

**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA)**  
**Thursday, September 15, 2022**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Board Member Uranga at approximately 1:30pm

**2. ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr. Roberto Uranga  
Ms. Victoria Paul (For Supervisor Barger)(Sworn in)  
Mr. Dan Arrighi  
Mr. Ernesto Rivera  
Ms. Laura Muraída (For Supervisor Mitchell)  
Mr. Ernesto Rivera(Sworn in)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Chair Herlinda Chico (For Supervisor Hahn)Mr. Vincent Chang (For Supervisor Solis)  
Ms. Denise Diaz

**STAFF PRESENT**

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer  
Elizabeth St. John, Deputy Attorney General  
Dena Williams, Board Secretary  
Nicole Law, Fiscal Manager  
Jeremy Munns, Project Manager  
Jonathan Perisho, Project Manager  
Suely Saro, RMC Staff Member

**3. Vote pursuant to Gov. Code section 54953**

Elizabeth St. John explained that this is a vote pursuant to the Government Code section 54953, that the Board make the two findings in order to conduct the Board Meetings remotely and comply with all provisions for teleconferencing. Ms. St. John stated staff recommends that the Board finds that 1) it has reconsidered the circumstances of the state of emergency since the last meeting of the Board and 2) find that one or more of the following circumstances continue to exist: either that the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person and/or that the state or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Uranga seconded. Approved. Roll call vote–Ayes = 4; Nays = 0; Abstentions =0.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

There were no corrections noted by the Board. Minutes were approved.

**6. CHAIR’S REPORT**

No report was given.

**EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORTS**

**7. WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Mark Stanley stated there is no update but the State encourages us to be cautious. Staff is still working in hybrid fashion and will be in the office at least once a week and do not anticipate that this will change anytime soon.

**8. LIAISON AND ACTIVITIES REPORT**

Mark Stanley provided a legislative update. Mr. Stanley stated that SB1122 is currently on the Governor’s desk and if signed, it will take effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB30, Equitable Outdoor Access Act, which has a budget of over \$500 million, is on the Governor’s desk waiting for signature.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB1789, Outdoor Recreation: California Recreational Trails System Plan: State Park and Recreation Commission, has a budget of \$35 million and is on the Governor’s desk waiting for signature.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB2251, Urban Forestry: Statewide Strategic Plan, requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to complete a statewide strategic plan to achieve a 10% increase of tree canopy cover in urban areas by 2035.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB178, Budget Act of 2022, has a budget of \$20 million to the RMC for direct project support including the SELA Cultural Center.

Mr. Stanley stated that AB211 included an additional \$4 million to the RMC for Nature-based solution investments in 2023-24 and \$11 million for Wildfire Resilience investments in 2023-24.

Jeremy Munns stated that the San Gabriel River Center project is in the permitting phase with submittals to County and SCE and staff has observed that response times from the agencies are taking much longer than pre-Covid norms but the Project Team will continue the permitting process, pay fees and respond to any questions or requests from permitting agencies. Mr. Munns concluded that

additional funding is being requested from RMC and will be on the RMC Board Meeting agenda on Monday

Mr. Munns stated that for the Walnut Creek Habitat & Open Space project the City of San Dimas is in the process of completing the remaining items of their RPOSD Prop A grant related to the Trail project and WCA has been assisting in the delivery of the final elements for the project. Mr. Munns added that WCA Staff designed and fabricated interpretive, funder dedication, operational, wayfinding and botanical plant ID plaques and signage which have now been installed along the trail and throughout the Open Space property. Mr. Munns concluded with the City of San Dimas will wrap up everything by the end of this month for project closeout.

Johnathan Perisho stated that for the San Gabriel Valley Greenway Strategic Implementation Plan with community engagements coming to a completion a preliminary draft program environmental report is being developed and the comment period will be open between September 20<sup>th</sup> and November 18<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Perisho stated that for the Parque Dos Rios project, CCLB continues on improvements to site elements for hardening and heightened use experiences while also increasing visibility at the park. Mr. Perisho concluded with an official opening event is planned for October 15 at 10am to celebrate this milestone and fee free to contact him directly if there were any questions or concerns.

Mr. Perisho stated that for the Foothills Open Space Engagement and Preacquisition WCA met with the Outreach committee of Claremont Wildlands Conservancy regarding priority parcels in the eastern San Gabriels and seek to continue a partnership to further opportunities to protect ecosystem services and public benefit on those parcels. Mr. Perisho also stated that WCA met with staff at DRP to understand status of developments proposed on certain parcels that were called out as priorities in the Foothills Plan, and another meeting is scheduled with DRP regarding the General Plan Safety Element update and Climate Change adaptation. Mr. Perisho concluded with an appraiser began work on establishing fair market value for the Azusa Floodplain property and completed a site visit and WCA mapped structures on the property to assist in this process and established contact with an additional property owner we seek to work with in the future.

