

**COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
REGULAR MEETING
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 115
Palm Desert, California
September 10, 2012- 3:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Buford Crites, State Assembly Appointee—(*Chairman*)
Kathy De Rosa, City of Cathedral City
John Donnelly, Wildlife Conservation Board
Jim Foote, U.S. Forest Service
Kristy Franklin, City of La Quinta
Eddy Konno, California Department of Fish and Game
William Kroonen, City of Palm Desert
Karin Messaros, National Park Service
Chris Mills, City of Palm Springs
Gordon Moller, City of Rancho Mirage
Allan Muth, University of California
Pedro Reyes, California State Department of Finance
Paul Riesman, California State Parks
Larry Spicer, City of Indian Wells
Ellen Lloyd Trover, Senate Rules Committee Appointee—(*Vice-Chairwoman*)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

John J. Benoit, Riverside County Supervisor, District IV
Russell Betts, City of Desert Hot Springs
John Kalish, Bureau of Land Management
Patrick Kemp, Natural Resources Agency
Joan Taylor, Governor's Appointee
Sam Toles, City of Cathedral City
Tribe Representative, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

STAFF PRESENT:

Kerrie Godfrey, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Kevin McKernan, Executive Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeff Morgan, Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains

VACANT POSITIONS: Vacant, Staff Services Analyst

1.0 Call to Order & Introductions

Chairman Crites declared a quorum with 15 voting members present at 3:05 pm.

2.0 Approval of Minutes of July 2012 meeting

Chairman Crites asked if there were any comments additions or changes to the July 2012 Minutes. There was no further discussion, so a motion was made and seconded (Kroonen/Spicer) to approve the Minutes. The July 2012 meeting minutes were approved by a unanimous roll call vote of the 15 Board members present.

3.0 Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

Chairman Crites asked if there were any comments on any items on the agenda. There were none.

4.0 Action Items - public hearing Agenda Item

4.1 Resolution 2012-12 approving a local assistance grant to the Friends of the Desert Mountains acquisition of approximately 150 acres known as the Bassett Property in the Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area.

Kevin McKernan briefly explained to the board the location of the parcels for acquisition. He stated that the parcel had already been appraised, approved by a third party reviewer and that the seller had agreed to sell at the appraised value. Kevin also stated as an informational note that they will be working with scientific communities to help identify wildlife and habitat corridors for future acquisitions. He asked for the Board to approve the resolution which would give the Friends of the Desert Mountains a local assistance grant not to exceed \$60,000 plus closing costs for the acquisition.

Chairman Crites asked if there was any further discussion on the item. Since there was none, he asked for a motion to adopt resolution 2012-12. A motion was made and seconded (Mills/Kroonen) to adopt the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote of the 15 Board members present.

4.2 Resolution 2012-13 approving a local assistance grant to the Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains for acquisition of approximately 209 acres in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains and Whitewater Floodplain Conservation Areas.

Jeff Morgan from the Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains introduced himself to the Conservancy Board and followed with a brief explanation of the location of the 209 acres. He stated that he was hopeful in his request to have the Board approve the resolution for local assistance grant to the Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains.

Kevin McKernan thanked Jeff Morgan for his introduction and noted that the Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains is a separate and different entity than the Friends of the Desert Mountains. He gave a more detailed location of the 209 acres for acquisition by the Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains. He stated that the property was a linkage piece or gateway into Palm Springs. He opened the item for questions.

Pedro Reyes inquired about how many acres the Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains currently managed. Jeff Morgan explained that they did not manage any acres at this time and that the 209 acres would be transferred to the City of Palm Springs upon approval by the City Council. Kevin McKernan stated that the 209 acres would either be transferred at the time of close of escrow or after the City approved the transfer. Pedro Reyes questioned why the City of Palm Springs would not directly acquire the 209 acres. Jeff Morgan responded by stating that it was a time issue and that they did not want other agencies to purchase the property. Pedro Reyes asked for

clarification that the City of Palm Springs was only receiving the 209 acres through transfer and would not have to pay for the property twice. Kevin McKernan and Jeff Morgan clarified that the City of Palm Springs would not provide funding to acquire the 209 acres but would only be receiving the property through a transfer from the Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains.

