

MBCA BOARD MEETING APPROVED MINUTES

Thursday, December 11, 2025 / 4:00 – 6:00 PM on Zoom

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

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|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell | <input type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan (prior notice) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Doolittle | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Wold |

REPORT FROM CLOSED MEETING 3:45-4:00 PM

Closed session was called to order at 3:48 PM. Sarah on behalf of the Recruitment Committee (Stacy, Laraine, Pat, Sarah and ex-officio Steve) nominated Erin Flanagan and Joani Tremblay as Board of Directors nominees for 2026.

Laraine moved to approve the nomination of Erin Flanagan to the Board of Directors for 2026. Brian seconded and all were in favor (9-0). Laraine moved to approve the nomination of Joanie Tremblay to the Board of Directors for 2026. Stacy seconded and all were in favor. (9-0) *Laraine will finish updating the Handbook to give to the new Board members.* They will be installed at the January Annual Meeting.

Steve called the regular meeting to order at 4:00 PM

• Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Steve welcomed Helen Jeong and first-time guest Zeynep Graves. Ted Stimpfel joined later. Zeynep is a senior attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity and lives in YV. Guests and Directors introduced themselves. Steve introduced Erin as an incoming Board member.

• Agenda approval

Laraine moved to approve the agenda as amended by Arch (add g., h., and i. under Land Use Conservation). Bob seconded, and all were in favor. (9-0).

• Approve Minutes from November 13, 2025 BOD meeting

Sarah moved to approve the November minutes. Steve seconded, and all were in favor. (9-0)

• Treasurer’s Report – Budgeting

Bob reported a current total of \$36,100 across our two checking accounts and \$51,000 in our 13-month CD. He continues the slow process of moving our banking from US Bank to Banc of CA, hopefully to be completed in January. We have received all Desert-Wise Living/Tour grants except from Golden State Water Agency. *Bob will reach out to remind them.* In November there were 6 membership renewals and donations totaling \$275. One large expense was \$3000 to videographer Cole Gibson for the fall planting videography. The Board accepted the Treasurer’s report by consensus.

Committee Reports/ Mission Statements and Budgets:

Steve reiterated our intent from the Retreat to more strongly structure our activities and reporting via committee work. *All information received today, including budget*

requests, will be combined by Bob and the Finance Committee for further review, then presented for approval at the January Board meeting.

Land Use Conservation - AM

Arch's committee is still working on a mission statement and budget. He read the draft version.

1. Renewable Energy

Status Sienna Solar project appeal hearing BH, SB

The Planning Commission approved the project at its October 23 meeting. Brian outlined some of the appeal grounds, which he believes are solid arguments. During the meeting Steve confirmed with new SB Planning Director Paul Gonzalez that the date of the appeal hearing will be January 27. Brian feels they have a chance as some important things were ignored.

2. Development Proposals

a. Status Ofland lawsuits filed by Indian Cove Neighbors and CBD

Zeyneb reported that CBD is asking to extend the deadline until March. The initial phase of settlement is promising.

b. Status -Lovemore Ranch lawsuit filed by Joshua Tree Village Neighbors Janet has no new information.

c. Cactus Club

Zeyneb reported that CBD wrote a compelling letter but there is no action scheduled yet. A main concern is their project's biology review stating there are no small mammal burrows. Photos have been taken to contradict that review.

d. Joshua Tree Rezoning/Joshua Tree Resort

The approved rezoning was presented as related to disaster preparedness and flood zones and providing more information for "potential" developers, and was passed by the Planning Commission. The seemingly related proposal for a wastewater treatment plant in JT administered and run by the County was noted as another County effort to bring more development to Joshua Tree. (The borders of the proposed facility includes (barely) the Compass Yacht Club.) Stacy checked with Obernolte's office and the legislative director told her they requested \$5 million but only got \$750K for a feasibility study. It would become a County special district but with no local contact or control. It's another situation where cumulative effects are not being considered. We need to keep referencing cumulative effects in our comments.

e. Sunfair - Rural Sports Recreation

Steve is asking Glen Harris for an update. They are calling a motocross track "rural sports recreation." It is being considered for a minor use permit but it should be a conditional use permit instead, which is discretionary in a RL zone *unless there is enough controversy or comment*. David went to the facility's second open house, where a dozen neighbors were most worried about the 2-stroke engine noise. There should be silencers and there will be noise tests. Racing happens between 8AM and 2PM on weekends.

