

**SAN DIEGUITO RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL OPEN SPACE PARK
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
Minutes of May 20th, 2011**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sherri Lightner - Chair
Don Mosier
Jim Cunningham
Dave Roberts
Pam Slater-Price
Dianne Jacob
Tom Golich

REPRESENTING

City of San Diego
City of Del Mar
City of Poway
City of Solana Beach
County of San Diego
County of San Diego
Citizens Advisory Committee

VISITORS/STAFF PRESENT

Wayne Brechtel	JPA Counsel
Dick Bobertz	San Dieguito River Park JPA
Susan Carter	San Dieguito River Park JPA
Shawna Anderson	San Dieguito River Park JPA
Jan Lines	San Dieguito River Park JPA
Pat Tennant	SCE Project Manager
Craig Adams	San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy
Jacqueline Winterer	Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley
Freda Reid	Del Mar Resident
Tom Cook	RB Historical Society
Dan Winne	Happy Trails
Pat Tennant	Southern California Edison
Tracey Alsobrook	Southern California Edison
Cheryl Goddard	County of San Diego Parks & Rec
Alexa Clausen	Sikes Adobe Docent
Elaine Browning	Sikes Adobe Docent
Vince Rossi	Rancho Bernardo Resident
Tomer Gutman	Worden Williams

Introduction and Announcements

Chair Lightner convened the meeting at 9:35 a.m. in the County Administration Building, 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 302/303, San Diego, CA 92101.

Boardmember Golich introduced the CAC members in attendance as Freda Reid and Jacqueline Winterer.

Chair Lightner asked the Board members to introduce themselves along with Counsel Brechtel and JPA staff. Mr. Brechtel introduced a new associate from his firm, Tomer Gutman.

Counsel Brechtel requested to add an item to the agenda that relates to the legal challenge filed with respect to the Del Mar Fairground Master Plan EIR. This item is to address the recent decision to participate in the suit. The issues came to Mr. Brechtel's attention after the agenda was sent and this would require a closed session under Government Code 54956.9.

Boardmember Mosier made a motion to approve adding the Closed Session to the agenda; seconded by Boardmember Cunningham. All in Favor.

Boardmember Mosier announced that the City of Del Mar got a Coastal Conservancy grant for \$650,000 for a Beach Safety Center to begin construction in September 2011.

Approval of Minutes March 18, 2011

Boardmember Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2011 and Boardmember Slater-Price seconded the motion. Boardmember Golich asked for two corrections, first, change the Vice-Chair behind Sherri Lightner's name and a correction to item 10 of the agenda showing Mr. Golich as the board member who seconded the motion and Boardmember Nichols who made the motion. Minutes approved as corrected.

Executive Director's Report Director Bobertz said that we had a busy month and stated that on April 8th we had a ribbon cutting ceremony to dedicate the West Bernardo Bike Path which was well attended. Boardmember Slater-Price hosted the opening and a good time was had by all. Mr. Bobertz said that this is the most used project that the River Park has ever accomplished. On April 30th the Del Mar Rotary and the Boy Scout Troop 713 joined forces for the "Rotarians at Work day" where they planted plants and built stands for interpretive panels. The Del Mar Rotary members have consistently come out for us year after year completing many important projects. Mr. Bobertz stated that on May 7th we had our volunteer appreciation picnic where we treat them to a good lunch and show them how much we appreciate all their efforts. Tom Golich officiated and awarded the volunteers with their appreciation plaques. Heritage trail link connection between Poway (Blue Sky Ranch) and River Park Coast to Crest Trail will be our next project completed and we will be having a grand opening for that important link between our Coast to Crest Trail and the Trans-County Trail through the Poway Trail system.. It will be the first north-south link between east-west regional trail systems. Director Bobertz thanked the City of Poway and Boardmember Cunningham for Poway stepping forward and paying for some important parts of the project. A big thanks goes out to Bob Hahn and John Keninski from the City of Poway for their efforts to complete this important project.

Public Comment- None

ACTION

1. Southern California Edison Wetland Restoration Project, update by Pat Tennant

Recommendation: Information only, Receive Report.

