

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
April 26, 2019



The audio file for this committee can be found at: <http://www.cvag.org/audio.htm>

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order by Chair Evans at 9:30 am at La Quinta City Hall Council Chambers, 78-495 Calle Tampico, La Quinta, CA.
2. **ROLL CALL** - Roll call was taken and a quorum was present. The pledge of allegiance was led by Councilmember Balocco.

**Members Present**

Mayor Pro Tem John Aguilar  
Councilmember Gary Gardner  
Councilmember Richard Balocco  
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz  
Mayor Linda Evans, Chair  
Mayor Susan Marie Weber  
Councilmember Lisa Middleton  
Councilmember Richard W. Kite  
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick  
Board Member Anthony Bianco  
Director Alex Cardenas  
Board Member Nancy Wright

**Agency**

City of Cathedral City  
City of Desert Hot Springs (*arrived at 9:34 am*)  
City of Indian Wells  
City of Indio (*arrived at 9:32 am*)  
City of La Quinta  
City of Palm Desert  
City of Palm Springs  
City of Rancho Mirage  
Riverside County – District 2, Alternate  
Coachella Valley Water District  
Imperial Irrigation District (*By phone, arrived at 9:50a*)  
Mission Springs Water District

**Members Not Present**

Mayor Steven Hernandez, Vice Chair  
Supervisor Kevin Jeffries  
Supervisor Chuck Washington  
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez  
Supervisor Jeff Hewitt

City of Coachella  
Riverside County – District 1  
Riverside County – District 3  
Riverside County – District 4  
Riverside County – District 5

**Others Present**

Michelle Ouellette (*phone*)  
John Criste  
Tom Kirk  
Katie Barrows  
Jim Sullivan  
Kathleen Brundige  
Libby Carlson  
Oscar Vizcarra  
Erica Felci

Best Best & Krieger  
Terra Nova Planning  
CVCC  
CVCC  
CVCC  
CVCC  
CVCC  
CVCC  
CVCC

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None.
4. **COMMITTEE MEMBER / DIRECTOR COMMENTS** – None.

**5. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**A. Approve the February 14, 2019 CVCC Meeting Minutes**

**B. Authorize Contract with San Diego Natural History Museum for management of cowbirds through September 30, 2019 for an amount not to exceed \$38,552**

**C. Ratify approval of Amendment 003 to the Technical Assistance Agreement with the United States Geological Survey to provide a no-cost extension through June 30, 2019 for tortoise surveys and genetic analysis**

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER KITE AND SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEM AGUILAR TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS.**

**ITEM 5A WAS APPROVED WITH 10 AYES, 1 ABSTENTION, and 6 ABSENT.**

Mayor Pro Tem John Aguilar	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez, Vice Chair	Absent
Councilmember Gary Gardner	Aye
Councilmember Richard Balocco	Aye
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans, Chair	Aye
Mayor Susan Marie Weber	Aye
Councilmember Lisa Middleton	Aye
Councilmember Richard W. Kite	Aye
Supervisor Keven Jefferies	Absent
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Abstain
Supervisor Chuck Washington	Absent
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Absent
Supervisor Jeff Hewitt	Absent
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Absent
Board Member Nancy Wright	Aye

**ITEMS 5B AND 5C WERE APPROVED WITH 11 AYES and 6 ABSENT.**

Mayor Pro Tem John Aguilar	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez, Vice Chair	Absent
Councilmember Gary Gardner	Aye
Councilmember Richard Balocco	Aye
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans, Chair	Aye
Mayor Susan Marie Weber	Aye
Councilmember Lisa Middleton	Aye
Councilmember Richard W. Kite	Aye
Supervisor Keven Jefferies	Absent
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Supervisor Chuck Washington	Absent
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Absent
Supervisor Jeff Hewitt	Absent
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Absent
Board Member Nancy Wright	Aye

## 6. DISCUSSION / ACTION

**A. La Quinta Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Barrier Project and Final Environmental Impact Report** - Katie Barrows provided a detailed overview of the project, recommendation, and next steps. Katie Barrows also summarized revisions transmitted in an addendum to the staff report and letters submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and the Bighorn Sheep Institute.

