



Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting
MBNEP Office

May 11, 2016
4:00 pm

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees: Joel Neel, *Bay Foundation*; Trudy O'Brien, *Fishing Interests*; Becka Kelly, *IC Chair*; John Flaherty, *Tourism Interests*; Jennifer Epp, *Water Board*; Ethan Bell, *Environmental Interests*; Holly Sletteland, *Environmental Interests*; Suzanne Marr, *USEPA*; Sam Schuchat, *CA Coastal Conservancy*; Marshall Ochylski, *LOCSO*; Bruce Gibson, *SLO County*; Matt Makowetski, *City of Morro Bay*; Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*.

1. Introductions and Updates

- a. **Lexie Bell** – We have a conflict for the date of the August EC meeting. We will send out a poll to choose an alternate date in August. Several years ago, the EC and Bay Foundation allocated \$100,000 to the Community Foundation to assist low income residents with the costs of connecting to the treatment facility in Los Osos. This funding, along with other monies, will likely be used to raise the income cap to qualify for assistance, allowing more residents to benefit.
- b. **Becka Kelly** – The dredging has begun and will continue throughout May. All dredging is focused near the bay entrance, and goes no further south than the fuel dock. The same disposal site is being used as in past years. The dredging goes on seven days a week, 24 hours a day. There is a Safe Boating Day on May 21 at the Yacht Club.
- c. **Trudy O'Brien** – The crab season finally opened, and the season has been good on the central coast. The salmon season recently opened. A Blessing of the Fleet ceremony recently took place and had a good turnout.
- d. **Holly Sletteland** – A Sudden Oak Death Blitz will be taking place in May. The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has been working on a bio-control for Cap Ivy and are about to start issuing permits for its release.
- e. **Bruce Gibson** – The Los Osos Wastewater Project Ribbon Cutting took place last month, and residents are beginning to connect to the system. About 700 permits are out right now for connection. Of those, approximately 25% of those include an effort to repurpose septic to collect rainwater.
- f. **Jennifer Epp** – The upcoming Board meeting will be held in Watsonville. Most issues before the Board do not pertain to the Morro Bay watershed.

2. Public Comment – None presented.

3. **Agenda Revisions** – Lexie proposed re-arranging the agenda items to consider the approval of the Workplan after approval of the minutes. This change was made to accommodate EC member schedules so that a quorum was present for Workplan approval. Approved via consent.

4. ACTION: Consider Approval of February 10, 2016 minutes

Vote: Matt motioned to approve the minutes. Bruce seconded the motion. Unanimous in favor.

5. ACTION: Consider approval of FY 17 Workplan

Lexie advised the group that the version of the Workplan budget submitted for their review contained additional match beyond what was required for FY17. Lexie revised the budget to remove the excess

match. This was a reduction of \$55,000 from Other Restoration and from Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve categories. Lexie briefly described two new Workplan tasks: Conservation and Restoration Planning (which includes stormwater work on Camp SLO, LID in Los Osos, and steelhead habitat projects) and a Nature Center Update (which includes applying for funding and planning the update). Lexie also highlighted the State of the Bay task, with a report card to be issued in the early 2017 followed by a month-long series of events to reach different aspects of the community. This will include a day of scientific presentations. John mentioned that in past events, he enjoyed scientific presentations and researchers talking about topics beyond those contained in the report card. Matt recommended presenting at the Harbor Advisory Board, which is televised. Jennifer asked about what was being taken out of the Workplan since new tasks were being added. Lexie felt that to accommodate the Nature Center update task, staff time would be available for fewer general outreach efforts such as field trips. For the Restoration task, the purpose was to try to be more strategic, rather than opportunistic, about applying for grants. Bruce was in agreement with the approach to eelgrass monitoring and restoration, where we are allocating resources to better understand conditions before taking on more wide-scale restoration.

Vote: Bruce motioned to approve the final version of the Workplan for FY 17. Marshall seconded. Unanimous approval. See attached for final version.

