



**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 8, 2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF THE
RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

The Regular Meeting of the Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Santa Cruz County Board of Directors was called to order at **6:30PM February 8, 2017** at the District Office, 820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136, Capitola, CA 95010.

Directors Present:	Gordon Claassen Robert Ketley Mike Manfre, Vice President Jim McKenna, President John Ricker Roberta Smith
Directors Absent:	Howard Liebenberg
Associate Directors Present:	Kathryn Tobisch Vasiliki Vassil
RCD Staff Present:	Chris Coburn, Executive Director Tangi Chapman, Recorder
NRCS Staff Present:	Roger Tompkins, Soil Conservationist

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. Jim McKenna chaired the meeting; there was a quorum present.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

The Board welcomed Roger Tompkins to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board made no changes to the Agenda.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Gordon Claassen moved approval of the Consent Agenda items. John Ricker seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Consideration of Nomination of a LAFCO Special District Member

Chris Coburn reported that the District received a letter from LAFCO encouraging nominations for a LAFCO Special District member; the District did not make a nomination.

6.2. Consider adoption of a Public Records Request Policy for the District

Chris presented the Board with Policy 1660, a Public Records Request Policy, explaining that this policy is a requirement of the still draft Tier 1 Department of Conservation Accreditation Standards for Resource Conservation Districts. John Ricker pointed out, and the Board agreed, that one of the hallmarks of the District is the voluntary, confidential nature with which the district engages landowners. He suggested that releasing certain records might jeopardize willingness to participate and encouraged the District to insert

language that would allow the District to restrict specific types of information from being released. After discussion, the Board requested that Chris communicate with legal counsel and other RCD Districts to determine what, if anything could be done legally to restrict release of sensitive information.

6.3. Consider a cost of living adjustment for District employees

Chris circulated the Bureau of Labor and Statistics Consumer Price Index Report from January 18, 2017. Chris reminded the Board that the CPI is what is normally used when considering the annual Cost of Living Adjustment. The CPI for the San Francisco Bay Area for 2016 was 3.5%. Additionally, Chris reminded the Board that this adjustment and a merit increase of 5% is built into the budget and the billable rates (for each year of an expected grant's life). He told the Board that few merit increases have been granted over the past year and suggested that the COLA increase would be a boost for a staff that works hard and gets the job done. The Board discussed the need to reward and retain the talented staff. The discussion brought about a separate though related concern about staff hours available beyond the end of the year. Chris mentioned that it was typical to see a dip in projected staff hours when projects go beyond 12 months out and noted that there are several grants that are awarded but not yet contracted and several about which the District waits to hear whether they will be awarded. The Board felt it important to look at the diversification of funding in light of the uncertain availability of Federal funding. Chris mentioned the Business Plan that Donna Meyers created for the District in 2013 and said that he will revisit that and update the document then bring it back to the Board to discuss further. Jim McKenna requested that John Ricker and Robert Ketley coordinate with Chris to look at the long term focus of the District. Chris said that he would report back to the Board on these topics in the next couple of months. John Ricker moved approval of the Cost of Living Adjustment of 3.5% to take effect the beginning of pay period four. Robert Ketley seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The motion carried.

6.4. Consider approval of Resolution RCDSCC 2017-01 to enter into agreement with CalFIRE

Chris presented the Board with Resolution RCDSCC 2017-01 to accept grant funds from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to implement a shaded fuel break along Graham Hill Road. The grant is funded through revenue collected by CalFire through the State Responsibility Fee, recently instituted for rural landowners.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Executive Director Report

Chris circulated the Executive Director Report for the Board. Chris highlighted from his report that the District has been assured that 319(h) Environmental Protection Administration funds, which are Federal funds that are awarded through the State Water Resources Control Board are not subject to President Trump's Executive Action freezing all Federal grants. According to our grant manager and colleagues in Sacramento, existing contracts have been encumbered at the State level and are not in jeopardy. However, we do not have clarity on the potential for new contracts (the District submitted a grant for 319(h) funds four days before the contracting freeze).

7.2. NRCS Report

Roger Tompkins reported that while Kay Joy Barge has made her selection to fill the District Conservationist vacancy, it remains uncertain about whether or not the hiring process was completed before the January 22 deadline and hiring freeze began. He told the Board that Carlos Suarez, the State Conservationist, is advocating that exceptions to the hiring freeze be made for key positions including our District Conservationist.

7.2. Directors Reports

Gordon Claassen reported that at Swanton Pacific Ranch the projects held beautifully in the face of weather and also that the water came up and flooded the crop fields and then receded completely. He noted that in past events when the creek flooded, water would be trapped behind the levees and would pool for some time, making the same crop fields usable. He was pleased with the results.

Roberta reported that San Vicente Creek flooded near her house and would like to see if there is a study that could be done to see if there would be a better way of managing the flood plain so that it flooded the fields and not the roads. Chris responded that the District has been interested in a project to restore the floodplain there, but have not been able to secure grant funds for that work.

8. ADJOURN

The next meeting of the RCD Board of Directors is scheduled for March 8, 2017. Gordon Claassen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20PM. Roberta Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned.



Jim McKenna
President, Board of Directors

(TC:JM)