Pedro Reyes asked what guarantees the transferred property would remain in conservation status. Kevin McKernan explained three possible transfer processes in which entities would only be allowed to take a transfer through a conservation easement, deed restriction or if the transfer was designated in a protected area; for example a National Monument. Each transfer process is set forth to make sure that the property will stay protected and preserved. He also stated that a grant agreement dictates what can and can not be done to the property after transfer. He continued by stating that the transfer of the 209 acres to the City of Palm Springs would either be transferred with a Conservation Easement or by the City of Palm Springs signing a Notice of Unrecorded Grant Agreement. Chris Mills, City of Palm Springs, stated that the city council and city manager were very supportive of this acquisition and transfer and are working on acquiring other properties in the Chino Cone area.

Larry Spicer inquired if the conservation of property and transfer would occur through the escrow documents. Kevin McKernan answered that the transfer and conservation of the property is intended to fall under the escrow but that the Friends of the Palm Springs Mountains purchase agreement does allow them to assign the purchase agreement to another party which would be the City of Palm Springs. Larry Spicer posed a second question regarding the appraisal of the 209 acres. Kevin McKernan explained that the appraisal averages compared to this property were below the average.

Chairman Crites asked if there was any further discussion on the item. Since there was none he asked for a motion to adopt resolution 2012-13. A motion was made and seconded (Spicer/Franklin) to adopt the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote of the 15 Board members present.

4.3 2012-14 approving the transfer of property by the Center for Natural Lands Management to the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission which was initially purchased with several local assistance grants from the Conservancy.

Kevin McKernan explained that these properties were already acquired, that no funds were going to be spent and only requested that the Board approve the transfer of these properties from the Center for Natural Lands Management to the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission.

Pedro Reyes noted an error on agenda page 19 paragraph 2. Pedro. Reyes also asked if the transfer would be included in the deed. Kevin McKernan responded, yes.

Chairman Crites asked if there was any further discussion on the item. Since there was none he asked for a motion to adopt resolution 2012-14. A motion was made and seconded (Reyes/Muth) to adopt the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote of the 15 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.

Chairman Crites asked if there were any discussion. Kevin McKernan provided the Board an update on acquisitions and acquisition priorities. He noted that the Conservancy is also in the process of interviewing for the vacant SSA position.

Kevin McKernan extended an invitation to the board members from Sacramento to join the Conservancy for a site visit of the acquisition projects and noted that more details would be provided in the future.

6.2 Board Member comments and reports from Conservancy member agencies. Chairman Crites asked if there were any discussion.

Larry Spicer asked about how many acres the commission had acquired and conserved. Kevin McKernan responded that 20-25k acres were conserved with Conservancy funds since 2001. Chairman Crites said that a number to keep in mind is how many acres that were facilitated and acquired by the Conservancy. Kerrie Godfrey stated that number would be about 75k acres.

Kevin McKernan noted that he gave the Conservancy's new presentation to the Palm Springs Rotary Club.

Chairman Crites welcomed Councilwoman Kathy DeRosa to the committee on behalf of the Conservancy Board and thanked Ellen Lloyd Trover for helping to make the Conservancy's new presentation happen.

John Donnelly stated that his board approved section 6 funding at the end of August for the acquisition of the Santa Rosa Ranch II (Desert Ranch) project, Indio Trails, and \$1 million from Wildlife Conservation Board Prop 84 funds. The acquisitions are projected to close by the end of the year. Kevin McKernan thanked John Donnelly and his staff for all their work on these projects.

7.0 Adjourn to the November 5, 2012 meeting

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 3:40 p.m.