CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE:

Chair Skei called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Flag Salute. The meeting was conducted via videoconference.

ROLL CALL:

Director Bill-de la Peña, Director Huffer, Director Jones, Vice Chair Nickles, and Chair Skei present.

Also present were: CRPD General Manager Friedl, Deputy City Manager Rogers, Assistant City Attorney Liberman, CRPD Park Superintendent Koubâ, COSCA Administrator Stark, COSCA Analyst Huber, Office Supervisor McMurtry, and Recording Secretary Goor.

PRESENTATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

COSCA Administrator Stark noted Recording Secretary Goor is loaned to COSCA by the City and thanked her for her work.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Speaker: Elayne Haggen, Thousand Oaks, representing the Conejo Open Space Foundation (COSF), noted that in lieu of the annual Trails Education Days (TED) event which had again been canceled, COSF coordinated the production of a video version of the event's native animal workshop with Animal Actors of Hollywood and California Lutheran University Associate Professor and Film & Television Program Director David Grannis. It is in distribution at Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) along with last year's nature hike video to provide CVUSD 4th graders with a sample of the material typically covered at TED. Both videos are also available at www.cosf.org.

Statement: Mark Lichalk, Thousand Oaks, is dissatisfied with the decision at the last meeting not to convene a new Wildwood Parking Lot Subcommittee.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

A. Approval of Minutes of February 10, 2021 Meeting
B. Approval of Minutes of March 10, 2021 Special Meeting. Director Nickles requested page one be changed from ‘The second bridge and...’ to ‘The second bridge in...’

Motion by Director Bill-de la Peña to approve the Minutes of the February 10, 2021 and March 10, 2021 meetings as amended carried 5 – 0 by the following vote: Ayes – Directors Bill-de la Peña, Huffer, Jones, Nickles, and Chair Skei; Noes – None; Abstain – None; Absent – None.

6. ACTION ITEMS:

A. 2021 Conejo Open Space Trails Action Committee (COSTAC) Appointments report was presented by COSCA Analyst Huber who reviewed the outreach and posting efforts for the annual member recruitment. Nine applications were received: 1 incumbent, 1 incumbent alternate, and 7 new applicants. The Subcommittee recommends the following individuals for membership: Carl Kolvenbach, Tom Becker, David Filgas; and the following individuals as alternates: Doug Baker, Susan Baikus, Chris Layton, and Trevor Pereira. Ms. Huber responded to questions regarding targeted outreach efforts to specific trail user groups and equestrian community participation.

Speaker/Written Statement Cards: None.

Motion by Director Bill-de la Peña to approve staff recommendation to appoint COSTAC members as nominated by the subcommittee carried 5 – 0 by the following vote: Ayes – Bill-de la Peña, Huffer, Jones, Nickles, and Skei; Noes – None.

7. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. COSCA Community Fire Safety Outreach Project Update was provided by COSCA Administrator Stark who noted Ventura Regional Firesafe Council produced educational content and fire safety services for our community using proceeds from the Woolsey Fire Recovery Fund. The program includes free educational webinars and assistance in disposing of flammable vegetation from residential properties through several free “Chipper Days.” Webinars regarding Disaster Preparedness and Fire Insurance / Wildfire Risk have already been presented. The two remaining webinars will address Waterwise and Firewise Landscaping and Home Ignition Zone Evaluation / Home Hardening. One Chipper Day event has already occurred and two more are scheduled. Ten volunteers have qualified for the Home Ignition Zone Evaluation training and 46 homeowners have expressed interest in having their homes evaluated.
Mr. Stark also reported on Country Fire and the associated erosion control and invasive species removal that will be required; the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy’s (SMMC) unanimous approval to grant funds to COSCA for giant reed and Mexican fan palm removal in a section of Arroyo Conejo Creek; and responded to questions.

B. Conejo Canyons Bridge Update verbal report was presented by COSCA Administrator Stark. Mr. Stark explained that the bridge project is making steady progress; however, the completion schedule has now moved toward Winter 2022. The shift is primarily due to the need to prepare an updated Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and updated biological assessment of the project site per comments from the California Department of Fish & Wildlife on the initial MND. The MND / CEQA document is anticipated to be open for public review in June, finalized in July, to be presented to the Planning Commission (PC) in August/September. PC approval would be followed by issuance of the Notice of Determination and completion of the CEQA process, with permitting completed by September/October 2021. The City’s Public Works Department will then coordinate the bidding process, which takes about three months. In order to avoid environmental impacts during the bird nesting season, construction is planned to begin in September/October 2022.

Mr. Stark responded to questions regarding the project delays and possible alternative temporary means of providing access from the Santa Rosa County Park / Hill Canyon Trailhead into the Wildwood area. Mr. Stark explained there is not a safe temporary way to move visitors across the creek due to site topography / channel shape, and that the existing Hill Canyon Road was not designed for pedestrian use. Deputy City Manager Rogers added that the road was not built for public access and there could be liability issues associated with opening it to the public; it also gets significant use from heavy trucks making trips to and from the treatment plant.

C. COSCA Volunteer Corps Activity verbal report was presented by COSCA Analyst Huber who stated Trail Watch filed 184 reports with 318 volunteer hours, a 50% increase over 2019/2020; and Adopt-a-Trail filed 61 reports with 165 volunteer hours, a 20% decrease over 2019/2020 due to the pandemic, but those numbers are on an upswing.

D. Ranger Operations and Maintenance Activities verbal report was presented by CRPD Park Superintendent Kouba who noted weed abatement is on schedule with approximately 50% completion to date. Mr. Kouba added that field crews avoid milkweed due to the butterflies and bird surveys are conducted to avoid impacts to nesting birds. Mr. Kouba also reported that dust suppressant has been applied at the main parking lot at Wildwood Park as well as the portion of access road between the parking lot and the Mesa
gate; that the "Via Merida Fire" (aka Country Fire) provided a good opportunity to practice internal communications among staff; and that the Los Robles Trail Re-route associated with the Rasnow land donation opened today. Mr. Kouba responded to questions and noted Trail Work Day is scheduled to resume in October.

8. **COSCA UPDATES** (CRPD General Manager and/or City Manager):

   A. Follow-up items, announcements, and upcoming issues

   CRPD General Manager Friedl mentioned that CRPD had also received a grant from SMMC. The grant will allow CRPD to purchase a water tender to assist with fire suppression activities; it will also be used at the Rancho Potrero Equestrian Facility. He thanked the Deputy Executive Officer of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Senator Stern, and Assembly Member Bloom in getting these fire resiliency grants out.

9. **BOARDMEMBER COMMENTS:**

   Director Huffer thanked those who volunteered for COSTAC. He also thanked CRPD Park Superintendent Kouba for the prompt response to a citizen's request for pepper tree removal.

10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. to the next Regular Meeting on Wednesday, September 8, 2021.

    Rorie Skei, Chairperson