RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
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MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 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 September 13, 2023,** the meeting was conducted in person at the City of Capitola Community Room and virtually via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Mike Eaton
	Robert Ketley
	Howard Liebenberg
	Mike Manfre, Vice President
	Jim McKenna, President
	John Ricker
Directors Absent:	Kelley Bell
Associate Directors Present:	Kathryn Tobisch (Zoom)
	Vasiliki Vasil
RCD Staff Present:	Tangi Chapman, Recorder
	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
	Arianne Rettinger, Director of Finance
NRCS Present:	Drew Mather, District Conservationist
Others Present:	Sarah Newkirk, Executive Director LTSCC
	Eric Lombardo, Public Policy & Grants Manager Specialist LTSCC

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 absent, Mike Eaton present; Robert Ketley absent; Howard Liebenberg absent; Mike Manfre present; Jim McKenna present; John Ricker absent.

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting.

(Howard Liebenberg entered the meeting)

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none given.

4. LAND TRUST OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PRESENTATION

Lisa Lurie introduced Sarah Newkirk and Eric Lombardo of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. Sarah explained that the LTSCC is leading an effort exploring a possible local ballot measure. They gave a presentation on Creating a Climate Resilient and Environmentally Equitable Santa Cruz County. (John Ricker entered the meeting) In the presentation they outline that Santa Cruz County, the second smallest in the state, has limited funds and resources to manage public and private open space. Santa Cruz is a biologically diverse county with threats from climate change exacerbating the effects of drought, uncontrolled wildfires, pollution, and stronger storms; it is also one of two counties in the 10-county Bay Area without a dedicated source of funding for local park and open space land management. The proposed ballot initiative if passed would contribute to projects that protect water quality, rivers, Monterey Bay and coastal access; improve forest health and reduce risk of destructive wildfires; restore habitats that benefit wildlife and store carbon; maintain parks, trails and open

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spaces to bridge the park equity gap. An oversight board would ensure the funds are spent equitably and consistent with the objectives of the initiative. The environmental resiliency and equity goals would be achieved by funding grants to community groups and public agencies for land and water stewardship and access projects; funding the four cities and unincorporated county departments for stewarding lands and waters; and funding both the RCD and a Land Stewardship partner for projects in the public benefit and for outreach and support. The Board gave feedback on the effort as well as messaging suggestions. LTSCC is exploring the measure for the November 2024 ballot.

5. NRCS REPORT

Drew Mather circulated an Emergency Watershed Program FAQ of the National Sponsorship Guide. He shared that the City of Santa Cruz is sponsoring an EWP project and that the project is close to being implemented. Additionally, the County of Santa Cruz has 19 potential projects that they may sponsor, subject to projects qualifying for funding. Additionally, he said that NRCS has about $500,000 in contracts funded for next year. Additionally, he, along with Lisa Lurie and Cameron MacDonald, went to the community meeting hosted by Congressional Representative Jimmy Panetta. The meeting focused on post storm efforts to rebuild Capitola and the wharf.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Mike Eaton made a motion to approve the consent agenda items including approval of the July 19, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes and a communication from LAFCO regarding "Holohan Road Parcel Annexation". Mike Manfre seconded the motion. The ayes included Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1. Consider approval of the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget

Ari Rettinger presented the Board with the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget. She explained that except for minor changes the budget is largely the same as the draft approved in June. One exception being the addition of a line item entitled retirement of long-term debt. This code will be used to lease to own a vehicle. Additionally, there are minor changes in grants that were awarded as well as some project implementation schedules; the personnel line item was updated to include the hiring of an additional administrator. John Ricker shared that he met with Ari to take a deep dive into the numbers and feels good about the resulting budget. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved approval of the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget as presented. John Ricker seconded the motion. The ayes included Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

7.2. Consider approval of an exemption to the informal bid process for Camara Environmental Consulting, per section 1080.8.3 and 1080.8.4 of the Procurement Policy

Lisa presented the Staff Recommendation memo for an exemption to the informal bid process and entering into agreement with Camara Environmental Consulting. The contract is compiled of distinct work programs for various individual grants. The total contract is a Not to Exceed amount of $210,000, with no single work program exceeding the $100,000 threshold for informal bidding of state contracts and one federal work program of $25,354 meeting the federal threshold for the informal bid process. The staff recommendation outlines an exemption to the informal bid process due to both the unique and specialized skills, 1080.8.3, the contractor possesses and the continuity of her work on the project 1080.8.4 as outlined in the Procurement Policy. After discussion, John Ricker moved approval of an exemption to the informal procurement process for contracting with Camara Environmental Consulting

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for professional services. The ayes included Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

7.3. Consider approval of informal bid process for the procurement of a construction contract for the Amber Ridge Loop Sediment Reduction Project per section 1080.7.2 of the Procurement Policy

