

ITEM 6A

**Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2022**



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 10:00 a.m. via Zoom, pursuant to the guidelines of Assembly Bill 361.
- 2. ROLL CALL** – Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Mayor Steven Hernandez, Vice Chair
Board Member Anthony Bianco
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner
Director Alex Cardenas
Mayor Pro Tem Donna Griffith
Councilmember Elaine Holmes
Mayor Linda Evans, Chair
Vice President Nancy Wright
Councilmember Kathleen Kelly
Councilmember Dennis Woods
Councilmember Glenn Miller
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick
Mayor Jan Harnik
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Director Russ Martin

Agency

City of Coachella
Coachella Valley Water District (*arrived in Item 4*)
City of Desert Hot Springs
Imperial Irrigation District
City of Indian Wells
City of Indio
City of La Quinta
Mission Springs Water District
City of Palm Desert
City of Palm Springs
Riverside County – District 1
Riverside County – District 2
Riverside County – District 3
Riverside County – District 4
Riverside County – District 5

Members Not Present

Mayor Pro Tem Rita Lamb
Councilmember Richard Kite

City of Cathedral City
City of Rancho Mirage

3. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS (IF ANY)

None

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Joan Taylor of the Sierra Club expressed support for Item 7E and encouraged the Commission's support of the national monument proposal.

Tammy Martin, Executive Director of the Friends of the Desert Mountains, announced the Friends of the Desert Mountains' strong support for the Protect California Deserts proposal and encouraged the Commission to support Item 7E.

Chris Clarke of the National Parks Conservation Association, highlighted the benefits of national monuments, including economic impacts, job creation and access to open park space, and encouraged support of Item 7E.

Katie Barrows, of the Riverside-San Bernardino Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, also encouraged passage of Item 7E by highlighting the important habitat, connection to natural communities and access to open space.

5. COMMISSION CHAIR / DIRECTOR COMMENTS

A. Update on the La Quinta Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Fence

Executive Director Tom Kirk provided an update on the fence project in La Quinta, which is scheduled to start construction next week. He also announced plans to coordinate an on-site visit for the Commissioners to visit the construction site as well as conservation projects along Whitewater River and near the Salton Sea.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approve June 9, 2022 CVCC Meeting Minutes**
- B. Reaffirm that findings still exist, pursuant to Assembly Bill 361, and authorize continuation of remote teleconference/virtual meetings of the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission and its committees**
- C. Authorize the updating of the signature cards and signatories for CVCC investments and banking**
- D. Adopt CVCC Policy No. 22-02 to update the procurement policies and procedures**

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

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 15 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Mayor Pro Tem Rita Lamb	Absent
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Vice President Nancy Wright	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Kelly	Aye
Councilmember Dennis Woods	Aye
Councilmember Richard Kite	Absent
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye

**Mayor Jan Harnik
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Director Russ Martin**

**Aye
Aye
Aye**

7. DISCUSSION / ACTION

A. Presentation on Biological Monitoring Program – Dr. Lynn Sweet, UC Riverside Center for Conservation Biology

Dr. Lynn Sweet, UC Riverside Center for Conservation Biology, provided an overview of the current biological monitoring efforts. Member discussion ensued, with Dr. Sweet and staff addressing questions.

There was no action taken on this informational item

B. Acquisition of one parcel in the Whitewater Floodplain Conservation Area – Jim Karpiak

Jim Karpiak of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy provided the staff report. Member discussion ensued. Mr. Kirk indicated staff would follow up on members' questions about what CVCC does with parcels that have existing billboards and return with additional information at a future meeting.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR PRO TEM GARDNER AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HERNANDEZ TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-07 FOR ACQUISITION OF ONE PARCEL CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY 5.08+/- ACRES IN THE WHITEWATER FLOODPLAIN CONSERVATION AREA AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$29,210, PLUS CLOSING AND TRANSACTION RELATED COSTS NOT TO EXCEED \$3,000, AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY CONTRACTS AND TAKE SUCH OTHER ACTIONS AS NECESSARY FOR THE ACQUISITION.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 15 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Mayor Pro Tem Rita Lamb	Absent
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Vice President Nancy Wright	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Kelly	Aye
Councilmember Dennis Woods	Aye
Councilmember Richard Kite	Absent
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye

