



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

Lower American River Conservancy Program Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes (Draft)

August 30, 2017

9:00 a.m.

Sacramento County Board Chambers
700 H Street, Sacramento, California 95814

1. Welcome- John Donnelly

The Lower American River Conservancy Program Advisory Committee (Committee) met on Wednesday, August 30, 2017, in the Board Chambers of Sacramento County. John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) convened the meeting at 9:00am. Director Donnelly briefly explained that under recently passed legislation, AB 1719, the WCB is charged with administering and operating the Lower American River Conservancy Program (Program). He welcomed the Advisory Committee and asked committee members to introduce themselves.

2. Introductions-

Present were:

Tina Bartlett, Department of Fish and Wildlife
for Natural Resources Secretary John Laird

Kelly Fong-Rivas for Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg

Susan Peters, Supervisor, Sacramento County

Phil Serna, Supervisor, Sacramento County

Jeff Harris, Councilmember, City of Sacramento

Donald Terry, Mayor, Rancho Cordova

Karen Finn, California Department of Finance

Stephen Green, Senate Appointee to the Committee and President of the Save the American River Association

Jennifer Lucchesi, Executive Officer, State Lands Commission

Don Nottoli, Supervisor, Sacramento County

Director Donnelly observed that committee appointments from the Speaker of the Assembly and the Governor's office have not yet occurred.

Committee members discussed the designation of a Committee Chairman, noting that the enabling legislation offers no direction on that. Colin Mills, WCB Staff Counsel, was introduced and confirmed that as an advisory body to a state entity, the Committee will operate under the dictates of the Bagley Keene Open Meeting Act. As such, while not on the Agenda, it would be appropriate to elect a Committee Chair. Supervisor Susan Peters nominated Councilmember Jeff Harris and the motion was carried. Councilmember Harris then nominated Supervisor Nottoli as Vice-Chair and the motion carried.

Colin Mills suggested it would be appropriate for staff to develop guidelines on how the Committee will operate using Robert's Rules of Order as a general guide.

Supervisor Peters asked if staff would bring those guidelines to the next meeting.

Director Donnelly gave an overview of the history, mission, and structure of the WCB. In response from a request from Supervisor Peters, Director Donnelly noted that the boundaries of the Parkway are from Nimbus Dam on the east, and westerly to the confluence of the Sacramento River, including tributaries. It is approximately 25 miles long. Among the features of the parkway are the UC Aquatic Center, the bike trail, and equestrian trails. Public use of the parkway is robust.

Director Donnelly asked if there were questions. Supervisor Peters asked how often this Committee will meet. Director Donnelly answered that the legislation dictates the Committee meet no less than two times per year. It may meet more, but not less. Chair Harris asked Counsel Colin Mills if committee votes would be majority or weighted. Mr. Mills indicated that it would be majority of the quorum present.

Councilmember Harris then noted that the Committee's organizational rules need to be developed. Director Donnelly stated that the WCB will provide those and Councilmember Harris offered that he would be happy to work with Director Donnelly. All agreed those guidelines would be presented at the next meeting.

3. Enabling Legislation (AB 1716) – John Donnelly

Director Donnelly gave an overview of the legislation that created the Program and provides direction for the Committee. He noted that the legislation identifies a Natural Resources Management Plan as a priority for funding and stated that given that, it seems completing the Natural Resources Management Plan should be the first step for the Program. Director Donnelly emphasized the importance of the section of legislation that directs the WCB to consult with the County of Sacramento prior to approving funding, and the express objective of funding through this Program is to enhance the natural resource values of the Parkway. Noting that this year's Governor's budget allocated \$1 million for the Program, Director Donnelly also informed the Committee of two active legislative proposals, SB 5 and AB 18, each of which contain funding for the Program.

Supervisor Nottoli asked if the \$1 million in the Governor's budget can be competed for. Director Donnelly said the local assistance designation in the legislation allows the WCB to award grants to local agencies and non-profit organizations. He explained that the project approval process he envisions begins with the development of guidelines and criteria that a proposal will have to meet in order to be considered. The WCB would open a period of solicitation for project proposals. Those seeking grants would need to demonstrate, and would be scored on, how their project meets the criteria. He indicated he hoped to have a sub-committee comprised of Committee members to help review and score proposals. When time for consideration, the Committee would then be asked to evaluate which projects they feel are most beneficial to the Parkway and to provide recommendations to the WCB.

Supervisor Peters asked if any of the \$1 million dollars can be used for organizational costs.

Director Donnelly stated that it cannot. The money is solely for Local Assistance and Capital Outlay. Supervisor Peters asked what the process for allocating the money will be. Director Donnelly referred again to the solicitation process he had described, adding that he hoped the Committee would form a subcommittee that would evaluate and score project applications.