The staff recommendation was hereby amended to include the following revisions:

### **Resolution 19-006, Section 3.E.3**

- BIO-9            The final design and alignment selection shall identify locations for entry gates that provide access necessary to retrieve PBS on the wrong side of the fence and to avoid take of PBS, to maintain the fence and to address other issues within the area bounded by the fence.*
- BIO-12           The CVCC shall mitigate for the loss of PBS access to the designated Peninsular bighorn sheep habitat resulting from the implementation of the barrier through a Transfer of Conservation Objectives consistent with the requirements of the CVMSHCP and in accordance with Section 20.4.3 of the CVMSHCP Implementing Agreement.*
- BIO-13           Prior to the completion of fence construction, CVCC and its partner agencies shall prepare a post-construction PBS monitoring plan for this portion of Recovery Region 3 that will provide for ongoing evaluation of bighorn sheep movements and population effects associated with the fence. Quarterly monitoring plan reports shall be prepared and include specific measures to address any identified harm to PBS. The reports shall also include an anticipated schedule for implementation of Project Phases and identify the status of any required agreements, permits, funding or other item required before the phase can be implemented. Copies of monitoring plan reports shall be provided to the wildlife agencies and will be posted on the CVMSHCP website to be available to any interested members of the public.*
- BIO-14           Prior to fence construction, CVCC shall confer and coordinate with the wildlife agencies, Bighorn Institute, property owners and/or managers, and other parties, as appropriate, to develop and implement a post-construction strategic management plan that addresses:*
- 1) Hazing of PBS that become entrapped on the urban side of the fence, including establish and availability of personnel, timelines for execution, funding, and methods to minimize disturbance to bighorn sheep*

### **Resolution 19-006, Section 10.B.4**

**Impacts.** *Most environmental impacts associated with Alternative C would generally be less than those associated with the other “build” alternatives. It would require the shortest fence alignment and would be the easiest and least costly to construct and monitor. However, the potential loss of 2,397± acres of sheep-accessible habitat that could occur under Alternative C will require substantial offset or compensation. This may be accomplished by a Transfer of Conservation Objectives, which requires a*

*Minor Amendment with the Wildlife Agency Concurrence consistent with Section 20.4.3 of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Implementing Agreement. There is some question whether the CVMSHCP Transfer of Conservation Objectives alone could supply sufficient mitigation habitat to offset the loss of sheep-accessible habitat. Although other lands in the mountains Conservation Area might also serve as mitigation, the availability of sufficient acreage is in doubt. Alternative C will also increase potential impacts to sensitive cultural resources, but such impacts can be fully mitigated. Alternative C will also generally have the greatest impact of area-wide aesthetics with the barrier being highly visible along a much-used area train connecting the La Quinta Cove with Lake Cahuilla. Impacts to the aesthetic experience of hiking the Cove to Lake Trail will only occur under the Alternative C scenario.*

### **Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program**

*BIO-12 The CVCC shall mitigate for the loss of PBS access to designated Peninsular bighorn sheep habitat resulting from the implementation of the barrier through a Transfer of Conservation Objectives consistent with the requirements of the CVMSHCP and in accordance with Section 20.4.3 of the CVMSHCP Implementing Agreement.*

*BIO-13 Prior to the completion of fence construction, CVCC and its partners agencies shall prepare a post-construction PBS monitoring plan for this portion of Recovery Region 3 that will provide for ongoing evaluation of bighorn sheep movements and population effects associated with the fence. Quarterly monitoring plan reports shall be prepared and include specific measures to address any identified harm to PBS. The reports shall also include an anticipated schedule for implementation of Project Phases and identify the status of any required agreements, permits, funding or other item required before the phase can be implemented. Copies of monitoring plan reports shall be provided to the wildlife agencies and will be posted on the CVMSHCP website to be available to any interested members of the public.*

### **Final Environmental Impact Report, Page 1.12**

*Two corresponding mitigation monitoring and reporting programs also have been added and are described below (the are assigned letters E and F to follow the numbering pattern on the Draft EIR page III-117).*

Jenness McBride, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, addressed the Commission in support of Alternative A2.

Joan Taylor, Sierra Club, addressed the Commission in support of Alternative A2 and proposed amendment to the staff recommendation.