Director Russ Martin

Aye

C. Acquisition of six tax default parcels from the Riverside County Treasurer-Tax Collector's 2021 Default List – Jim Karpiak

Mr. Karpiak provided the staff report and overview of the tax default acquisition process.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER HOLMES AND SECONDED BY DIRECTOR MARTIN TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2022-08 AUTHORIZING ACQUISITION OF SIX TAX DEFAULT PARCELS TOTALING APPROXIMATELY 131.25+/- ACRES AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$26,938.36, PLUS ADMINISTRATION COSTS, AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT OF SALE TO PURCHASE THE PROPERTIES.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 15 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Mayor Pro Tem Rita Lamb	Absent
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Vice President Nancy Wright	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Kelly	Aye
Councilmember Dennis Woods	Aye
Councilmember Richard Kite	Absent
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye

D. Contract with Southern California Mountains Foundation for Invasive Species Removal within the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Delta Conservation Area – Tony Quiroz

Management Analyst Tony Quiroz provided the staff report. Member discussion ensued, including the importance of multi-year removal efforts.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR PRO TEM GARDNER AND SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEM FITZPATRICK TO APPROVE A CONTRACT WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MOUNTAINS FOUNDATION FOR A NOT-TO-EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$109,619.56 TO REMOVE TAMARISK FROM SENSITIVE MESQUITE HABITAT IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY STORMWATER AND DELTA CONSERVATION AREA; AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND/ OR LEGAL COUNSEL TO MAKE CLARIFYING CHANGES PRIOR TO EXECUTION

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 15 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Mayor Pro Tem Rita Lamb	Absent
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Donna Griffith	Aye
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Vice President Nancy Wright	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Kelly	Aye
Councilmember Dennis Woods	Aye
Councilmember Richard Kite	Absent
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye

E. Support for the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument and protection of other public lands – Kathleen Brundige

Conservation Director Kathleen Brundige provided the staff report and discussed the proposed monument's boundaries as compared to the conservation areas.

Member discussion ensued, with several questions raised about the proposed national monument's boundaries, including any potential overlap with the All-American Canal operations, flood control efforts and habitat conservation lands. Concerns were also raised on how the monument's creation overlaps with ongoing county studies in the area.

Mr. Kirk stated that staff would relay the Commissioners' feedback to the project proponents as they finalize the monument map, further research the questions about the boundaries, and coordinate with various jurisdictions and agencies. The consensus among members was to bring the item back at a future meeting with additional information to address Commissioners' questions and concerns.

F. Election of CVCC Officers – Tom Kirk

Mr. Kirk opened the floor for nominations. The existing officers were nominated for re-election.

IT WAS MOVED BY DIRECTOR CARDENAS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HARNIK TO RE-ELECT MAYOR LINDA EVANS AS CVCC CHAIR AND MAYOR STEVEN HERNANDEZ AS CVCC VICE CHAIR FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022/23.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 15 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Mayor Pro Tem Rita Lamb	Absent
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye

Board Member Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Donna Griffith	Absent
Councilmember Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Vice President Nancy Wright	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Kelly	Aye
Councilmember Dennis Woods	Aye
Councilmember Richard Kite	Absent
Councilmember Glenn Miller	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Director Russ Martin	Aye

8. INFORMATION - The following items were provided in the agenda for information only:

A. Attendance Record

B. Feedback from Members on the Continued Use of Virtual Meetings

C. CVCC's Unaudited Investment Report through June 30, 2022

D. CVCC's Unaudited Financial Reports through June 30, 2022

E. Contracts under \$25,000

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission will be held on Thursday, November 10, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom webinar.

11. ADJOURN – The meeting was adjourned by Chair Evans at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Felci
Assistant Executive Director