

**SAN DIEGUITO RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PARK  
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY  
Minutes of February 15, 2013**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jim Cunningham- Chair  
Lesa Heebner –Vice Chair  
Don Mosier  
Olga Diaz -  
Dave Roberts  
Dianne Jacob  
Sherri Lightner  
Tom Golich  
Becky Bartling

**REPRESENTING**

City of Poway  
City of Solana Beach  
City of Del Mar  
City of Escondido  
County of San Diego  
County of San Diego  
City of San Diego  
Citizens Advisory Committee  
22 District Agricultural Association

**VISITORS/STAFF PRESENT**

Wayne Brechtel  
Dick Bobertz  
Susan Carter  
Shawna Anderson  
Leana Bulay  
Jeff Barnouw  
Rand Newman  
Bill Michalsky

JPA Counsel  
San Dieguito River Park JPA  
Friends of SDRV  
San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy  
San Dieguito Lagoon Committee

**Introduction and Announcements**

Chair Diaz convened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the County Administration Building, 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302/303, San Diego, CA 92101

The River Park staff and Board members introduced themselves.

Chair Diaz read from a list of Accomplishments of 2012 and said that they would be posted on the San Dieguito River Park website.

**Approval of Minutes of December 14, 2012**

Boardmember Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes of December 14, 2012, Boardmember Roberts seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Executive Director's Report**

Director Bobertz reported the opening of Horse Park Trail adding ½ mile length to the Lagoon Trail and the opening of Dust Devil Nature Trail, which is a 1.70 mile-long loop trail.

He reported that Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead hosted its first wedding in 100 years.

Mr. Bobertz updated the Board on the situation with the State Coastal Conservancy. The Director of the Conservancy had objected to SANDAG using the Boudreau property, which was partially funded by the Conservancy, for mitigation, and therefore required that the JPA return the funds that SANDAG had paid the JPA. Director Bobertz spoke to the Conservancy Director and he agreed the projects Park staff were doing do qualify as public benefit. He requested an accounting report of the costs associated with various park ranger activities. No final agreement has been reached but he said he feels this matter could be resolved soon.

**Public Comment- None**

**CONSENT**

1. **Receive and Distribute Audit Report for Year Ending June 30, 2012**
2. **Award Contract for Phase One Construction of Trailside Open Air Classroom** (Marathon Construction at \$157,000)

Board member Jacob moved approval of the Consent Calendar, Board member Roberts seconded. All in favor.

**ACTION AGENDA**

3. **Election of Officers and Committee Appointments**

Board member Tom Golich reported that the Nominating committee (Golich, Lightner and Mosier) was recommending that Jim Cunningham be elected as Chair and Lesa Heebner be elected Vice-Chair. Approval of nominations moved by Boardmember Golich and seconded by Boardmember Roberts with all in favor. Committee appointments will stay the same with Mr. Roberts replacing former Board member Slater-Price. Motion for approval with committee appointments by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Boardmember Mosier with all in favor.

4. **Meeting with the Mayor of San Diego**

First meeting with Mayor Filner was with Chair Cunningham. He reported that Mr. Filner was fond of the JPA and was disturbed the City of San Diego pulled its funding. Mr. Filner reconfirmed his commitment to restore the JPA's funding in this year's budget. The second meeting was with Mr. Cunningham, Boardmember Roberts and Executive Director Bobertz, Mr. Filner again committed to reinstatement. The Mayor's Budget is due April 15<sup>th</sup>. The second part of the meeting was about the retroactive money, which is \$800K. He was not opposed but wants to see a plan on how the money would be spent. Mayor Filner also committed to reimbursing Boardmember Lightner's \$25,000 from her office budget and questioned the billings the JPA had received for City services for the West Bernardo Bike Path. Boardmember Jacob warned not to spend the money until we receive it, but good job. Ms. Lightner seconds that advice since there is a 45 million dollar deficit in the