Pat Tennant from SCE gave a update on the San Dieguito River Park Wetlands project. In the near future they plan to accomplish 4 major construction projects, dredging of inlet channel and some regulatory issues that have been addressed. He said we have been dredging and are working closely with NCTD to complete the section west of Jimmy Durante Blvd. Part of our process was to do surveys on the grunion and their eggs which were found in the thousands on the beach that caused us to stop our work. The location of the grunion eggs on the beach has delayed our work until September 2011 and we need to amend our Coastal Commission permit to accommodate this delay. Mr. Tennant explained that there are two revetment locations that they have to complete along with Least Tern nesting sites that will be scraped and new sand will be deposited on the sites. Mr. Tennant said SCE is working closely with the JPA staff on the trail

system that surrounds the wetlands and he was pleased to announce that SDG&E is also working in the area undergrounding the powerlines.

Boardmember Golich asked about all the rock that is sitting in the area of along Via de la Valle. Mr. Tenant said that the rock is scheduled to be moved to the staging area for permanent placement.

Boardmember Roberts asked about the NCTD bridge and if things were going well with that project. Mr. Tennant said that he is pleased to say that SCE only has to fortify the abutment under the bridge. NCTD is getting the permits and had been very accommodating to work with.

Mr. Tennant said that Tracey Alsobrook will be taking over most of the everyday operations at the wetlands project now that they are close to the end, and that she will be finishing the project .

Tracey Alsobrook said that she is pleased to be on this project and looking forward to working with JPA staff.

2. Report and Recommendations from Budget Committee for Adoption of FY 11/12 Budget.

Director Bobertz said that last year the Board made the difficult decision to withdraw funds from our endowment fund to cover the budget deficit. At the time we felt that the borrowed funds would be replaced with proceeds of the Farmers Market and equestrian activities at Sikes Adobe Farmstead. Our plans were not met due to months of bad weather and lack of experience in operating a farmers market. Mr. Bobertz said that just when things looked bleak, we were approached by experienced market managers from Rancho Bernardo who had just lost their lease. These market managers have moved to our site at Sikes Adobe and have brought with them approximately 40 vendors and the customers that followed them from Rancho Bernardo. We are hopeful that this will be the answer to our deficit problems for FY 2011/12. He added that the idea is that the farmers market will bring in shoppers who will also be interested in participating in Mr. Winne's equestrian activities.

Director Bobertz said that we have the same problem this year because the farmers market and equestrian activities have not started producing income we can count on yet, although we are optimistic that with another year it will. He said we need to address the shortfall. The proposed budget has no changes to current staff levels or salaries. It eliminates the last half of the JPA contribution to employee retirement contribution (Offset) which will be paid by the employees. Eliminating the offset alone has saved the River Park \$42,800. There will be a continued freeze on the medical insurance plan benefit payment so that all the increased medical insurance costs will be paid by the employee which will save the River Park \$24,700. Our projection for next year is for all the member agencies to pay the same as last year with no expectation of funding from the City of San Diego. The Bingo operations have gotten off to a slow start and no expectation of income from that source can be included in the budget.

Mr. Bobertz said that it was his recommendation to the Budget Committee that the JPA make up the \$49,607 from the Fidelity Growth fund which the River Park has control of. He also recommended that the JPA Board adopt a position that any one time revenue be used to replace funds that had been removed from the Fidelity Growth fund; and that any new recurring revenue be used to restore ranger staff to the FY 2008/09 levels.

Mr. Bobertz stated that we hope that the rangers can be brought back to full staff since 2.5 of the rangers work at the coast per our reimbursement agreement with Southern California Edison. Since we assigned the

rangers to the coast we have lost ground on the maintenance of our eastern trail system and we desperately need to hire more rangers for the San Pasqual region.

Mr. Bobertz said he also recommended that the Board determine that when either the Executive Director or Deputy Director position becomes vacant that the two positions become combined into one position. He explained that this change is appropriate because the River Park is evolving toward an operations mode after 21 years of trail building and major projects with less emphasis on planning and more on operations.

He explained that the Budget Committee had mixed opinions on the recommendation to withdraw funds from the endowment fund. An alternate idea proposed by some members of the Budget Committee was to revert to the FY 08/09 assessment levels, which were 14% higher.

