

## MINUTES

### Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District

#### Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, August 13, 2020 at 4:00 PM

Truax Building  
41923 Second Street, Fourth Floor  
Temecula, CA 92590

#### I. PRELIMINARY FUNCTIONS

**Call to Order, 4:00 p.m., meeting recorded by Rose Corona**

**Flag Salute**

**Roll Call/Establish a Quorum**

**Directors Present:** Rose Corona (President), Randy Feeney (Director), Stacy Kuhns (Director), Newt Parkes (Director)

**Directors Absent:** Lisa Battiato (Director)

**Associate Directors Present:** None

**Associate Directors Absent:** Rick Neugebauer

**Office Manager:** Deborah Getty – Present

**District Counsel:** Ward Simmons, Best, Best & Krieger – Absent

**Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCS):** Robert Hewitt – Absent

**Guest Speakers:** None

**Public Guests:** Tom Gomez, Wraham Stager

#### **Approval of Agenda**

President Corona called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Director Feeney moved and Director Parkes seconded. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0.**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tom Gomez is in attendance due to water concerns in Aguanga, specifically at the Rancho California RV Resort. This RV resort is a temporary stay, 30 days at a time but they live there full time. They have many lakes, swimming pools and a huge green wall causing many of the surrounding neighbors to run out of water. Mr. Gomez is hoping to find the right channel, to get somebody that can help bring awareness to this.

#### **II. CONSENT CALENDAR, CORRESPONDENCE & GENERAL INFORMATION**

President Corona called for a motion to approve the consent calendar, financials, and correspondence. Director Parkes moved and director Kuhns seconded. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0**

### **III. ACTION ITEMS/ DISCUSSION CALENDAR**

#### **Item 1: Discussion and potential review and approval of Financial Statements and Independent Auditors Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2019 as presented by Nigro & Nigro.**

Director Parkes reports he reviewed the report and has no questions. President Corona explains that due to the cost of the audits for special districts to keep the costs low the County agreed about five years ago to allow a compilation and financial analysis every two years and then on the third year we have to do a more in-depth audit. With no further questions, President Corona calls for a motion to approve the Financial Statements and Independent Auditors Report for Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2019. Director Kuhns moved and Director Parkes seconded. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0**

#### **Item 2: Discussion and review of information received to the Board regarding County Hemp Ordinance in Anza.**

Director Kuhns reports that the Planning Department just sent to the Board of Supervisors to vote to not allow permits in the watershed. In speaking with the AG Commissioner, if it goes through there will not be any permits for wells allowed until all of the research done and they figure out how much water is being pulled out of the table. The Water Master, which is Michael Pressler is in the middle and he sent a letter of support to stop everything. General discussion on the potential outcomes. President Corona gives a general overview of TEAM RCD explaining that we are a governmental agency that tries to be a bridge for all these different agencies in the area which is resource conservation. President Corona provides examples of the Homeless Monitoring program to give the general public present a better understanding of TEAM RCD. Director Kuhns is going to continue to communicate with the AG Commissioner and follow the progress. No motion necessary at this time.

#### **Item 3: Discussion and update on Greer Ranch Conservation Easement responsibilities and current state of the easement.**

President Corona reports that there are beavers who have decided to build a house in the lower area and have clogged up the drainage pipe causing standing water in the upper area because it cannot drain. With the rains, there is a tremendous amount of weeds and quite a bit has grown in the channel. The difficulty is, that the requirements of TEAM RCD were minimal when we took the easement. Our requirements were to do yearly monitoring with quarterly photos, removing invasive species. We weren't required to do any kind of maintenance whatsoever and explains the low endowment. The area has gotten really overgrown and we were contacted by the HOA to say there is so much fuel in the area and now the homeowners are having their fire insurance canceled. Technically, this isn't our job to clean out, but the way that the easement papers are written, someone's got to do the maintenance. We're working with the HOA, and we're working with CAL FIRE, because they have crews that come from the prison that clean out all that deadwood at a very reasonable price. There has to be a governmental agency that is the lead agency for this collaboration. We are meeting with the Conservation Core so they can hopefully get the drainage all cleaned out. No motion necessary at this time.