Mr. Perisho stated that for the Azusa Foothills Acquisitions and Interim Land Management Plan two RFP's were issued to forward Land Management Guidelines with the first RFP for Invasive Species Management two eligible proposals were received and a jury of four chose Wildscape Restoration for the contract and will visit the site to confirm whether recommendations made by previous biological surveys still hold in present conditions. Mr. Perisho also stated that the second RFP seeks to identify workshop leader to partner with on a series of planning workshops on the topic of Stewardship and Engagement and two proposals were received but WCA revised and reissued the RFP on July 27, 2022 to seek broader representation from the community and the deadline for proposals was September 8, 2022 at 5pm.

Mr. Stanley briefly explained that for the Mt. Baldy Wilderness Preserve Fuel Modification project three eligible proposals were received and the jury chose California Botanic Garden as the Specialist Crew who will provide guidance, training, oversight and quality control for broom removal and the jury also chose San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps as the non-specialist Field Crew who will conduct the bulk of the work in removing the broom.

Suely Saro shared that the River Ranger Program began its 26-week program with the River Ambassadors on June 27, 2022 and that 10 Ambassadors are currently in week 10 of the program with

training in emergency systems, data collections and reporting in partnership with the South Gate Police Department, Downey Police Department, CCLB staff and the Los Angeles Department of Public Health.

## **9. EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Nicole Law referenced Exhibit A, the FY 22/23 budget with balances as of August 31, 2022 and the Receipts and Disbursements for the quarter ending June 30, 2022 are referenced as Exhibit B.

Ms. Law highlighted the revenues for the Authority include lease revenue for July and August from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, annual lease payments were received from the Rainbow Canyon Ranch and WCA is awaiting reimbursement from several other grants, and once received, the revenue will be reflected when submitted costs expended under the grant has been approved for reimbursement and the reimbursement is received.

Ms. Law briefly mentioned that for the expenses the Property management line item is higher than YTD budget projections due to the installation of Highway 39 sign and the Authority anticipates expenses incurred through the end of the fiscal year to be within budgeted projections.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

## **10. FUND BALANCE REPORT**

## **11. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT GRANT FUNDING FROM THE RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CENTER AND GARDENS PROJECT.**

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Uranga seconded. Approved. Roll call vote—Ayes = 4; Nays = 0; Abstentions =0.**

### **\_\_\_\_\_ REGULAR CALENDAR**

## **12. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN UPDATE TO THE WCA EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK.**

Nicole Law Referenced two sections of the Employee Handbook that need to be updated which pertain to the Equal Employment Opportunity Statement/Affirmative Action Policy and the COVID-19 Infectious Disease Control Policy.

There were no questions from the Board or Staff.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to receive and file this item. Board Member Muraida seconded. Board Voted; 4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstentions**

## **13. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE EMERGENCY ACTION TO COMPLETE RIVER PARK PHASE 1A STEP 2 PROJECT.**

Johnathan Perisho stated that the primary contractor Fast Track Construction Corporation was selected through a competitive bid process but has since been terminated for cause which is forcing WCA to engage in direct contracting superseding standard procurement protocols to facilitate completion of the project and mitigate against the threat to public health, welfare and safety as well as any loss or damage to state property.

Mr. Perisho concluded with actual costs of project work can vary significantly month to month from estimate to award of contract with recent market instability and the recommendation is to approve contracts up to amounts budgeted through project-specific grants awarded and currently, \$1,000,000 is available; staff will seek additional funding if necessary.

Board Member Uranga asked if the \$1,000,000 was that the maximum or minimum for the project. Mr. Perisho answered with the \$1,000,000 is what is on hand right now and with rising costs, WCA would need to request additional funding if necessary.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Muraida seconded. Board Voted; 4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstentions**

**14. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO 1) APPROVE GRANT APPLICATION AND 2) ACCEPT FUNDING FROM THE RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY FOR SAN GABRIEL RIVER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND PLANNING.**

Johnathan Perisho referenced Exhibit A as a grant application to the Rivers & Mountains Conservancy for \$236,000 which would expand timely data collection and actionable knowledge of the San Gabriel River watershed with the results being made publicly available and shared in meaningful dialog structured to identify project opportunities with a focus on restoring and daylighting riparian systems, supporting stronger river and stream-adjacent projects, and data-driven land management.

Mr. Perisho mentioned that goals for the project include adding to knowledge of water temperature impacts, knowledge of species presence in the San Gabriel River and tributaries and knowledge of geography in areas where there has not been systematic documentation.

Mr. Perisho concluded with the proposed action would approve a grant application for a technical assistance grant from the RMC with a project budget of \$236,000 which would include project management, sensor approvals, purchase, installation and data collection, biological survey, comprehensive spatial dataset development, stakeholder and community engagement, project concept development and indirect costs.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Muraida seconded. Board Voted; 4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstentions**

**15. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AWARD OF CONTRACT TO THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COASTAL WATER RESEARCH PROJECT (SCCWRP).**

Johnathan Perisho stated that the consultant is conducting a temperature study of the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers for the LA County Sanitation Districts to reduce temperature effluent and receiving water limits in surface water discharge permits. Mr. Perisho further stated that the proposed scope of this approved contract would include securing approvals, purchase, installation and data collection of up to 6 additional sensors in target locations in the Upper San Gabriel River Watershed with location recommendations from the consultant as highlighted in Exhibit A.