Boardmember Roberts, who serves on the Budget Committee, said that we are struggling and there are no good answers, but he has concerns about using the endowment. He said that his understanding of the endowment was that it was for land acquisition not administration costs. He said that the talk about each member agency making up the City of San Diego's membership fee by reverting to the FY 08/09 assessment level probably would not work for his city.

Counsel Brechtel explained that he had researched the history of the establishment of the endowment fund at the San Diego Foundation and the later establishment of the Fidelity Growth fund. He said it was very clear that the Board intended to create a fund that would generate income for future operations needs, not acquisition needs.

Board member Mosier said that his city has already taken action to revert to the FY 08/09 assessment level and he said that Board member Diaz said that Escondido is ready to do the same.

Chair Lightner said that the Budget Committee had 3 choices as stated in the staff report: 1) Fund the shortfall from the endowment reserve, 2) Request that member agencies contribute at the level of the 08/09 budget assessment and 3) or eliminate the ½ time Sikes Adobe Museum Manager position which is about \$32,000 and shut down Sikes Adobe.

Boardmember Roberts stated that he felt that the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy would be a good candidate to take over the Sikes Adobe Farmstead and run the operation. He also felt that the volunteer appreciation event should be eliminated when we are in dire times. Mr. Roberts stated that the JPA members should reach out to all the mayoral candidates and get information to them about how important the funding is to our agency.

Boardmember Jacob asked if we have Fidelity Growth statement information. Deputy Director Carter said that as of yesterday there is \$281,000 in the fund. Ms. Jacob had concerns that we are taking funds out and depleting principal investment. Ms. Carter explained the contributions and withdrawals to the Board and it was determined that that \$30,000 in appreciated funds could be used without touching the principal balance.

Boardmember Slater-Price stated that she does not want the Sikes Adobe to close but fundraising for administrative costs is a very difficult and she is very disappointed that the Bingo funding has not worked out.

Chair Lightner recapped the discussion by saying that no one wants to shut down the Sikes Adobe, that there is a willingness to withdraw appreciated funds from the endowment to make up the shortfall in the budget,

there is assurance from Del Mar and Escondido to add funds by using the assessment figure from 08/09. This would help cover the deficit. Ms. Lightner said that the board is close to finalizing the budget and no board member is in favor of closing the Sikes Adobe. It was requested that the speakers for Sikes Adobe limit their discussion to 3 minutes.

Speaker, Tom Cook, said that the chemistry of the equestrians, historians and farmers market people add so much to this magnificent facility. Mr. Cook said that there is no doubt in his mind that this will work out and hopefully there will be a full time position for the museum manager in the future.

Speaker, Dan Winne said that it was a struggle getting started with the equestrian activities, and getting past the initial objections of the San Pasqual Planning Group along with some issues with the Farmers Market being rained out so much of the season. Mr. Winne said that he feels that the market will work well now that the weather is better and he has hired more people to help with his portion of the contract. He said he has \$120,000 in assets at the site. Mr. Winne said that he will not be taking funds from this operation as he wants to help the River Park.

Speaker, Alexa Claussen is a volunteer at the Sikes Adobe and prepared a statement of reasons that the Adobe should be supported. Ms. Claussen said that the house is a huge marketing and educational tool for the River Park with a mutual benefit to the guests and the River Park. The RB Questers have donated \$1000 along with a fence that is being built by the Escondido Kiwanis Club. She believes that the spirit of the past has enlightened many.

Speaker, Vincent Rossi said that he is very glad that the board consensus is to keep Sikes Adobe open. He reminded the Board that the Sikes Family lost their home to foreclosure in 1899 and he is hopeful that the Sikes story can be passed on to future generations.

Speaker, Craig Adams of the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy said that they are opposed to closing Sikes Adobe. Mr. Adams said that they feel that support from the City of San Diego is necessary and explained how this operation is very lean in this budget year. In fact, he said it is too lean. By having such a large operation with a small budget there are problems with rangers maintaining the trails and patrolling the area for issues that are arising with dogs off leash and erosion on the trails. The Conservancy is in favor of adding another ranger for the east area of the River Park and hopes that the budget will reflect this.