Doug Evans, Desert Riders/Desert Trails Coalition, addressed the Commission in support of equestrian gate installation.

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER FITZPATRICK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER GARDNER TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 19-006 AS AMENDED TO INCORPORATE REVISED WORDING, CERTIFYING THE FINAL IMPACT REPORT (SCH #2016021102) FOR THE LA QUINTA PENINSULAR BIGHORN SHEEP**

**BARRIER PROJECT, ADOPTING FINDINGS AND A MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM, AND APPROVING ALTERNATIVE A2 OF THE LA QUINTA PENINSULAR BIGHORN SHEEP BARRIER PROJECT.**

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 12 AYES AND 5 ABSENT.**

Mayor Pro Tem John Aguilar	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez, Vice Chair	Absent
Councilmember Gary Gardner	Aye
Councilmember Richard Balocco	Aye
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans, Chair	Aye
Mayor Susan Marie Weber	Aye
Councilmember Lisa Middleton	Aye
Councilmember Richard W. Kite	Aye
Supervisor Keven Jefferies	Absent
Councilmember Fitzpatrick	Aye
Supervisor Chuck Washington	Absent
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Absent
Supervisor Jeff Hewitt	Absent
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Board Member Nancy Wright	Aye

**B. Acquisition of 2 Parcels Totaling Approximately 10.00 Acres in the Stubbe/ Cottonwood Canyon Conservation Area**

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER BALOCCO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER ORTIZ TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 19-007 AUTHORIZING ACQUISITION OF TWO PARCELS TOTALING APPROXIMATELY 10.00 ACRES IN THE COUNTY UNINCORPORATED JURISDICTION OF STUBBE/COTTONWOOD CANYON CONSERVATION AREA AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$12,000 PLUS CLOSING AND DEMOLITION/CLEAN-UP COSTS NOT TO EXCEED \$33,000.**

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 12 AYES AND 5 ABSENT.**

Mayor Pro Tem John Aguilar	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez, Vice Chair	Absent
Councilmember Gary Gardner	Aye
Councilmember Richard Balocco	Aye
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans, Chair	Aye
Mayor Susan Marie Weber	Aye
Councilmember Lisa Middleton	Aye
Councilmember Richard W. Kite	Aye
Supervisor Keven Jefferies	Absent
Councilmember Fitzpatrick	Aye
Supervisor Chuck Washington	Absent
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Absent
Supervisor Jeff Hewitt	Absent
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Board Member Nancy Wright	Aye

**C. Acquisition of 24 Parcels Totaling Approximately 71.42 Acres in the Thousand Palms Conservation Area**

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER MIDDLETON AND SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEM AGUILAR TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 19-008 AUTHORIZING ACQUISITION OF 16 PARCELS TOTALING APPROXIMATELY 32.09 ACRES IN THE COUNTY UNINCORPORATED JURISDICTION OF THE THOUSAND PALMS CONSERVATION AREA AND 8 PARCELS TOTALING APPROXIMATELY 39.33 ACRES WITHIN THE CITY OF INDIO AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$227,000 PLUS CLOSING COSTS NOT TO EXCEED \$10,200.**

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 12 AYES AND 5 ABSENT.**

Mayor Pro Tem John Aguilar	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez, Vice Chair	Absent
Councilmember Gary Gardner	Aye
Councilmember Richard Balocco	Aye
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans, Chair	Aye
Mayor Susan Marie Weber	Aye
Councilmember Lisa Middleton	Aye
Councilmember Richard W. Kite	Aye
Supervisor Keven Jefferies	Absent
Councilmember Fitzpatrick	Aye
Supervisor Chuck Washington	Absent
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Absent
Supervisor Jeff Hewitt	Absent
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Board Member Nancy Wright	Aye

**7. INFORMATION** - The following items were provided for member information only:

- A. CVCC Attendance Record**
- B. Annual Inflation Adjustment to Local Development Mitigation Fee**
- C. CVCC Quarterly Unaudited Financial Statements as of March 31, 2019**
- D. CVCC Investment Report as of March 31, 2019**

**8. ANNOUNCEMENTS** - The next CVCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 9 at 11 am in Room 119, 73710 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert.

**9. ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Libby Carlson