen being used as a cut-through by large trucks in residential neighborhoods. There appears to be no significant communication between Yucca Valley and the County on traffic issues.

2) Minute Land – SB

*Steve will inform Supervisor Rowe in case she's not aware.*

3) Light Trespass – SB – See agenda item 6). under **Outreach**.

4) Scenic 247 - SK

Changes are completed; they are waiting for CalTrans responses. There are concerns about definitions between County and State. The CPP Corridor Protection Plan that requires 200 feet on each side must be unambiguous. They are waiting also on Land Use Services' response. Sarah thinks it should be sent to Sacramento for review.

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Steve wished Helen luck with progress of the Joshua Tree development with which she is affiliated. She said they are trying to meet with Park Supt. Jane Rodgers and tribal representatives. Sarah noted that their group has been “doing the right thing” trying to meet and communicate with the community before completing the plan.

David commented on the composting issue. The state requirements are appropriate for urban areas but don't work well for SB County's rural Districts 3 and 1. The 29 Palms Transfer Station is the only one to accept compostables.

**Adjournment at 7:06 pm.**

Letters: MBCA letter re: Faulty Program 4 Study

**Next Regular Meeting:** Thursday, February 8, 2024, 5:00 – 7:00 PM - zoom