6. ACTION: Recommendations on Community Grant Applications

SeaLife Stewards: The group had questions on how the program will interact with businesses. Local recreational businesses were invited to the training sessions, although it was unknown if any of them attended. Conversations had already taken place to communicate to rental businesses that this was not an enforcement effort. There were questions about the evaluation of the program with kayak renters, and Lexie added that the program is looking into some brief surveys to gauge behavior changes. Bruce pointed out that Friends of the Elephant Seals would be a good model for the program. Becka said that the effort began this past weekend, with 24 volunteers in the program.

Vote: Holly made a motion to approve the SeaLife Stewards grant. Joel seconded. Unanimous approval.

Morro Bay Boatyard and Haulout Facility: Matt explained some of the history of the project. He described the property that the city had designated for the facility. He also described the efforts of the private for-profit entity that is interested in conducting a Feasibility Study. The city does not want to conduct its own study if it is not needed. This private entity is meeting with the Harbor Advisory Board and the city to begin this process. Lexie noted that by awarding a grant, the NEP shows support for the effort and also provides the program with match funds. There was then discussion in the group about funding the grant only if the city conducting its own Feasibility Study. Marshall expressed concern about issuing a grant contingent on other conditions.

Vote: Marshall made a motion to table the decision until the next EC meeting in August, at which point the group would get an update from the city on the process and vote on the grant. Matt seconded. All in favor except for Joel, who voted against it because it did not follow the decision of the Bay Foundation board. Joel will present this decision to the Bay Foundation before the next EC meeting.

Proposal Development Support for Green Infrastructure and Storm/Rain Water Catchment: Sam said that grants exist for technical assistance, but that he had never seen anyone apply for a grant to fund work that is already completed. Jennifer and Joel pointed out that the applicant could apply for implementation support for the stormwater project itself, rather than the grant application. Ethan said that there is no guarantee of what we'll get because the grant award process could be fairly competitive.

Vote: Marshall moved to deny the application since the Committee is not comfortable retroactively funding a project to apply for a grant. Bruce seconded the motion. Unanimous in favor.

7. Discussion: 2017 Workplan Input – See 2016 Workplan

Staff provided an overview of eelgrass-related monitoring efforts. Since the staff report was compiled, there were updates on some of the items:

- Cal Poly funded four eelgrass-related research efforts. Aside from the work of Ryan Walter, Jennifer O’Leary and Jenn Yost, a project by Lisa Needles to study crab abundance in areas with and without eelgrass was also funded. The hope is that together these efforts will help create a strong application for SeaGrant funding.
- San Francisco State University and Cal Poly have an ongoing collaborative effort looking at eelgrass wrack and *Suaeda californica*. Jennifer O’Leary and Jenn Yost of Cal Poly are involved in the project to cage Suaeda plants around the bay and in the Los Osos area.
- CDFW has instrumentation in the bay to measure water quality conditions near eelgrass beds. In an agreement with Cal Poly, faculty member Ryan Walters will now be responsible for the download and analysis of the data.
- Jen spoke with Brian Meux of NOAA. His request for internal funding to support Cal Poly research efforts will likely not be funded, but it is an important relationship to maintain.

Holly had questions about the impacts of Gracilaria and the presence of the eelgrass pathogen in the bay. The Gracilaria question will in part be addressed by a caging study conducted by a master’s student over the summer. The pathogen is thought to always be present in the bay, so it is likely not the cause of the recent drastic decline.

8. Discussion: Presentation of US EPA Semi-annual Report

Staff clarified an error in the staff report regarding the budget spent in the 320 grant. The staff report should have read as follows: “As of March 2016, 79% of the 320 funds from the grant that began in FY12 have been spent. \$256,073 has been spent from October 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016.”

The group had questions about meeting the match requirements and spending out the remainder of the funding. Lexie said that we anticipated no problems with either of those things. We could apply for an extension from EPA if we determined that additional time was needed.

9. Adjourn to next meeting in August, the date to be determined.

Jennifer suggested that at the next meeting the group revisits how the meetings are run and whether we are achieving our mission. This will be on the agenda for the August meeting. Lexie also pointed out that in 2012, the group developed a five-year spending plan for the Restoration Funds. This will be expiring in 2017, so we will need a new plan starting in 2018.

Attachments to May Staff Report:

1. February EC meeting minutes
2. FY17 Workplan
3. Community Grant applications
4. US EPA Semi-annual report