

WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Natasha Johnson at 12:00 p.m., via Zoom Meeting ID: 876 1042 0431, in accordance with AB 361 due to state or local officials recommending measures to promote social distancing.

2. ROLL CALL

Members/Alternates Present

Jeff Hewitt
Natasha Johnson
Lesa Sobek
Jonathan Ingram
Kevin Bash

Members Absent

Kevin Jeffries
Crystal Ruiz

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member Sobek.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no requests to speak from the public.

5. ADDITIONS / REVISIONS

There were no additions or revisions to the agenda.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR – *All matters on the Consent Calendar will be approved in a single motion unless a Board Member(s) requests separate action on specific item(s).*

M/S/C (Bash/Ingram) to approve the following Consent Calendar items.

6A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 15, 2021

6B. QUARTERLY INVESTMENT REPORT

- 1) Receive and file the Quarterly Investment Report for the quarter ended September 30, 2021; and
- 2) Forward to the Board of Directors for final action.

6C. ACQUISITIONS STATUS REPORT

- 1) Receive and file the acquisitions status report as of November 30, 2021; and
- 2) Forward to the Board of Directors for final action.

6D. JOINT PROJECT REVIEW STATUS REPORT

- 1) Receive and file the Joint Project Review (JPR) monthly status report as of November 30, 2021; and
- 2) Forward to the Board of Directors for final action.

6E. SINGLE SIGNATURE AUTHORITY REPORT

- 1) Receive and file the Single Signature Authority report for the second quarter ended December 31, 2021; and
- 2) Forward to the Board of Directors for final action.

7. MSHCP MITIGATION FEE IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL UPDATE

Jennifer Fuller, Financial Administration Manager, provided a presentation on the MSHCP Mitigation Fee Implementation Manual Update. The Board adopted the Mitigation Fee Manual to provide member agencies with further guidance for fee implementation, collection of remittance, outline the appropriate methods for the calculation of payments for different types of projects, and provide multiple examples of how to apply the fee. The intent of the manual is to provide clarity and create consistency. The manual does not supersede the member agency adopted ordinances and resolutions; it is intended to be an administrative document to help jurisdictions to implement the fee.

This is the second update to the manual, it was originally adopted December 7, 2020, with the 2020 Nexus Study. In September 2021, the Board adopted an urgent update to the manual to address a fairness and equity concern about the current ordinance's lack of attention to room additions and renovations.

As member agencies adopted the updated ordinances and resolutions last spring, many questions were raised. Based on the early conversations, staff and legal counsel completed a full review of the manual. RCA staff attended the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) Planning Directors Meeting in August 2021, to recruit volunteers for a Manual Committee to review the manual and provide timely comments and suggestions. The committee included 5 member agencies, RCA staff, and legal counsel. The committee met 5 times over 3 months and concurrently assisted with comment review from all member agencies.

Numerous changes have been made to the manual. Among them, redundant items were removed, cross references were added, and minor errors and grammar changes were made as well. A discussion on regional impacts was added for clarity, as well as a reiteration of the

current policy on pre-payment of fees. The definition of usable square footage was also added to assist member agencies with the application of exemptions, and the definitions for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and project area were also updated. The manual also increased from 5 to 8 chapters, adding new chapters on Mitigation Fee Forms, Other Issues, and an Appendices.

To better answer many questions received, an FAQ and decision map were also developed. The FAQ provides a discussion on parks and community centers and clarification on several items including exemptions, ADUs, renovations and residential density calculation. The ADU and renovations decision map helps member agencies to determine if a fee is required to be paid on an ADU or renovation.

Board Member Sobek thanked staff for the communication with member agencies and collaborating to help update the manual.

Chair Johnson also thanked staff for the commitment to ensuring that the information was available to member agencies.

M/S/C (Sobek/Hewitt) to:

- 1) Approve the update to the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Mitigation Fee Implementation Manual; and**
- 2) Forward to the Board of Directors for final action.**

8. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Tyler Madary, Senior Management Analyst, Legislative Affairs, provided an update on state and federal legislative actions. Governor Newsom has unveiled his Proposed Fiscal Year 2022/23 Budget, it's a \$286.4 billion proposal that will kick off the season of budget negotiations. In addition to the state's continued response to the COVID-10 pandemic, the Governor identified the climate change crisis as one of the top priorities. The budget proposes to invest \$22.5 billion in one-time climate action funds over 5 years. The multi-year funding is a significant investment, but it is important to remember that no one can obligate general fund spending for future fiscal years. Budgetary outlooks can change by the year, so it will take continued advocacy to ensure ongoing funding increases become a reality.