City's budget and it still needs to be approved by the City Council. She said she is not sure what Mayor Filner can do about the City Water Utilities or the retroactive payments. Mr. Roberts said Mr. Filner can take money from the enterprise fund. Mr. Bobertz explained that the City of San Diego attorney did issue a report agreeing that much of what the River Park does could legally be reimbursed from the Utilities fund. The Director of Utilities would need to approve. Mr. Bobertz stated that almost everything the River Park does is related to water quality. That is our main function. Trails are a byproduct of water quality protection. Staff would rather the funding comes from the water department because it is more secure. Mr. Roberts said he will go testify in City Council meeting for importance of Park funding. Ms. Lightner said it would be best if the River Park funding is included in the Park and Recreation budget and not spelled out as a separate line item. She stressed that follow up is important.

Mr. Bobertz reported that as requested by the Mayor, staff had prepared a list to show how the \$800,000 would be spent if it were repaid to the JPA. Deputy Director Carter reviewed the list, which started with deferred expenses. At the annual staff retreat insight from staff was given to show what we could and should have been doing the last several years. The Park has deferred on educational materials such as booklets that are out of stock. Invasive species removal is very important and must continue every year. Many interpretive panels are old and need replacement. A major goal is to complete CEQA for the Sikes Adobe Master Plan so that improvements at Sikes Adobe can be implemented so it can become self supporting. With the wetland mitigation we need to continue monitoring. We need land management equipment, like a flatbed truck and to replace an older truck. Ms Carter also explained that we still have a shortfall in the Fire Recovery fund. She said the Park's total loss was \$794,000, not including our office or Sikes Adobe. FEMA paid 75%, CALEMA paid 18.75%, the victim (SDRP) had to pay 6.25%. In the past years the State would pick up that 6.25% but not this time, due to the State's own financial problems. The total owed by the Park came to \$46,000. This amount is a short fall in our account that we need to repay.

At December's JPA board meeting there was a discussion that Southern California Edison will provide the Park with \$4K each month for the next 10 years for the ranger office. There is a need for additional money to construct the ranger maintenance building. The list includes \$250,000 to be added to the SCE money for that purpose. The 22nd Agriculture District is providing interim office space now. The problem with the office space is the public and visitors cannot access the office due to its location on the Fairgrounds. She noted that the Lagoon Center Plan has 3 components: Phase one starts next month with the construction of the open air classroom; Phase two is the ranger maintenance building; followed by the Lagoon Center. She said that the \$250,000 would help kickstart the capital campaign for the Lagoon Center.

Lastly, she said the JPA needs to build up its reserve. This fund needs to have at least \$42K in reserve in case of unanticipated expenses such as payout of vacation leave when an employee leaves. . The loan from the Endowment Fund needs to be replaced because it is our nest egg for the future. Ms. Heebner feels this is a compelling story but make a larger point for financial sustainability.

Ms. Diaz suggested Mr. Bobertz consider coming out of retirement. Mr. Bobertz states he enjoys helping out the Park but the greatest need for the organization is rangers. He suggested that when Ms. Carter retires then the Board should consider combining the two positions into one since the Park continues to move from administrative to operational functions. The Park hopes to have the trails completed in the next 5-6 years. We need to build a budget that reflects that change to add additional rangers. If the City reinstates funding we can add 2 rangers, followed by more in the upcoming years.

Mr. Roberts stated that Mr. Filner said he does not want salaries to be included but he liked the Visitor Center. Ms. Jacob agrees with Mr. Bobertz' planning recommendation of evolving into park operations. The Park needs to discuss where to go from here in terms of personnel. The organization is lean at this time. Mr. Cunningham's long range planning session would be a good idea. Ms. Lightner asks if this dollar amount is set in stone. She suggests giving Mr. Filner a choice and with a range of costs. Staff was directed to make revisions to the list for review by Boardmembers Roberts and Cunningham.