Speaker, Jaqueline Winterer wanted to express her pleasure that there are no changes to the current staff.

Boardmember Jacob made a motion to approve the staff recommendation, to take out of our Fidelity account only the funds that are needed but not to encroach into the principal, and to request that member agencies go back to their budgets and see if they can provide additional funding to the level of FY 08/09. Ms. Jacob requested that the City of San Diego fund some or all of their contribution, for a committee of the JPA Board to meet with a committee of the Conservancy to review roles and responsibilities, and requested that staff come back with a final budget in June.

Boardmembers Slater-Price and Roberts seconded. All in Favor

Boardmember Roberts asked staff to send more information to address the 08/09 request for more funds.

Boardmember Cunningham thanked the Sikes Adobe volunteers who addressed the board with their support.

INFORMATION

3. Coordination Reports

- a. San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy- Craig Adams reported that they did a survey on the trail to establish a baseline of users and they counted 850 people. About 2/3 participated in the survey with varying comments. Mr. Adams said that most of the people loved the trails but had some concerns about the maintenance issues and dogs off leash problems. There is not enough ranger coverage on our trails due to the budget constraints and more rangers need to be hired to cover the vast trail system.
- b. Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley- Jacqueline Winterer spoke about the paintings that were painted over at the I-5 undercrossing. She was disappointed that these works of art were destroyed especially since the undercrossing is very dark passage. Ms. Winterer asked for a policy about keeping future art work.
- c. Volcan Mountain Preserve Foundation- None
- d. San Dieguito Lagoon Committee- None

4. Status Reports

a. River Park Projects

- i. **Reach the Beach Trail Alignment study-** Environmental Planner Shawna Anderson reported that the River Park received a grant from the Coastal Conservancy to study alternatives for a preferred route to extend the lagoon trail (that currently ends at Jimmy Durante Blvd.) all the way to the beach. Ms. Anderson said that we are nearing the end of the public process regarding the different alternatives that would reach the beach. She explained that all of the potential alternatives have significant constraints. We have had a well attended workshop with input from the public and the next step is to do environmental study and drawings with accurate cost estimates to apply for grants to complete this process.
- ii. **Sikes Adobe Historic Farmhouse Awards-** Deputy Director Carter said that the restoration of the Sikes Adobe has won two major awards: one is the agency award from the City of San Diego's Historic Resources Board; the event is next Thursday. The second award is from SOHO (Save our Heritage Organisation) "People in Preservation" award and this will be on Monday. Ms. Carter said two of our JPA Board members will be at that presentation, Chair Lightner is presenting the award and Boardmember Slater-Price will be receiving it for the River Park. SOHO sent a wonderful letter praising the accomplishment of reconstructing the site and preserving our heritage.
- iii. **SANDAG/Caltrans Lagoon Restoration Project-** Deputy Director Carter reported on the SANDAG/ Caltrans Lagoon Restoration project. Ms. Carter said that we heard earlier in the meeting a report from Pat Tennant from Edison on the status of the wetland project and since this has been so much fun over the last decade or more

that we thought we would start a new project with SANDAG /Caltrans. This project would be to create 50 to 60 acres of tidal wetlands which brings up the familiar issues of what to do with the dredged materials. She explained that she and Shawna Anderson have been attending a series of meetings with SANDAG, Caltrans and the engineering consultant team that SANDAG hired to prepare a feasibility study. The feasibility study should be ready this fall for review and move into the CEQA analysis in the next stage. Shawna Anderson added that this project is partially located on the former Boudreau property.

b. **Proposed Trail parking/Staging Area in Del mar-** There is nothing new on this project.

5. **Jurisdictional Status Reports-** None

6. **Communications**

CLOSED SESSION: Counsel Brechtel announced that this closed session is in compliance with government code 54956.9 to confer with legal counsel about litigation concerning Del Mar Fairgrounds Master Plan and EIR.

After the Closed Session Counsel Brechtel announced that there was no reportable action taken.

Chair Lightner adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

These minutes approved by Board Action

Date

Executive Director