Supervisor Peters who would be responsible for administering the solicitation.

Director Donnelly confirmed that as the WCB is administering the Program, the WCB will oversee the solicitation.

Supervisor Nottoli asked how soon the Committee could get started on the process. Director Donnelly replied that staff will begin the process and hopefully have an outline for discussion at the next Committee meeting.

Supervisor Peters asked how the types of eligible projects will be decided upon.

Director Donnelly replied that he would like to wait and discuss the details of the solicitation until after the Committee's organizational structure has been worked through.

Councilmember Harris asked Director Donnelly how much staff time the WCB has to devote to the Committee. Director Donnelly said the WCB did not add new staff to accommodate the Program at this time. He said he is optimistic that using an existing WCB process as a model will accelerate the implementation of the Program. He added that because these projects will be approved and funded by the WCB, using a process that is proven and familiar to the WCB will be an advantage.

Councilmember Harris asked if it is reasonable, considering staff constraints, that the WCB can have the Committee rules and procedures ready for the Committee's review in two months.

Director Donnelly confirmed that as reasonable.

Supervisor Peters asked that the WCB provide an example of what the solicitation and application will consist of to the next meeting, as well as a description of the procedures that the WCB follows for a solicitation. She suggested that the WCB should interview the non-profits that are interested in the Lower American River Parkway to learn who they

are and how to reach out to them.

Councilmember Harris asked if that answered all the questions.

Supervisor Peters said that it really did not.

Councilmember Harris suggested moving on to the presentations and then addressing any remaining questions.

Supervisor Peters said it was not her intention to reorder the Agenda but she wants to be sure that the non-profits who are interested in the Parkway have a chance to weigh in on what should be focused on and that she had not heard that said.

Supervisor Nottoli asked if public agencies will be eligible for funding.

Director Donnelly confirmed that they will be. He said outreach will include any organization interested in the Parkway. He noted that the WCB does a good job state-wide of reaching out and partnering with non-profits, local agencies, resource conservation districts, water districts, federal agencies, other state agencies, cities and counties. He said the WCB has experience reaching out and they will implement that same partnership theme in the Lower American River.

Councilmember Harris invited Stephen Green to begin his presentation.

4. American River Parkway Plan -Stephen Green

Mr. Green gave an overview of the Parkway Plan.

Following his presentation, Mr. Green asked if there were questions.

Karen Finn asked if 2008 was the last update.

Mr. Green confirmed that it was.

Supervisor Nottoli added that the update was a thorough undertaking involving many people and costing over \$1 million.

Councilmember Harris thanked Mr. Green and invited Jeff Leatherman to proceed with his presentation.

5. American River Parkway Natural Resources Management Plan- Jeff Leatherman, Director of Regional Parks for Sacramento County

Mr. Leatherman gave an overview of the Management Plan noting that the legislation that created the Program prioritizes the Management Plan and its implementation, as the guide for protecting and restoring the Parkway.

He reported that Regional Parks is in the process of recruiting and hiring a Deputy Director to help with the completion and implementation of the Natural Resources Management Plan. He noted that the County Board had previously requested that Regional Parks compile a list of unfunded maintenance and capital improvements needed in the parks and said that list could effectively serve as a catalog of potential

projects for the Committee to consider for funding.

Councilmember Harris observed that between the Parkway Plan and the Management Plan, plenty of direction on the type of projects to be considered is immediately available. He suggested it would be helpful to the Directors to be familiar with both plans before the next meeting.

Councilmember Harris asked if there were any questions

Kelly Fong-Rivas asked if Director Donnelly had said that money to complete the Natural Resources Management Plan would be a top priority.

Director Donnelly replied that he thinks based upon the legislation, it should be a top priority. He confirmed that would be accomplished with funds from the \$1 million currently available or funds that become available. He added that he understands the legislation to say that once the Resource Management Plan is complete and has been adopted by Sacramento County, that implementation of projects under that plan should begin.

Ms. Fong-Rivas asked for confirmation that it will be possible to estimate the cost of completing the plan when the scope of work is completed and goes out to bid.

Mr. Leatherman confirmed.

Supervisor Peters asked if non-profit groups that own or do work on the Parkway can be eligible for applying for funding.

Director Donnelly said they would as long as they are a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

Supervisor Peters asked what the rules are. She wondered if a Boy Scout troop in Roseville could receive funding for work on the Parkway.

Director Donnelly replied that eligibility is not limited to those who own land or work on the Parkway. He gave as an example that the Nature Conservancy, based in San Francisco, could apply for funding for a project as long as they meet the non-profit requirements.

Supervisor Peters said she understood that the process would be that the Committee will vet applications and then selected proposals would be recommended to the Board. Then, noting that the Board only meets quarterly, estimated that it will take five to six months for a project to be approved for funding.