Renewal of JPA agreement- The current JPA agreement expires in 2014, so it needs to be renewed. A year ago we went through the agreement and made some changes. The staff sent it to the agencies for comments, after a year we have not had any comments back. Executive Director Bobertz said it is time for the City and County to put the new JPA agreement on their agendas. Funding breakdown is 6% Del Mar and Solana Beach, 13% for Poway and Escondido, 31% San Diego County and City of San Diego. Boardmember Lightner suggests change the agreement to a 5 year review to identify when to update the member agency assessments. JPA Counsel Brechtel states that the revised agreement provides for a review every ten years, using the new census figures each decade.

Boardmember Roberts asked what if another agency wanted to join JPA. Executive Director Bobertz stated Mr. Brechtel can look into it but nothing is preventing the Park from taking another agency on but it would require an amendment. Boardmember Golich asks how percentages would be determined if a new agency joined. Mr. Bobertz stated it would be established by the Board. Boardmember Roberts asked if some language could be added to the draft agreement now that gives the power to the JPA Board to add a new member agency, without having to amend the agreement. Attorney Brechtel said he could add some language to the agreement that would accomplish that.

The Board discussed the need to send out a letter very soon to each of the member agencies asking them to approve the new agreement, and asking them to take action by a specific date. Chair Cunningham will be authorized to send the letter to member agencies to expedite the response for the revised JPA agreement. Ms. Lightner would like to add Council President, and City Attorney to receive the letter. Vote: All in favor.

**INFORMATION**

5. Citizen Science Grant Presentation- Leana Bulay, SDRP Interpretive Ranger- Interpretive Ranger Leana Bulay showed a PowerPoint and spoke about the 2012 grant from the San Diego Foundation in cooperation with the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy. Ms. Bulay said that in the past we have done some water quality testing with the help of Coastkeeper at the lagoon but that this Citizen Science Grant will allow us to map and monitor open space, agricultural/ranching and watershed areas. We will be assessing our priorities so that we can train volunteers to span the vast FPA that the River Park oversees. Part of the monitoring will include vegetation type, class and habitat type and ecosystem in the watershed along with wildlife crossings. In the future all this information can be analyzed and published for future projects and to better access our needs in different areas of the park. There is an opportunity to work with students at local schools to encourage them to take an interest in the environment and create future naturalists. An App will help us with the research and we will be recruiting volunteers to help with implementation of this monitoring.

Coordination Reports (oral)

- a. San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy- None
- b. Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley- None
- c. Volcan Mountain Preserve Foundation- None
- d. San Dieguito Lagoon Committee-Lagoon Days is on April 21, 2013 where there will be a lecture and booths set up. This is a free event that is open to the public. The City of Del Mar has established a committee to review the double tracking project.

Status Reports(oral)

- a. River Park Projects
  - a. The lighting on the pedestrian bridge is going forward and there will be future reports as more information comes in.
  - b. The Santa Ysabel General Store and Backcountry Interpretive Center is owned and the store is managed by Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO). The Backcountry Interpretive Center is managed by the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, Volcan Mountain Foundation, Wildlife Research Institute, San Diego River Park Foundation and Anza Borrego Foundation. The biggest challenge is getting volunteers to manage the Center.
  - c. The Lagoon Trailside Open Air Classroom will be breaking ground next week. Due to bird nesting season we will start with Phase One - grading until mid March then start again in September 2013 with Phase Two which will include the seating and shade structure.

Jurisdictional Status Reports- Becky Bartling reported that the trail extension at Horsepark came out great.

Boardmember Diaz reported that the Amgen bicycle tour will be held on May 12, 2013. The race will start in Escondido and goes through San Dieguito River Park and past the Santa Ysabel General Store and Backcountry Interpretive Center. This could be a good chance to highlight the Park.

Boardmember Mosier reported the railroad bridge construction will have several impacts that need to be addressed in planning and not during the construction. There are already problems in Oceanside. Chair Cunningham reported that the amphitheater at Blue Sky Reserve is now open.

Chair Diaz adjourned the meeting at 11:00am.

These minutes approved by Board Action

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Executive Director

