

COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
REGULAR MEETING
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 101
Palm Desert, California
January 8, 2024 - 3:00 p.m.

Tele-conference location:
State of California, Resources Agency
715 P St.
Farallon Room on the 20th floor (NRHQ 20-105)
Sacramento, CA 95814

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lupe Ramos Amith, City of Indio
Enrique Arroyo, California State Parks
Stephen Benson, Department of Finance
Denise Delgado, City of Coachella
Gary Gardner, City of Desert Hot Springs
Grace Garner, City of Palm Springs
Beatriz Gonzalez, State Assembly Appointee
Richard Kim, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Rita Lamb, City of Cathedral City (*Chairwoman*)
Lynn Mallotto, City of Rancho Mirage
Deborah McGarrey, City of La Quinta
Jennifer Norris, Wildlife Conservation Board
Margaret Park, Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
V. Manuel Perez, Riverside County
Andrea Scharffer, CA Natural Resources Agency
Joan Taylor, Governor's Appointee
Christopher Tracy, University of California, Riverside
Ellen Lloyd Trover, Senate Rules Committee Appointee
Evan Trubee, City of Palm Desert

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bruce Whitman, City of Indian Wells

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Karpiak, Executive Director
Diana Rosas, Associate Director
Maximiliano Ochoa, Project Coordinator
Abriana Elms, Administrative Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT: Tammy Martin, Friends of the Desert Mountains
Oscar Ortiz, Friends of the Desert Mountains
Jennifer Prado, Southern California Mountains Foundation

1.0 Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Gary Gardner declared a quorum with 13 voting members present at 3:02 p.m. Subsequently, 5 additional board members arrived after the roll call bringing the attendance to 19 voting members.

2.0 Approval of November 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2023, meeting; the motion passed with 2 abstentions.

3.0 Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

No public comments were made.

4.0 Action items – Public Hearing

4.1 Election of Officers for 2024.

A motion was made and seconded (Trover/Delgado) to elect Rita Lamb as Chair. A motion was made and seconded (Gardner/McGarrey) to elect Steve Downs as Vice Chair, and to designate Gary Gardner as the board's representative on the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority board. The motion passed unanimously.

4.2 Annual Review of Acquisition Priorities and Report on 2023 Acquisition Activity.

Jim summarized item 4.2 as presented in the staff report.

Gary Gardner asked Jim about the amounts of CVMC bond funds versus funding from the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC). Rita Lamb asked about which staff members would need to explore new avenues for accessing; Jim responded that the Executive Director and Associate Director will be working on that.

A motion was made and seconded (Perez/Taylor) approving revisions to the Acquisition Priorities for 2024 as shown in Exhibit A. The motion passed unanimously.

4.3 Presentation by Friends of the Desert Mountains on CRCA & Prop 68 Projects.

Jim Karpiak introduced Tammy Martin and Oscar Ortiz, Executive Director and Associate Director of Friends of the Desert Mountains, who made a presentation on CVMC-funded FODM projects with special emphasis on the Desert Lake Shore (DLS) project.

V. Manuel Perez commented that this is a great project and would like to see this be a part of the Art and Culture Month of Riverside County. Gary Gardner asked if there is a construction timeline, Oscar responded that they do not have a timeline yet but that it will be developed as part of the next step in the design process. Evan Trubee asked what the total estimated cost was for this project. Oscar stated that the Biological Survey was \$8200.00 and the fee for the conceptual design was \$45k, but that construction costs have not yet been estimated. Tammy Martin thanked Jennifer Prado for her initiation of this project.

4.4 Annual Review of Implementation of Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Policy.

Jim Karpiak summarized item 4.4 as presented in the staff report.

Deborah McGarrey commented that she can provide some additional organizations to contact with regard to workforce diversity issues.

There were no further questions or comments from the board.

5.0 Reports

5.1 Written reports from staff.

There were no questions or discussions from the Board.

5.2 Executive Director Report.

Jim Karpiak reported on the following:

- Existing Trails- The CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration for the four trails West Deception Canyon, Biskra Palms, Chuckwalla and Cathedral Cove trails is being circulated for public comment and should be presented to the board in March. The two other trails in Blind Canyon and Fargo Canyon require NEPA action by BLM. The existing trails project of CVDMRCA has ended. The future trail work will be done utilizing the CVDMRCA's Land Management Capacity Building project staffed by the Desert Recreation District. The Big Morongo new trail signage project is waiting for Forest Service/BLM approval.
- Grant Workshop- tomorrow Tuesday the 9th at the Indio Community Center CVMC will be holding a workshop for the available grant RFPs.

- State Budget Update- the wildfire resilience money allocated to CVMC in the FY 23-24 budget is being considered for deletion as part of the FY 24-25 budget approval. If that happens, those RFPs will be suspended.

There were no board comments or questions.

5.3 Board Member comments and reports.

Gary Gardner commented that Greater Palm Springs has completed three additional hiking trail maps in collaboration with CVMC and FODM. Copies are available in the CVMC office.

There were no further questions or comments from the board.

6.0 Closed Session

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. The matter scheduled for closed session is:

- Recruitment of Executive Director

Chair Rita Lamb asked the public to leave the meeting at 3:43 pm to convene the closed session. At 4:10 p.m., the Chair reconvened the open session and announced that the board had created an ad hoc search committee to oversee the recruitment process.

7.0 Adjourn to the March 11, 2024, meeting at 3:00 pm. Chair Lamb adjourned the meeting without objection at 4:10 p.m.