RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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MINUTES OF THE MAY 8, 2024 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 April May 8, 2024,** the meeting was conducted in person at the Capitola Community Room, 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, 95010 and virtually via Zoom, Meeting ID: 708-386-048.

Directors Present:	Kelley Bell
	Mike Eaton
	Howard Liebenberg
	Robert Ketley
	Jim McKenna, President
	John Ricker
Directors Absent:	Mike Manfre, Vice President
RCD Staff Present:	Tangi Chapman, Recorder
	Lisa Lurie, Executive Director
NRCS Present:	Drew Mather, District Conservationist
Others Present:	Sarah Newkirk, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

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

2. INTRODUCTIONS & WELCOME

Jim McKenna welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting, though there was none in attendance on zoom.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were none given.

4. NRCS REPORT

Drew Mather circulated an activity report. He shared that the Earth Day Event was well attended and he thanked Angie Gruys and Lisa Lurie for making it happen. He attended the nesting bird survey training Angie Richman coordinated with Gary Kittleson at New Brighton State Beach and said it was excellent and appreciated that NRCS was invited to the event.

5. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION

5.1. Santa Cruz County Water and Wildfire Protection Act

Sarah Newkirk from the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County gave a presentation regarding the effort to bring the Santa Cruz County Water and Wildfire Protection Act before the voters in November. She shared that 16,000 signatures were submitted to get the Act on the ballot in November. If approved by voters, the Act will add $87/parcel tax and will use existing agencies and non-profits, namely, the County, Incorporated Cities, the RCD and environmental nonprofits. The goal of the act is to invest in land and water stewardship to improve the resilience of our community to climate change, protect water resources, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, restore habitat, reduce pollution of the

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coast and ocean, and care for parks, open spaces, and working lands. Sarah said that on May 17th there will be an event to showcase the measure.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

The Board considered the Consent Agenda items which included the Regular Minutes from April 10, 2024 and the Vendor Expenditures for April 2024. Robert Ketley moved approval of the Consent Agenda Items. Kelley Bell seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1. Consider and approve Resolution 2024-04, a Resolution of Support for the Santa Cruz County Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, Wildfire Risk Reduction and Wildlife Protection Act

Lisa Lurie shared Resolution 2024-04 with the Board, which has been reviewed by legal counsel at BBK, who advised that the RCD can formally adopt a position on a ballot measure and educate the public on the measure, its impact on the district, and the basis for the district's position. The district can educate, but not advocate. The Resolution identifies the need for stable local funding and how the Act would impact the RCD and services provided by the RCD to the community to benefit natural resource management and community resilience to climate change. Lisa will put together talking points, and clarified that while the District is limited to educating, this does not affect individuals' freedom of speech and ability to express their own personal opinion about ballot measures so long as public funds are not expended. After discussion, Robert Ketley moved approval of Resolution 2024-04. Mike Eaton seconded the motion. The ayes included Kelley Bell, Robert Ketley, Howard Liebenberg, Jim McKenna and John Ricker. The motion passed unanimously.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1. Strategy Session – RCD Visibility

Lisa requested the Board discuss RCD visibility and ways to engage and improve the RCD's visibility within the community, and specifically ways board members could engage in this effort. Ideas that were discussed included writing a guest editorial about the history of the RCD and what we do within the community, "helping people, help the land." Other ideas included an advice column with Question and Answers, something like a Dear RCD advice column, submitting articles to the local papers and communicating individually with partners. Board members could support distributing RCD social media through NextDoor or other networks. Radio PSAs and a short video on who the RCD is were also discussed. It was also suggested that the RCD name be on everything we do, including distributing more RCD swag.

8.2. Ad hoc Policy Committee Report

Lisa shared that she, Robert Ketley, John Ricker and Tangi have been working on the review of the employee handbook. BBK has done their review and updates, and the ad hoc Committee is doing final revisions. She has met with staff regarding Overtime and Compensatory Time Off and has received more information. Generally, there are times during implementation, especially with multiple projects, emergency response or meeting critical grant deadlines when

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it is difficult to stay with in an 8 hour per day or 40-hour week. The meeting was helpful to get a sense from staff regarding this need. The goal is to bring the Employee Handbook and Workplace Violence Prevention Plan to the Board in June.

8.3. Executive Director's Report

Lisa reported that the State funding freeze is affecting grants in the awarded but not yet contracted phase as well as some in the submission phase. At this point existing grants have not been identified as being affected, but there is a high level of uncertainty. This process has highlighted the need for the District to develop a reserve policy. Additionally, Lisa informed the Board of the launch of the SWEEP Block Grant assistance program to local farmers. The solicitation for this goes through June 28th and awards will be made late summer into the fall. Lisa will be terming out from the Fire Safe Council Santa Cruz County Board next month. They are also looking for members to serve on their Board of Directors.

8.4. Director/Associate Director Reports

There were none given.

9. CALENDAR DATES

May 14, 2024	Pajaro Compass meeting at the Aromas Grange
June 6, 2024	Fire Safe Summit
June 27/29, 2024	Soquel Demonstration Forest Tour

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 June 12, 2024, at 6:30PM. John Ricker moved to adjourn. Howard Liebenberg seconded the motion. All were in favor, the meeting adjourned.

(TC:JM)

James J. McKenna

2024-05-08 - Minutes

Final Audit Report 2024-07-04

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