

ITEM 7A

**Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2023**



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 Linda Evans, City of La Quinta, at 10:32 a.m. in the CVAG Conference Room, Suite 119, in Palm Desert.
- 2. **ROLL CALL** – Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez
Mayor Steven Hernandez, Vice Chair
Board Member Anthony Bianco
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner
Mayor Donna Griffith
Councilmember Elaine Holmes
Mayor Linda Evans, Chair
Director Russ Martin
Councilmember Evan Trubee
Councilmember Ron deHarte
Mayor Pro Tem Steve Downs
Councilmember Glenn Miller
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick
Councilmember Jan Harnik
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Councilmember Neftali Galarza

Agency

City of Cathedral City
City of Coachella
Coachella Valley Water District *(left after Item 8D)*
City of Desert Hot Springs
City of Indian Wells
City of Indio *(left after Item 8C)*
City of La Quinta
Mission Springs Water District
City of Palm Desert
City of Palm Springs
City of Rancho Mirage
Riverside County – District 1
Riverside County – District 2
Riverside County – District 3
Riverside County – District 4
Riverside County – District 5 *(arrived at Item 6)*

Members Not Present

Director Alex Cardenas

Imperial Irrigation District

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Supervisor V. Manuel Perez led the commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS (IF ANY)

None

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

6. COMMISSION CHAIR / DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Executive Director Tom Kirk presented an update on the fencing being completed by Desert Recreation District.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approve April 13, 2023 CVCC Meeting Minutes**
- B. Authorize the Chair to execute the Agreement with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments for Administration of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, allowing the total to be paid each fiscal year to be determined by CVAG’s adopted budget specific to CVCC, which will be approved by CVCC and CVAG as part of the annual budget processes**
- C. Authorize Amendment No. 4 of the services agreement with Desert Recreation District, adding an additional \$75,000 through June 30, 2024 to provide maintenance and cleanup services on conservation properties, including fences, gates, boulders and signs**
- D. Authorize the Executive Director to take the necessary actions to convey to Mission Springs Water District a 1,200-square-foot utility easement for the placement of a sewer line on APN 665-200-013**
- E. Authorize the Executive Director to execute a services agreement for an amount not to exceed \$50,000 with TerraPulse Inc. for the acquisition of Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) data**
- F. Authorize the Executive Director to execute the Technical Assistance Agreement with the USGS for the project entitled “Using NDVI Data in Models to Determine Habitat Use of Peninsular Bighorn Sheep in Response to Human Presence on Recreational Trails” for a not-to-exceed amount of \$100,546**

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR PRO TEM GARDNER AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER HOLMES TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 16 AYES, AND 1 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Absent
Mayor Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye
Councilmember Evan Trubee	Aye
Councilmember Ron deHarte	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Steve Downs	Aye
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Councilmember Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye

Councilmember Neftali Galarza

Aye

8. DISCUSSION / ACTION

A. Fiscal Year 2023/24 Agency-Wide, Programs, and Individual Funds Budget

Finance Director Claude Kilgore presented the staff report, including highlights from the 2023/24 budget. Mr. Kilgore thanked the CVCC Finance Committee members for their time and feedback during the budget process.

IT WAS MOVED BY SUPERVISOR PEREZ AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER MILLER TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2023-02 AND ADOPT THE CVCC ANNUAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023/24

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 16 AYES, AND 1 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Absent
Mayor Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye
Councilmember Evan Trubee	Aye
Councilmember Ron deHarte	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Steve Downs	Aye
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Councilmember Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Neftali Galarza	Aye

B. Acquisition of two parcels in the Long Canyon Conservation Area

Jim Karpiak from Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy presented the staff report.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR PRO TEM GARDNER AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER HOLMES TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2023-03 FOR ACQUISITION OF TWO PARCELS CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY 10.60+/- ACRES IN THE LONG CANYON CONSERVATION AREA AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$99,000, PLUS CLOSING AND TRANSACTION RELATED COSTS NOT TO EXCEED \$6,000; AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY CONTRACTS AND TAKE SUCH OTHER ACTIONS AS NECESSARY FOR THE ACQUISITION.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 16 AYES AND 1 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez

Aye

Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Absent
Mayor Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye
Councilmember Evan Trubee	Aye
Councilmember Ron deHarte	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Steve Downs	Aye
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Councilmember Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Neftali Galarza	Aye

C. Contract with the University of California Riverside, Center for Conservation Biology to Implement Biological Monitoring

Conservation Management Analyst Tony Quiroz presented on the biological monitoring program contract with UC Riverside and the goals of the program.