Director Donnelly agreed that is a reasonable estimate.

Councilmember Harris added that approval from the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors will also be necessary.

Councilmember Harris asked if anyone in the audience would like to speak and recognized Corey Brown in the audience. Mr. Harris said that the creation of the Program was Mr. Brown's idea and asked him if he would like to speak.

Mr. Brown thanked the members of the Committee for their service. He observed that the Parkway is a treasured jewel and pointed out that the WCB is one of the County's

oldest partners in creating the Parkway. He noted that in 1964, the WCB provided matching funds for some of the initial acquisitions along the Parkway and the WCB has since helped acquire many of the properties that create the Parkway that we know today. He continued saying that he has worked with the WCB on projects throughout the state and that they are a skilled and easy to work with Agency. He observed that the Advisory Committee will play a critical role in providing community input, and the County will provide expertise as owner/operator of the vast majority of the Parkway and having ownership of the Parkway Plan, which everything funded through the Conservancy under this Program, will have to be consistent with.

He continued noting that SB 5, currently being considered in the Legislature, includes \$20 million for the Lower American River Conservancy Program and urged support of the Bill.

Councilmember Harris asked if there were questions, there were none. He thanked Mr. Brown for starting the process that resulted in the creation of the Program.

6. Funding- John Donnelly

Councilmember Harris invited Director Donnelly to discuss funding.

Director Donnelly said funding had been largely discussed earlier and could be summed up by saying there is \$1 million available to allocate.

7. Next Steps

Councilmember Harris noted that Supervisor Peters had asked several questions and appreciated the discussion on timelines and organizational rules and asked if she had other concerns.

Supervisor Peters said her main concern was that organizational rules be brought to the next meeting. She also asked how the public could access meetings of the Committee and asked Mr. Leatherman if the meetings will be televised.

Mr. Leatherman said the meetings will not be televised. He added that the meetings will be recorded and WCB staff will produce minutes.

Supervisor Peters asked if the minutes will be made available on the WCB website.

Director Donnelly confirmed they will be made available.

Councilmember Harris asked if interested parties should be directed to the WCB website for the schedule of meetings and all relevant information, including anyone who is interested in proposing a project.

Director Donnelly confirmed.

Mr. Leatherman added that once the information is available the County will help disseminate.

Councilmember Harris added the City will do the same.

Supervisor Peters said that addresses her concern, that she wants the public to know the meetings are taking place and that there is a little bit of money now, and an opportunity to have some of their ideas on how to spend the money considered.

Councilmember Harris observed that if the mailing lists of the Committee members were used to disseminate information, thousands of people would be reached and that it is incumbent upon the members to help spread information, he added that would be a way to encourage people to support SB 5.

Supervisor Nottoli suggested looking into whether the meetings could be televised.

Councilmember Harris asked if there was consensus that two months was a good time frame for the next meeting.

Supervisor Peters asked if that will give the WCB enough time to develop what is needed for the next meeting.

Director Donnelly suggested scheduling the meeting two months out and then seeing how much staff could have ready. He reminded those present that WCB staff is busy preparing for the regular WCB meetings so may not have everything that has been asked for today ready by the next meeting, but will at least have the procedural rules ready. He added that by the time the Committee meets again, they will have a better idea of whether a Parks Bond will be going forward and what other funding may be available next year. He also asked that each Committee member forward their contact list for the Lower American River to his assistant, Mary Delaney.

Supervisor Serna asked if Mary Delaney would be the clerk for the Committee meetings.

Director Donnelly confirmed Ms. Delaney would serve as clerk.

Supervisor Serna invited Ms. Delaney to contact Florence Evans for a tutorial on operating the technology available in the Chambers.

Director Donnelly asked if the Committee would like to meet at the Chambers routinely or hold a future meeting at another location in the Parkway area.

Supervisor Peters said that whatever the location, it should be permanent.

Councilmember Harris added that he would also like to establish a regular meeting schedule and asked everyone to think about their schedules.

Mayor Terry asked if a Form 700 will be necessary for this committee.

Director Donnelly said he will research and provide the information as soon as possible to Committee members.

Supervisor Serna asked the WCB contact Amy Rutledge, Sacramento Valley Conservancy, to see if the Committee could meet at Camp Pollock, right in the Parkway.

Councilmember Harris said that would be nice but noted that venue does not have

microphones or other technology that the Chambers has.

Councilmember Harris asked if there were any more questions. There were none. He asked if everyone feels they have a path forward. They did.

Director Donnelly said he looks forward to working with everyone.

Mr. Leatherman offered that if anyone is interested in a tour of the Parkway they should contact his office.

8. Adjourn

9. Councilmember Harris adjourned the meeting at 10:02am.