#### **Item 4: Discussion and update on potential grants for Meadowview Project Phase II.**

President Corona forwarded a grant that was found to Mary Lanier, head of the Meadowview HOA to see if it may be a good fit. It comes from the Water Conservation Board and goes until 2025. It may be a good fit for Meadowview project because there are different areas in which you can apply. This grant says, "Implementation grants shall fund construction of restoration, enhancement projects and newer enhanced facilities that were provided direct and measurable, enhancements to Screen Flow." That's exactly the problem that they have. Since they have a majority of the information, it might be easy for their group to put together the requirements for this. Then, if they need a lead agency, we are here to help.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Item 1: Discussion and email sent to Board on 7-30-20 regarding outreach by the Sierra Club for collaboration with TEAM RCD.**

On behalf of a member of the public that could not attend the meeting, Ms. Pam Nelson, the President read a letter for public comment for Agenda Item #1 in OLD BUSINESS. Ms. Nelson included many different subjects and is available in total in the Board packet on the website.

In brief summary of the letter, Ms Nelson wished to discuss mitigation bank opportunities in the Santa Margarita Watershed and in addition indicated that she was also hoping that TEAM RCD would join the Sierra Club in opposing a County proposed Hemp Ordinance. She also discusses in her letter that she had an 11 year experience with the District being a board member and expresses her disappointment when a potential merger with another RCD did not come to fruition. As she states in her letter "We were encouraged that things were going well and then something happened. Our board was torn apart by the County without even a semblance of RCD protocol. This was a missed opportunity."

She continued in her letter and wrote about the proposed Myriad Housing development, her hope for a Watershed Council, if any of the Board members were interested in attending the Santa Ana Mountain Palomar Wildlife Coalition. The President finished reading and asked if any of the public had any comments. There were none.

The President then moved forward with the discussion on the agenda item and made note that there were many subjects within this letter that she would like to address. The President stated that TEAM RCD's mission statement is to help their District within their community and with those things that are within their mission statement. President reiterated however that TEAM RCD's mission statement does not include becoming an activist group, which there are many non-profits who do this kind of work well, but rather it was our responsibility to work with all County agencies and the public to help bring them together for solutions, not to create animosity by drawing red lines in the sand with their partners in the County or the public.

She also addressed Ms. Nelson's comments about lack of revenue and staff saying that the prior Board did not have a lot of revenue. This was true in the past. However, when new officers were appointed and then elected to officer positions in June of 2015, sound accounting and fiscally responsible measures were taken to get the District back on its feet and as a result the General Fund of the District has increased steadily in the years since from \$22,000 in June of 2015 to almost \$200,000 in 2020. President Corona stated that the Board's position was to gain revenue for the District by reaching out and doing a lot of projects within the community rather than taking on a one huge project that would take many years and dollars to accomplish such as a mitigation bank which is better done by large Water Districts or Agencies that have unlimited resources.

President Corona also addressed the Watershed Council and how the Board felt that there was already another entity in the watershed (IRWM) doing the same work that was proposed in a recent grant and that the Board did not see the need for another group performing duplicative work. As well as the fact that Rancho California Water District was almost to the point of having a mitigation bank. She stated that the Board feels strongly that it isn't in their best interest to get into competition with sister agencies. There is also not a large demand for mitigation credits at this time.

And finally, she addressed the issue of a potential merger with another RCD that was mentioned in Ms. Nelson's letter. She explained that the merger of which Ms. Nelson spoke of did not go forward, not because of the County or any unforeseen issues there, but because there were only 4 members on the Board at the time and two Directors (Long and Nelson) were for it and two directors (Corona and Martin) were against it. There was a split decision with no majority or consensus to move the issue forward. Therefore, it never came to the Board for a vote.

The President then summed up this Agenda item by reading an e-mail from the County Counsel of Riverside County, Greg Priamos, who had been asked to clarify Ms. Nelson's comments in her letter about the Board being torn apart by the County. Mr. Priamos stated as follows:

"The quick version is that you did not miss anything. The Board of Supervisors was concerned with the operation and leadership of the district and sought out qualified individuals to appoint to the district board of trustees to bring needed stability. The Board a number of important appointments to the District Board of Trustees. The Board (of Supervisors) was also very concerned about the District Counsel, Ray Johnson and his conflicts of interest. The Board (of Supervisors) requested that the County Counsel take over and the new Board of Trustees appointed County Counsel as District General Counsel to replace Ray Johnson.

