

**COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY  
REGULAR MEETING  
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 115  
Palm Desert, California  
September 9, 2013 - 3:00 p.m.**

**A P P R O V E D M I N U T E S**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

John J. Benoit, Riverside County Supervisor, District IV  
Jean Benson, City of Palm Desert  
Buford Crites, State Assembly Appointee–(*Vice-Chairman*)  
Kathy Dice, California State Parks  
John Donnelly, Wildlife Conservation Board  
Karin Finn, California State Department of Finance  
Kristy Franklin, City of La Quinta  
Patrick Kemp, Natural Resources Agency  
Eddy Konno, California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Karin Messaros, National Park Service  
Chris Mills, City of Palm Springs  
Allan Muth, University of California  
Larry Ollinger, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians  
Greg Pettis, City of Cathedral City  
Mary Roche, City of Indian Wells  
Ellen Lloyd Trover, Senate Rules Committee Appointee–  
(*Chairwoman*)  
Ted Weill, City of Rancho Mirage

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Russell Betts, City of Desert Hot Springs  
Arturo Delgado, U.S. Forest Service (Non-voting Member)  
John Kalish, Bureau of Land Management  
Joan Taylor, Governor's Appointee

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Jim R. Karpiak, Executive Director  
Kerrie Godfrey, Associate Governmental Program Analyst  
Diana Rosas, Staff Services Analyst

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Tom Davis, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians  
Britt Wilson, City of Rancho Mirage

**1.0 Call to Order & Introductions**

Chairwoman Trover declared a quorum with 16 voting members present at 3:00 pm. John J. Benoit arrived after Chairwoman Trover called the meeting to order, thus bringing the quorum to 17 voting members present.

The Board welcomed and introduced themselves to new Board member, Larry Ollinger, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

**2.0 Approval of Minutes of July 8, 2013 meeting**

A motion was made and seconded (Mills/Benson) to approve the July 8, 2013 Board meeting minutes. The motion was approved with four abstentions and thirteen votes in favor.

**3.0 Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda**

There were no comments on items not on the agenda.

**4.0 Action Items – Public Hearing Agenda Items**

Before action items were discussed, Buford Crites, moved all action items be heard and voted upon as a package, rather than voting on them separately. Chairwoman Trover asked if anyone had any objections, John J. Benoit seconded Buford's motion.

Chairwoman Trover asked for a roll call vote to approve Buford's motion, which was approved by a unanimous roll call vote of the Board members present.

**4.1** Resolution 2013-01-A1 approving an amendment to a local assistance grant to Friends of the Desert Mountains for appraisal and acquisition of identified parcels known as the East Valley Canyon Protection Project.

Jim Karpiak briefly explained that this was a change to a Resolution that was passed in January of this year authorizing \$850k for the purchase of several parcels in the EVCPP area. Subsequently, FODM obtained an appraisal and contacted landowners and determined that there are not sufficient sellers to use the full \$850k. Accordingly, staff's recommendation is to reduce encumbered amount from \$850k to \$450k.

**4.2** Resolution 2013-02-A1 approving an amendment to local assistance grant Resolution 2013-02 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.

Jim Karpiak explained that this is also an amendment to a Resolution was passed in January of this year authorizing \$34k for the purchase of 93 acres in the Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Linkage Conservation Area. This amendment would increase the authorization amount by \$2,400.00, which would be used to reimburse FODM for closing costs that exceeded the estimate available in January.

**4.3** Resolution 2013-08 approving a local assistance grant to the Friends of the Desert Mountains to support the acquisition of approximately 621 acres in the Dos Palmas Conservation Area.

Jim Karpiak explained that in January, the Board approved a grant of up to \$3M to the FODM for the purchase of certain tax defaulted parcels in the Dos Palmas Conservation Area. The sale was cancelled because the property was redeemed, and those funds are now available for other projects. FODM is requesting a local assistance grant of up to \$500,000 for the purchase of 621 located in the Dos Palmas Conservation area near the tax default parcels. Staff's recommendation is to authorize \$500k to FODM for the purchase of the 621 acres.

**4.4** Resolution 2013-09 approving a local assistance grant to the Friends of the Desert Mountains to support the acquisition of to 30 acres in Stubbe Canyon Conservation Area.

Jim Karpiak explained that CVMC is actively working with FODM and CVCC in purchasing property in the Stubbe Canyon Conservation Area. Three additional sites recently became available, and the owners, Logan, Robles and Villalobos have agreed to sell, and FODM is requesting a grant for \$202k to purchase the sites.

Chairwoman Trover opened the floor for discussions on any of the four action items on the agenda. Larry Ollinger inquired on the parcel location in the Stubbe Canyon Conservation Area in relation to the Agua Caliente Casino. Kerrie Godfrey approximated the area to be 2 miles east of the casino. No other questions or comments were made on any item of the agenda.

A motion was made and seconded (Pettis/Weill) to approve items 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote of the Board members present.

## **5.0** Reports

### **5.1** Written Reports.

There were no comments or questions on staff written reports.

### **5.2** Executive Director Report.

Jim Karpiak briefly discussed funding opportunities through water bond funds, matching funds and federal and state funding.

Historically, CVMC has received funds for acquisitions from water bonds. However, in the 2010 proposed water bond that never made it to the ballot, CVMC was the only Conservancy to not be included. Jim noted the current water bond discussions in Sacramento and said he has been working with the directors of the other conservancies to make sure that CVMC would be eligible for funding in the water bond that the Legislature is considering for 2014 or 2016.

Jim also noted that he is looking at other programs for matching funds, such as the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration program (REPI) of the Department of Defense which provides matching funds for acquisition of properties to preserve flight paths for military aircrafts in exchange for navigation easements. The Mojave Desert Land Trust has worked with REPI successfully and there are portions of the Coachella Valley that are within military flight paths.

Jim mentioned that CVMC is currently contracted as the Acquisition Managers for CVCC but that he is also looking for other funding opportunities with other conservancies and other grant sources with different non-profit organizations.

For the November 2013 Board meeting, Jim said he expects to present to the Board a recommendation on revised acquisition priorities. Staff is also working on

updating the Strategic Plan (which has not been updated in several years) and expects to present an update to the Board in January or March of 2014.

Finally, Jim asked the board about its interest in participating in a bus tour to visit conservation projects that highlight the Conservancy's accomplishments. He stated that he would present proposed details of the tour at the November meeting to see if the board wanted to hold the tour on the same day as the January board meeting.

Al Muth asked Jim if he could note in the acquisitions priorities list whether any of the areas were adjacent to or in the desert renewable energy zones. Jim corresponded that he could try to do that, but did not believe that the zones would come into the Valley. Buford Crites added that the lands within the CVMSHCP are excluded from the DRECP.

### **5.3 Board member comments and reports from Conservancy member agencies.**

There were no reports from any member of the Board.

### **6.0 Adjourn to the November 4, 2013.**

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 3:26 p.m.