RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
Capitola, California 95010
tel 831.464.2950
www.rcdsantacruz.org

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 9, 2022 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 **6:31PM on March 9, 2022,** the meeting was conducted virtually per AB 361 and Executive Order N-35-20 via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell
	Mike Eaton
	Robert Ketley
	Howard Liebenberg
	Mike Manfre, Vice President
	Jim McKenna, President
	John Ricker
Associate Director Present:	Vasiliki Vasil
	Kathryn Tobisch
RCD Staff Present:	Tangi Chapman, Recorder
	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
NRCS Staff Present:	Drew Mather, Soil Conservationist
Others Present:	Melanie Mow-Schumacher, Soquel Creek Water District
	Rebecca Rubin, Soquel Creek Water District

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31PM, with a quorum present. Jim McKenna chaired the meeting. Roll was called and connectivity confirmed; Kelley Bell present; Mike Eaton present; Robert Ketley present; Howard Liebenberg present; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker present.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. NRCS REPORT

Drew Mather gave the NRCS report. He informed the Board that advertisements for the District Conservationist position in Capitola have been sent, he will update the Board as news arrives. The deadline for EQIP applications was February 23; 5 applications for cropland applications and one biochar application submitted. Biochar is a new practice and is gaining interest and momentum. Drew has been working with Matt Abernathy and Angie Richman on two forestland projects with a May deadline. He has also been working with Kelli Camara and Erin McCarthy through the RCPP program with one sediment basin on a large berry farm. Additionally, he has been involved in a new cover crop initiative through the EQIP program with interest from farmers in Santa Cruz County and San Mateo County; this is an exciting new opportunity. Drew will be presenting at the American Farmland Trust event focused on women farmers interested in dry farming. He has four growers in Santa Cruz County interested in attending. He will be talking about available NRCS and RCD programs.

820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
Capitola, California 95010
tel 831.464.2950
www.rcdsantacruz.org

5. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION: Pure Water Soquel Project Update presented by Rebecca Rubin and Melanie Mow-Schumacher

Rebecca Rubin and Melanie Mow-Schumacher gave a presentation on the Pure Water Soquel Project (see the attached slide deck). Soquel Creek Water District has been pursuing the Pure Water Soquel project to address the overdraft of the mid-county groundwater basin and to bring the basin back into sustainability. They are currently seeking a letter of support from the RCD as they apply for additional funding to complete the project. After the presentation, the Directors and Associate Directors asked questions about the project. Of interest was the effect the project will have on water quality and saltwater intrusion. Additional questions included how growth pressures could affect the sustainability of the groundwater basin. The Board congratulated Soquel Water District on leading the local effort to achieve groundwater sustainability; all agreed that Lisa Lurie should draft a letter of support for the effort on behalf of the District.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board reviewed the consent agenda items, including the corrected January 2022 Minutes, February 2022 Minutes, and Resolution RCDSCC 2022-07 to extend remote meetings per AB 361 for an additional 30 days. Robert Ketley moved approval of the consent agenda items. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

7.1. Consider approval of Illness Injury Prevention Program and COVID Addendum

Lisa presented the Board with the Illness Injury Prevention Program and COVID Addendum. Lisa and Tangi explained that the document once approved will be reviewed with all current and future staff. The document provides a framework for the RCD's safety program and a mechanism to identify, investigate and resolve any potential breech in safety. The COVID Addendum similarly codifies the RCD's COVID response and gives a process for investigating any outbreaks and limiting their scope and effect on other employees. Lisa explained that that the entire document has been reviewed by BBK. After review, John Ricker moved approval of the Illness Injury Prevention Program and COVID Addendum as presented. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1. Memorial Planning for Director Roberta Smith

Vasiliki Vasil explained that at the last Board meeting the Board came up with some ideas for a memorial for Roberta Smith. She requested creating an ad hoc committee to get together and come up with a couple ideas that could then be brought back to the board next month, with a goal of holding the event in May. Mike Eaton volunteered along with Kathryn Tobisch, Tangi Chapman and Lisa Lurie.

8.2. Executive Director Report

Lisa gave highlights from the Executive Director's Report. She pointed out that next week the District will be having a meeting Tuesday March 15 at 6:30PM to hear presentations on two Forest Health Projects that will be going through the RCD's Public Works Plan. Upon approval the RCD will submit the projects to the Coastal Commission for final approval. Matt Abernathy along with consultants from Ascent Environmental

820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
Capitola, California 95010
tel 831.464.2950
www.rcdsantacruz.org

will be presenting the projects for review and approval. The agenda and board packets are on the website and Lisa will email the Board with the targeted pages for each of the projects to focus review of the in depth materials. The public will be able to comment and ask questions in relation to the project. Once approved by the RCD a notice of impending development will be sent to the Coastal Commission and stakeholders, and open for public comment at their April 7 meeting.

Lisa provided updates on RCD technical assistance to licensed cannabis growers, including interest from a cannabis grower needing irrigation assistance. There are many different requirements and concerns unique to cannabis growers and the RCD is responding to the need.

Additionally, Erin McCarthy has coordinated tTem surveys on farmland. This essentially takes an MRI of the landscape and will give valuable data to pinpoint potential sites for managed aquifer recharge sites. Lisa also shared that Erin McCarthy will be leaving the RCD and starting work for the County of Santa Cruz at the end of the month. She has done a great job at the RCD and she will be missed. Finally, Lisa shared that the Ag Team has a new member, Alfred Cortes, he has been studying groundwater sustainability at San Jose State and will join as an Irrigation Efficiency field tech.

8.3. Director/Associate Director Reports

John Ricker asked about the budget presentations. Due to the Audit, Director of Finance transition among other things those items have been delayed but are on the agenda for the April meeting.

Mike Eaton shared that he and Lisa attended a meeting with Supervisor Coonerty. There was discussion at that meeting regarding a request for grant writing support.

9. ADJOURN

The next meeting of the RCD Board will be March 15, 2022, at 6:30PM via Zoom to consider approval of the 2022 Public Works Plan Projects. Kelley Bell moved to adjourn. Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The vote was by roll call; the ayes included Kelley Bell, Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

(TC:JM)

James J. McKenna