The new Board and its Counsel then set out to competently perform the statutory duties of the District, improve its financial position, improve its efficiency and effectiveness as a special district, eliminate conflicts of interest, and to professionalize the overall operation of the District. All of these goals have been and are continuing to be met.

Please feel free to share this with the District Board, District Counsel, as well as the public.

Gregory P. Priamos  
County Counsel  
County of Riverside"

END OF QUOTE FROM E-MAIL

Mr. Priamos's e-mail is also on record in the Board Packet for the Board, our District Counsel, and for the public.

President Corona concluded her remarks and asked the Directors for comment. They had none and the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

**Item 2: Discussion and potential approval of funds to begin habitat restoration and vegetation removal at Benton Channel.**

President Corona requests to table this item as Mr. Law and SAWA have sent information but they haven't sent the final requirements needed to work on the conservation easement. They found that there was some water that was flowing into our canal from homes on the northeast side and there was water that was coming through at a rate not seen before. Flood Control was called out and we traced it back and found out that it was from a broken valve or broken pipe. We are waiting for it to dry out to complete the work and restoration. No motion necessary at this time.

**Item 3: Update on Homeless Task Force.**

Director Parkes reported that back in November of last year we had some indications at that time that there were homeless issues in some of our projects sites which was all addressed. In January of this year, one of sites in Temecula seemed to have a homeless encampment. Director Parkes contacted Robin Gilliland in Temecula who is the homeless specialist and based on communicating with her the right activities took place and that was cleaned up. Since January our monitoring hasn't shown any homeless activity since January until this past month. This was addressed and there aren't any issues at in any of our project sites that Director Parkes is aware of. He will continue to connect with the appropriate city homeless task force person to let them know any items noted on the reports. With regards to the Homeless Task Force in our area, it is really being operated and coordinated by Lake Elsinore and they are doing a terrific job. Lake Elsinore recently bought what was known as the House of Siloam and they are in the process of revitalizing it and turning it into a homeless facility. This facility will

be renamed Anchor as they help anchor the lives of people they are trying to help. The state currently has grant funding with what they refer to as project home key. It's about \$600 million in funding available statewide for dealing with homeless issues. No motion necessary at this time.

**Item 4: Update and discussion on AEIP and CropSwap reports.**

Director Battiato being absent, President Corona reports that Director Battiato and she had a discussion with Rancho Water to help streamline things so we can collect more information and get back to them regarding the response to these two programs. We have received some wonderful feedback from the owners due to Director Battiato personally contacting them. We also reached out to Farm Bureau of Riverside County who gave us a full-page section in which they did an article on the CropSwap and Water Audit to encourage more participation. We are also reaching out to local real estate agents so they may educate their clients of the programs available when purchasing property. No motion necessary at this time.

**Item 5: Update and discussion on CDFW cannabis program.**

Director Kuhns reports that we are communicating with Jeff Brandt to determine where the illegal grows are throughout the whole county. Director Kuhns also reports that she and Gary Worobec had a conversation in regards to a letter he had sent. He requested we sign alongside the other people about not allowing hemp in the valley. We invited him to one of our meetings or suggested he write a summary and he didn't want to do that either. No motion necessary at this time.

**Item 6: Discussion and potential approval for funds to begin enhancing TEAM RCD website.**

President Corona reports that we have not heard back from the potential grant submission to enhance the website. President Corona recommends tabling this item and in the meantime, we will continue to collect ideas from the Board to better enhance the website. No motion necessary at this time.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**VI. ORAL/WRITTEN REPORTS**

**NRCS**

Bob Hewitt not present.

**DIRECTOR REPORTS**

None

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS**

None

**VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Jeff Brandt – Fish and Wildlife Cannabis Program

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, President Corona made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Parkes seconded. **Motion passed unanimously 4-0.** Meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

  
Secretary/Treasurer