Of the Governor's climate action proposals, RCA is interested in the proposed investments in nature-based solutions and climate change. The Governor proposes to spend \$382 million in the next year for drought response, resilience against wildfires, urban greening, climate smart agriculture, costal restoration, economic investment in agriculture, forestry, climate restoration, and nature-based solutions to combat climate change, expand outdoor access, and protect biodiversity. The initiatives are broad and cover a lot of ground, with finite funds, but nature-based solutions, outdoor access, and biodiversity is what the MSHCP does, so RCA will be engaged in the process.

Other proposed spending that RCA will continue to monitor, includes the \$768 million in one-time general funds allocated over two years to implement the state's Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy and the Pathways to 30x30 Strategy. RCA has been providing input on these strategies since May 2021, and while the strategies are still pending, the Governor has identified 5 categories that the funds could support. RCA will be tracking three of them which could benefit Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) and Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCPs).

The 2022 Advocacy Strategy is outlined in the staff report. While the Legislative Affairs team has accomplished a lot in the past year, several lessons were also learned which have been incorporated into the advocacy strategy. State level priorities include: continue to engage in the state's 30x30 Strategies, not only to ensure the HCPs and NCCPs are understood as critical tools to naturally sequester carbon and protect biodiversity, but to make sure that the unique ecosystems are not overlooked in favor of the coasts and forests; continue to engage in the state budget process, to ensure that dedicated ongoing funding to implement the MSHCP; and finally, understanding that legislators are drawn to other issues than habitat conservation, and promote HCPs and NCCPs as tools that can be included in other policy areas, including housing legislation to address housing and infrastructure needs through sustainable planning. This policy messaging is already underway in coordination with the State HCP Coalition.

The focus of the federal strategy will be two-fold. RCA will continue to work with Representative Calvert and Senator Feinstein to try and get the Western Riverside Wildlife Refuge bill across the finish line, and advocate for funding. The advocacy for funding will not only be through the community project funding request for the Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations Bill, but also through any climate resiliency funds that may be available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Acts.

Board Member Ingram wanted to ask about the carbon dollars that are available based on the acreage the RCA provides. There is a lot of money there, and the RCA has certainly produced a significant amount of clean air with the acreage provided. Mr. Madary noted that the way the Legislative Affairs team has advanced the conversation is through the State's 30x30 and the Natural Working Lands process. It is a bit of challenge to try to advance nature-based solutions when many legislators are focused on other things such as electric vehicles and technology. The RCA will continue to monitor greenhouse gas reduction funds, looking for any opportunities.

- 1) **Receive and file an update on state and federal legislative affairs; and**
- 2) **Forward to the Board of Directors for final action.**

9. BOARD OF DIRECTORS / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Board Member Sobek announced the City of Menifee just broke ground for the area Justice Center, it is scheduled to be completed in 2024, there will 9 courtrooms in the three-story building.

Board Member Ingram announced he has reached out to the mayors in the southwest region regarding the composition of a letter about debris in the corridors with Caltrans. The debris is affecting properties and littering the corridors which serve as welcome mats to cities.

Board Member Sobek wanted to know if Board Member Ingram was speaking of a single letter or individual letters that could be sent by cities. Board Member Ingram clarified that mayor's county wide were sent the information on a single letter.

Aaron Hake, Interim Regional Conservation Deputy Executive Director, advised that the February 7th Board Meeting will have a substantive agenda, as there a couple item that are going directly to the Board. The Board had requested staff bring back the City of Moreno Valley's fee credit request from December, so that will be on the February 7th agenda. Chair Johnson has requested that the Stakeholders Committee be introduced to the Board in February and staff is also working to finish the previous years' Annual Report on the MSHCP which provides critical information to wildlife agencies and the public on RCA's progress.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for consideration by the Executive Committee, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 12:22 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled to be held on **Wednesday, February 16, 2022.**

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Mobley
Administrative Services Manager/
Clerk of the Board