- f. Compass Yacht Club
Meeting by developers will be held in Joshua Tree on December 17.
- g. Inland Desert Working Group
Arch reported that Congressional outreach efforts have been made to Calvert and Obernolte, and he encouraged more attendance at the legislators' "mobile office hours", especially [Obernolte's](#), held monthly in YV or 29 Palms. The IDWG would like to have an upper desert business group supporting Chuckwalla and thinks MBCA could help with that.
- h. Amargosa Basin National Monument
Protecting the Soda Mountains by adding to the Monument has been discussed. Sheep hunters and the town of Baker want that area protected from solar. There is interest from Supervisors Cook and Rowe in protecting the Soda Mountains and NPCA is "approaching" them about support.
- i. Senate Bill
While the JTNP expansion was eliminated from the final Chuckwalla NM, bills have been introduced to add that land back in and to designate the Cottonwood Visitor Center as the Dianne Feinstein Visitor Center, [SB 1777 by Padilla](#) and Schiff and [HR 3414 by Ruiz](#).

3. Water

- a. MWA
Brian reported MWA will be adding a second recharge pond in the Bighorn Desert View Agency territory.
- b. JBWD
David reported that the district is fighting every way they can against the devastating financial cost of Chromium 6 treatment. Stacy may be added to a state committee to make sure desert issues are represented. *David will send a video of the the Board's recent 45-minute discussion about the sewer situation.*

Joani joined the meeting and Steve announced her election to the Board.

4. WJT Conservation Plan [FAQs](#) vs Firewise

A workshop is scheduled in January; Laraine will find and post.

Board/Volunteer Recruitment - SK

Sarah read the Committee's mission statement. She mentioned they might also add a membership responsibility in the future. Budget request is \$500 for an event as part of recruiting Directors, Advisors and Volunteers. The committee will continue to vet names throughout the year. *All committees should send to the Recruitment Committee names and contact information for people involved with their activities.*

FYI the committee has taken on a year-end membership campaign requesting membership and/or donations, with specific appeals to current members, former members, and those who have never donated. Stacy shared the proposed letters.

Housing and Community - JJ

Janet read her committee's statement. Emphasis is on collaborations, navigation and planning issues, not boots on the ground. Budget request was for travel to meetings, room rental and snacks, copies, an additional website and other possible expenses.

The Working Group is sharing a lot of important information, and creating a larger number of informed people. Janet is having some success connecting people across government agencies, non-profits and funding sources. The County recently signed an MOU with 13 different agencies to share data (it wasn't shared before!!). Federal changes are particularly problematic. Permanent funding was changed to temporary and could result in a loss of over 900 beds. Connections are critically important. She thanked Brian for providing some maps.

Steve suggested we ask Working Group members to become MBCA members. Janet's efforts are significant and should be recognized as part of MBCA.

DWL - SD

Stacy shared a document providing mission statements and budgets for both the Desert-Wise Living and Communications committees.

1. Annual Meeting 1-24-26 Topic Greywater
Nicholas Holmes is the main speaker, paid through the \$10K grant Stacy wrote and received for greywater education. We hope to have some equipment vendors. Bob Stephenson will video the event, and Teri will again do the catering. In early 2026 there will be two follow-up workshops by Nicholas, one in the Hesperia or Apple Valley area and one here in the Basin.
2. Spring Landscape Tour planning update –
A subcommittee is working on sites and planning is ahead of last year. CMC is interested this year as a public site.