Mr. Perisho concluded with the recommended action would approve award of contract in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 on the conditions that the WCA Governing Board approves the grant application for Upper San Gabriel River Technical Assistance and Planning and a grant is awarded by the RMC including this scope of work and the contract would be budgeted through the awarded grant.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Uranga seconded. Board Voted; 4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstentions**

**16. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AWARD CONTRACT TO ERSOLYU CONSULTING FOR RIVER RANGER PILOT PROGRAM EVALUATION SERVICES.**

This item was tabled.

**17. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AWARD CONTRACT TO PHIL & SONS FOR TREE REMOVAL AT WALNUT CREEK HABITAT AND OPEN SPACE.**

Jeremy Munns stated that WCA owns approximately 54 acres of Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space property and a cluster of mature palm trees are located on WCA's portion of the property near the entrance to the residential neighborhood. Mr. Munns further stated because the trees are considered invasive, with minimal habitat value, staff has recommended removal of the trees which will reduce fire risk and save the agency operational and maintenance costs associated with annual tree skirt removal.

Mr. Munns concluded with Phil & Sons Tree service is being recommended by staff based on their experience and knowledge as an ISA Certified Arborist and their quote for removing the trees was lower in cost and represents a higher overall value to the agency and the not-to-exceed \$10,000 contract will be funded by a Proposition A Grant from the Regional Park and Open Space District which includes a line item for area development improvements, including tree removal.

**Board Member Paul motioned to approve this item. Board Member Arrighi seconded. Board Voted; 4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstentions.**

**18. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION TO APPROVE APPLICATION FOR A LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT OF WCA'S WALNUT CREEK OPEN SPACE TO CONFORM LOTS TO ANTICIPATED USE.**

Jeremy Munns gave a brief description of the project and also stated that WCA seeks board approval to apply for a Lot Line Adjustment from the LA County Department of Regional Planning in order to conform lot lines to current and anticipated uses.

Mr. Munns further stated that both the Tzu Chi and WCA agree on the exchange of acreage as referenced in Exhibit A as follows:

- A. 6 acres from the Tzu Chi to WCA including the connection of WCA's Walnut Creek Open Space Nature Trail to the County Antonovich Trail.
- B. 4.3 acres from the WCA to Tzu Chi Foundation including a walking path used by Tzu Chi Foundation
- C. 0.7 acres from the WCA to Tzu Chi Foundation including a warehouse and portion of parking lot and
- D. 0.3 acres from the WCA to Tzu Chi Foundation including a portion of an existing parking lot

Mr. Munns concluded with that the Lot Line Adjustment costs would be covered by the Regional Parks and Open Space District grant and range of costs would be from \$43,900 - \$87,346. Mr. Munns mentioned that the cost to WCA for survey services, fees for the application process, fire referral costs, Building and Safety fees, recordation fees for the Certificate of Compliance and any additional fees for recordation of 'perfected' deeds will be split evenly between WCA and Tzu Chi Foundation.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Uranga seconded. Board Voted;**

**4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstentions.**

**19. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE NEGOTIATION AND ENTERING INTO A CONTRACT FOR SURVEY SERVICES IN PREPARATION FOR LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT OF WCA'S WALNUT CREEK OPEN SPACE TO CONFORM LOTS TO ANTICIPATED USE.**

Jeremy Munns stated that this item is related to the last item and a survey is required in preparation for the Lot Line Adjustment.

Mr. Munns further stated that WCA issued an RFP for survey services on May 23, 2022 and in order to increase the pool of applicants, the RFP was reissued on July 29, 2022, three proposal were received by the deadline and Southland Civil Engineering & Survey unanimously received the highest scores.

Mr. Munns mentioned that due to the funding constraints, the RFP stated that legal descriptions shall be completed and ready for use in a Lot Line Adjustment application before November 1, 2022 or as soon as possible.

Mr. Munns concluded that the cost of the consultant proposal for \$43,900 will be split equally between WCA and Tzu Chi Foundation in two separate not-to-exceed contracts of \$21,950 and the amount will be funded by a Regional Parks and Open Space District (Prop A) Grant.

**Board Member Arrighi motioned to approve this item. Board Member Uranga seconded. Board Voted; 4 Ayes; 0 Nays; 0 Abstentions.**

**20. CLOSED SESSION: PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54956.9(d)(1) AND (4), THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY MAY HOLD A CLOSED SESSION ON THE FOLLOWING ITEM: RIVER PARK PHASE 1A STEP 2.**

Closed Session started at 2:27pm and ended at 2:35pm. Ms. St. John stated that Item 20 was discussed and it was informational only and there is no action to report.

**21. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 17, 2022 @ 1:30 pm

**22. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by Board Member Uranga at approximately 2:37pm.

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Herlinda Chico  
Madam Chair

X

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Dena Williams  
Board Secretary