

**COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
REGULAR MEETING
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 115
Palm Desert, California
January 14, 2013- 3:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Russell Betts, City of Desert Hot Springs
John J. Benoit, Riverside County Supervisor, District IV
Jean Benson, City of Palm Desert
Tom Davis, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
John Donnelly, Wildlife Conservation Board
Karen Finn, California State Department of Finance
Jim Foote, U.S. Forest Service (Non-voting member)
Kristy Franklin, City of La Quinta
John Kalish, Bureau of Land Management
Patrick Kemp, Natural Resources Agency
Eddy Konno, California Department of Fish and Game
Karin Messaros, National Park Service
Chris Mills, City of Palm Springs
Allan Muth, University of California
Greg Pettis, City of Cathedral City
Paul Riesman, California State Parks
Mary Roche, City of Indian Wells
Iris Smotrich, City of Rancho Mirage
Ellen Lloyd Trover, Senate Rules Committee Appointee–
(*Vice-Chairwoman*)
Ted Weill, City of Rancho Mirage

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Buford Crites, State Assembly Appointee–(*Chairman*)
Joan Taylor, Governor's Appointee

STAFF PRESENT:

Kevin McKernan, Executive Director
Kerrie Godfrey, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Baine Kerr, Deputy Attorney General

STAFF ABSENT:

Diana Paz, Staff Services Analyst

OTHERS PRESENT:

Britt Wilson, Management Analyst, City of Rancho Mirage
Gail Sevrens, Colorado Desert District, California State Parks

1.0 Call to Order & Introductions

Vice Chairwoman Trover declared a quorum with 18 voting members present at 3:05 pm.

2.0 Approval of Minutes of November 5, 2012 meeting

Vice Chairwoman Trover asked if there were any comments additions or changes to the November 5, 2012 Minutes. There was no further discussion, so a motion was made and seconded (Mills/Muth) to approve the Minutes. The November 2012 Minutes were approved by a roll call vote of the 18 Board members present with 11 yes and 7 abstentions.

3.0 Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments on any items not on the agenda.

Vice-Chairwoman Trover noted an Amendment to the agenda which Executive Director, Kevin McKernan, would present to the Board.

Kevin discussed the Riverside County Tax Default Properties as the amendment to the agenda and asked the Board members to only consider this item as an informational item for the next months meeting. He explained that the Conservancy identifies and tracks defaulted properties for both the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) and the Friends of the Desert Mountains (FODM) for suitable conservation acquisitions. The normal procedure is to identify suitable parcels that meet the criteria, object to the sale of the parcels and follow through with commitments to purchase the parcels from the County before going to public auction.

In the past, FODM has acquired such properties with their discretionary funds however, this unique subject holds a large number of parcels under one single ownership in the Dos Palmas Conservation area with a purchase price of approximately \$1.5M (\$500 per acre) for 2,912 acres. FODM is requesting that the Conservancy Board approve a local assistance grant for \$1.5M for the acquisition of approximately 2,912 acres which would include the subject parcels that also connect to existing conservation lands in the Dos Palmas area. The County is requesting a binding resolution from FODM by March 6th as a commitment to purchase the parcels.

Kevin and Baine Kerr, Deputy Attorney General, confirmed that this item did not meet the Bagley Keene requirement (11125(b.)) of a 48-hour notice of any amendment/addendum to the agenda. Kevin asked that the board consider moving the March meeting to an earlier date of February 25th in order for FODM to object to the sale of the parcels and meet the County's deadline.

No motion or vote was taken for this informational item.

4.0 Action Items - public hearing Agenda Item

4.1 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Vice Chairwoman Trover opened the floor for nominations of Chair and Vice-Chair. Ellen Lloyd Trover was nominated for Chair by Board member Franklin and Buford Crites was nominated for Vice-Chair by Board member Benoit.

A motion was made and seconded (Franklin/Benoit) to elect Ellen Lloyd Trover as Chair. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote of the 18 Board members present.

A motion was made and seconded (Benoit/Betts) to elect Buford Crites as Vice-Chair. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote of the 18 Board members present.

4.2 Resolution 2013-01 approving a local assistance grant to the Friends of the Desert Mountains for appraisal and acquisition of identified parcels in the project area known as the East Valley Canyons Protection Project.

Kevin McKernan proposed the Friends of the Desert Mountains (FODM) request for a local assistance grant for appraisal and acquisition of approximately 182 parcels comprising approximately 5,563 acres. He identified some of the parcel locations to be in linkage with conservation parcels already owned by FODM and Joshua Tree National Park. Additionally, he stated that the long-term plan for such parcels would be to transfer them to the Park Service for inclusion in Joshua Tree National Park and the other parcels would possibly be transferred to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in areas of wilderness or other future protective land designations.

A motion was made and seconded (Benoit/Mills) to adopt the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote of the 18 Board members present.

4.3 Resolution 2013-02 approving a local assistance grant to the Friends of the Desert Mountains for acquisition of approximately 93.49 acres in the Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area.

Kevin McKernan proposed to the Board the Friends of the Desert Mountains (FODM) request for a local assistance grant not exceed \$34,000 for the two parcels (approximately 93.49 acres) owned by willing sellers which are located in what is known as Pushawalla Canyon and have been identified as a potential wildlife corridor linkage to Joshua Tree National Park.

A motion was made and seconded (Mills/Benoit) to adopt the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote of the 18 Board members present.

5.0 Closed Session – No matters scheduled

Pursuant to Government Code sections 11126 (a)(1), 11126 (e)(1) and 11126.3(a) the Board may hold a closed session to discuss and take possible action on personnel matters and or receive advice of counsel on pending or potential litigation. In addition, pursuant to Government Code section 11126 (c) 7 (A) the Board may meet in closed session with its negotiator prior to the purchase or sale of real property by or for the state body to give instructions to its negotiator regarding the price and terms of payment for the purchase or sale. Confidential memoranda related to these issues may be considered during such closed session discussions.

6.0 Reports

6.1 Written Reports.

Kevin McKernan provided the Board with a very brief update on acquisitions and acquisition priorities. Desert Ranch II closed on 11/28/12, Angel Cove closed on 11/13/12 and Palmwood is expected to close by 1/31/13. Stokes project however, may be canceled as seller is no longer willing to sign deed and WCB Section 6 funds would be appropriated to another project.

Kevin also thanked all of the Board members for submitting their Ethics Training Certificates and reminded them of the Form 700 due to the CVMC office no later than March 29, 2013.

6.2 Board Member comments and reports from Conservancy member agencies.

Russell Betts commented on Palmwood and the progress with the clean-up of the property. Kevin McKernan pointed out that it was 883 acres in Palmwood which the landowner was responsible for cleaning up before the purchase of the property.

Allan Muth inquired on the grant guidelines after property has been transferred; Kevin confirmed that the same grant guidelines are followed.

7.0 Adjourn to the February 25th, 2013 meeting

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 4:00 p.m.