Member discussion ensued and staff addressed members' questions.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR HERNANDEZ AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER FITZPATRICK TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RIVERSIDE'S CENTER FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY TO IMPLEMENT BIOLOGICAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD FROM JULY 1, 2023, TO JUNE 30, 2024, AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$206,826.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 16 AYES AND 1 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Absent
Mayor Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye
Councilmember Evan Trubee	Aye
Councilmember Ron deHarte	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Steve Downs	Aye
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Councilmember Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Neftali Galarza	Aye

D. Amendment No. 2 to the Technical Assistance Agreement for Desert Tortoise Monitoring

Kathleen Brundige, Director of Conservation, presented the staff report and background on the research efforts.

Brief member discussion ensued.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR GRIFFITH AND SECONDED BY DIRECTOR MARTIN TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE AMENDMENT NO. 2 TO THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, EXTENDING THE TERM THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2024 AND PROVIDING AN ADDITIONAL \$170,000 FOR TORTOISE MONITORING AND GENETIC STUDIES

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 15 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Absent
Mayor Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Absent
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye
Councilmember Evan Trubee	Aye
Councilmember Ron deHarte	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Steve Downs	Aye
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Councilmember Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Neftali Galarza	Aye

E. Senate Bill 583 and the Proposed Salton Sea Conservancy

Program Manager Emmanuel Martinez presented the staff report. Mr. Martinez introduced Dan Reeves, Chief of Staff for State Sen. Padilla, who joined the meeting via Zoom videoconference to provide more information on the bill and to address members' questions.

Supervisor Perez provided details on the efforts to amend the legislation. Patrick O'Dowd, Salton Sea Authority's Executive Director, outlined the Authority's opposition to SB 583.

Victoria Llorca, Government and Regional Affairs Manager for Coachella Valley Water District announced that CVWD has taken a position of opposition regarding Senate Bill 583 and stated the bill needs more work towards conservancy.

Robust member discussion ensued regarding details provided about SB 583 and the points presented for opposition by CVWD and the Salton Sea Authority.

IT WAS MOVED BY SUPERVISOR PEREZ AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER DEHARTE TO OPPOSE SENATE BILL 583 RELATED TO ESTABLISHING THE SALTON SEA CONSERVANCY UNTIL THE LEGISLATION IS AMENDED AND THERE IS FURTHER CLARIFICATION AND ENGAGED CONVERSATIONS THAT SORT OUT DETAILS AND REACH A BETTER POSITION COLLECTIVELY FOR MOVING FORWARD BECAUSE OF THE PASSION THAT IS SHARED FOR THE SALTON SEA.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Absent
Mayor Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Absent
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye
Councilmember Evan Trubee	Aye
Councilmember Ron deHarte	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Steve Downs	Aye
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Councilmember Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Neftali Galarza	Aye

9. INFORMATION

- A. Attendance Record**
- B. Contracts under \$25,000**
- C. Schedule of Meetings for Fiscal Year 2023/2024**

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the **Coachella Valley Conservation Commission** will be held on Thursday, September 14, 2023, at 10:30 a.m. at the Coachella Valley Association of Governments' conference room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 119, Palm Desert, 92260.

The next meeting of the **CVAG General Assembly** will be held on Monday, June 26 at 6 p.m. at The Penney & Parlour at Desert Island, 71-777 Frank Sinatra Dr., Rancho Mirage, 92270.

12. ADJOURN

Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elysia Regalado
Management Analyst