Lisa shared the Staff Recommendation memo regarding the construction contract for the Amber Ridge Loop Sediment Reduction Project. The project consists of upgrades to ditch relief culverts and reverse grade dips to reduce sediment in surface waters of the San Lorenzo River Watershed and is funded with state and federal funding. The engineers estimate for the project is $135,000, therefore procurement will follow the informal bid process outlined in 1080.7.1.2 of the Procurement Policy. The memo requests approval of the RCD entering into contract with the lowest responsible bidder. After discussion, Mike Manfre moved to approve entering into contract with the lowest responsible bidder for the Amber Ridge Loop Sediment Reduction Project per section 1080.7.2 of the Procurement Policy. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The ayes included Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

7.4. Review an exemption to the informal bid process for a subaward to Groundswell Ecology per section 1080.8.1 of the Procurement Policy

Lisa shared the Staff Recommendation memo for the subaward to Groundswell Ecology. The non-profit will be working on two projects - a monarch overwintering site restoration and monarch habitat creation on public lands. Funding is provided through a California Association of Resource Conservation District Block Grant with the Wildlife Conservation Board. Groundswell was written into the agreement with the Funding Agency. Per 1080.8.1 of the Procurement Policy a subaward with a qualifying entity may be exempt from competitive procurement. The contract with Groundswell, a qualifying subaward entity, is $102,600 and is therefore before the Board for review. After discussion, Mike Eaton moved to acknowledge the exemption to the informal bid process for the subaward to Groundswell Ecology per 1080.8.1 of the Procurement Policy. John Ricker seconded the motion. The ayes included Mike Eaton, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Mike Manfre, Jim McKenna, and John Ricker; there were none opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

7.5. Nominate a delegate to attend the CARCD Annual Conference and Business Meeting scheduled for December 13-15 in Sacramento

Lisa shared that staff will be attending and presenting at the upcoming CARCD Conference in Sacramento December 13-15. She invited the Board to send a delegate to the conference. The Business meeting will be held on December 13. It provides a great opportunity to network and learn from other RCDs. There were no volunteers.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1. CARCD 2023 Speak-off Competition Planning

Lisa shared that staff have been working to connect with local high schools to see if there is interest in the CARCD Speak-off Competition. Dan Hermstad has been heading up the effort but has not yet been successful connecting with teachers or identifying interested students. Should contestants come forward, they would present on the topic Groundwater Recharge at the October meeting.

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8.2. Executive Director Report

Lisa shared highlights from the past month. A number of grants have come online, including a Caltrans notice of award to the Regional Transportation Commission and RCD for coastal resilience planning at Waddell and San Vicente Creeks. Additionally, the RCD has received a notice of award from California Department of Food and Agriculture for a state water and energy efficiency program block grant to expedite awards to growers and will provide funding to San Mateo and Monterey RCDs as well as RCD Santa Cruz County. RCD Santa Cruz County will take the lead and administer the grant. Lisa said that the RCD has received notice from Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County that they will be awarding the RCD a $50,000 replenishable grant to help with cashflow for the chipping programs. Other proposals for funding are under development to continue the Integrated Watershed Restoration Program.

The RCD is working with the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association to develop a partnership to support their efforts promoting prescribed fire in Santa Cruz County. We are exploring roles including CEQA lead agency, and our level of engagement in considering taking on that role in partnership on projects in the future.

Lisa told the Board that construction season is in full swing. With several roads projects getting started as well as the second phase of the Summit Road Shaded Fuel Break.

8.3. Director/Associate Director Reports

Howard Liebenberg noticed that the pampas grass has been cut along the Highway One corridor near Half Moon Bay. Additionally, he questioned who the best person would be to discuss dust suppression on road projects in Boulder Creek. It was suggested that calling the County Supervisor would be the best option.

Jim shared that he is making progress on reconstruction after the storm damage on his property.

Mike Eaton let the Board know that the Pacific Elementary School garden dedication is drawing nearer, and he said there would be a place for a Roberta Smith memorial plaque and or rock. The Board discussed the details of the project.

9. CALENDAR DATES

September 15, 2023 7PM Fire Safe Counsel Wildfire Adaptation Workshop at Felton Library

10. ADJOURN

The next regular meeting of the RCD Board will be held at the at the City of Capitola Community Room and via Zoom on October 11, 2023, at 6:30PM.

James J. McKenna

(TC:JM)

2023-09-03 Minutes Final for signature

Final Audit Report 2023-11-02

Created:	2023-11-02
By:	Tangi Chapman (tchapman@rcdsantacruz.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAEmdWlVHC1LBF0464r1VjhXQeTeZxQR_R

"2023-09-03 Minutes Final for signature" History

Document created by Tangi Chapman (tchapman@rcdsantacruz.org)
2023-11-02 - 9:29:06 PM GMT

Document emailed to James McKenna (jmckenna@calcentral.com) for signature
2023-11-02 - 9:29:31 PM GMT

Email viewed by James McKenna (jmckenna@calcentral.com)
2023-11-02 - 10:31:03 PM GMT

Document e-signed by James McKenna (jmckenna@calcentral.com)
Signature Date: 2023-11-02 - 10:31:49 PM GMT - Time Source: server

Agreement completed.
2023-11-02 - 10:31:49 PM GMT