Web, Social Media Communications - SD

Stacy reported some analytics from our social media, including 2.3K followers on FB. Recently she's created 19 posts in 20 days including shares as well as originals. The Fall Planting video was boosted, with 6904 views, 675 engagements, and 9 shares. 82% engaging are non-followers. She is really expanding our audience.

There was also a great response to the graphic about different types of lights related to the Dark Sky Ordinance; 2.7K engaged.

Stacy spoke more about the Compass Yacht Club posting, which got lots of online engagements and comments. Additional discussion ensued with these points:

- People ask MBCA to organize against such things.
- Cumulative effects is a good talking point – required by CEQA but not being addressed by the County.
- The Community Action Guide says citizens are in charge of community vision but that isn't recognized in any County interactions.
- Arch commented on the "easily expandable" comment in the Yacht Club proposal. These things need to be pointed out to "create excitement" at the developers' Dec. 17 Town Hall rather than waiting until the Planning Commission hearing, to engage community as early as possible.

- We need to know more on this project in order to get people involved with accurate information.

Stacy also reported on the Communications team meeting (Stacy, Joani, Nora, Laraine) about website and CRM (i.e. administrative data) needs. Joani is developing a more attractive and modern MBCA website on Squarespace but we will stay with Nationbuilder in the background for CRM needs. When Steve is able to get the name correction on our official federal IRS records, we will switch the Tour registration payment system to Zeffy or EventBrite.

Scholarships/Field Trips - LT

Laraine read the mission statement but agreed it needs condensing. The annual budget request is for \$1000 a year for the MBCA scholarship with a \$2000 contingency to cover the other two scholarships if they are not covered by donations; and \$1200 for Field Trips.

Partnership Advocacy - SB

Steve read the mission statement and they are working on a budget. He also reported it has been a slow month for sign-on comment requests. Most recent was the Endangered Habitats League, related to the border wall, asking California to recognize an old agreement with Mexico to maintain terrestrial connectivity.

Finance Committee - BW

Bob read the committee's mission statement.

Bob and the committee will put together an organizational budget after receiving all the requests and will present in January. A decision needs to be made about one platform/format to use (e.g. Google docs, Nationbuilder, Intuit, or other). *Committee chairs should send mission and budget documents to both Laraine and Bob.* This will help to do more long-range planning.

Erin noted the need for consistency and asked if this becomes a strategic plan and if so how are we packaging it and for what are we using it. Steve and Stacy answered that it's based on our 3 major Goals* and is part of ongoing efforts to better develop our organizational structure.

Outreach and Organizational Issues

- 1) Bring back the MAC – SB
There have been no recent discussions. Ray Kennedy in MV and Ryan Schneider (per Joani) are also interested. We've discussed whether to develop our own "shadow MAC" or "dark MAC" if the County refuses. Steve mentioned that the Landers Community Assn. is able to get local sheriffs and fire to participate in their meetings without a MAC. Terry Taylor Castillo of JT Retreat Center is supportive and willing to offer a venue.
- 2) Eco Summit at Harrison House – JJ
Janet said it will be planned for a date around the spring Field Trips.

Steve commented on the huge workload of topics we take on and exhorted us to not burn ourselves out. We're doing a great job and have a great reputation. If we have to pull back from something, we will.

Director's Comments

Erin heard that comments are due January 19th for the proposed 29 Palms solar project near Harmony Acres. They want a mitigated negative declaration.

Erin also noted that the Morongo Basin Democrats are meeting this Saturday and will focus on identifying 2026 priorities.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, January 8, 2026, 4:00 – 6:00 PM Zoom

Adjourned at 6:05 PM.

*GENERAL BOARD GOALS, ADOPTED IN 2018, Revised 2021, [Revised 2025](#).

[Goal 1](#): Engage in issues impacting [land use and](#) natural resources, quality of life, and human health [and welfare](#).

[Goal 2](#): Maintain active community involvement through education in issues such as climate change, [clean air](#), energy and water use.

[Goal 3](#): Highlight the value of the natural environment for the arts, tourism and other segments of [our](#) local economy.