

**CONEJO OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**September 14, 2022
Civic Arts Plaza Board Room
2100 Thousand Oaks Boulevard**

SUMMARY MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE:

Chair Skei called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Flag Salute.

2. ROLL CALL:

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

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

3. PRESENTATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. None.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Elayne Haggan, Thousand Oaks, representing the Conejo Open Space Foundation, announced they are sponsoring the Native Plantpalooza and Eco Fest at Conejo Creek North on October 1, 2022 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. She listed the many exhibitors and speakers that will be present noting there will be talks on biodiversity; attracting birds, bees, and butterflies; backyard bee-keeping; and more. Ms. Haggan stated they received a grant from the Coalition for California Clean Air and thanked CRPD for waiving their site fees for the event. She encouraged everyone to take the Clean Air Pledge.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR:

A. Approval of Minutes of May 11, 2022 Meeting

Motion by Director Huffer to approve the Minutes of the May 11, 2022 meeting carried 4 – 0 by the following vote: Ayes – Directors Huffer, Jones, Nickles, and Chair Skei; Noes – None; Abstain – None; Absent – Director Bill-de la Peña.

6. **ACTION ITEMS:**

- A. Authorize an Appropriation of Woolsey Fire Recovery Funds for the Construction of the Conejo Canyons Bridge at Hill Canyon Treatment Plant (HCTP). COSCA Administrator Stark provided the report and noted the bridge will cross Conejo Creek and will allow pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists to have a defined route between the Santa Rosa Equestrian Park and the existing Hill Canyon parking lot to the Wildwood and Conejo Canyons open space areas, improve safety, and allow COSCA and City staff access to open space and public infrastructure. He commented on increased construction costs, funding, and noted there is a budget gap of \$200,000. Mr. Stark and COSCA Analyst Huber responded to Director questions regarding the service the bridge will provide, its location, staff vehicle use for emergency ingress/egress and infrequent travel between the Municipal Service Center and HCTP, supply chain issues, permit time limitations, and advertising that will be done once the project is complete.

Speaker/Written Statement Cards: None.

Motion by Director Jones to approve staff recommendation (to authorize an appropriation of \$200,000 of Woolsey Fire Recovery Funds for the construction of the Conejo Canyons Bridge at Hill Canyon Treatment Plant); carried 4 - 0 by the following vote: Ayes – Directors Huffer, Jones, Nickles, and Chair Skei; Noes – None; Absent – Director Bill-de la Peña.

- B. Authorize an Appropriation of Woolsey Fire Recovery Funds for the Arroyo Conejo Invasive Plant Removal Project. COSCA Administrator Stark provided the report, noted the Conejo Canyons Open Space Management Program prioritizes invasive plant management along Arroyo Conejo Creek to improve ecological conditions in the area's unique habitat by removing giant reed and Mexican fan palms, both of which contribute to wildfire threat. Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has awarded \$200,000 in grant funds toward this effort. He reviewed project priority and funding and responded to Director questions regarding height of palms that will be removed, other areas where the palms species exist, and other federal grants being applied for to increase areas of removal.

Speaker/Written Statement Cards: None.

Motion by Director Jones that fire prevention is a good way to utilize fire recovery funds (and to approve staff recommendation to authorize an appropriation \$365,000 of Woolsey Fire Recovery Funds for the Arroyo Conejo Invasive Plant Removal Project); carried 4 - 0 by the following vote: Ayes – Directors Huffer, Jones, Nickles, and Chair Skei; Noes – None; Absent – Director Bill-de la Peña.

- C. Award Agreement for General Services for the Arroyo Conejo Invasive Plant Removal Project to R.A. Atmore & Sons in the Amount of \$450,000 for the Removal of Invasive Plants in the Arroyo Conejo Open Space, and Delegate Authority to Execute the Agreement to the Co-Chief Administrative Officer. The report was presented by COSCA Administrator Stark who discussed the broad advertising that was done for requests for proposals. The initial outcome resulted with the lowest bid price exceeding the budget. A re-scoping to eliminate trees over 10 feet in height from the project was done, and new bids based on the revised specifications were solicited. The Directors commented on plant removal in the LA. River. Mr. Stark and Assistant City Attorney Doran responded to questions on project workers' requirements as outlined in the contract.

Speaker/Written Statement Cards: None.

Motion by Director Huffer to approve staff recommendation to award Agreement for General Services for the Arroyo Conejo Invasive Plant Removal Project to R.A. Atmore & Sons (in the amount of \$450,000 for the removal of Invasive plants in the Arroyo Conejo Open Space, and delegate authority to execute the Agreement to the Co-Chief Administrative Officer); carried 4 - 0 by the following vote: Ayes – Directors Huffer, Jones, Nickles, and Chair Skei; Noes – None; Absent – Director Bill-de la Peña.

7. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- A. COSCA Volunteer Corps Activity verbal report was presented by COSCA Analyst Huber who stated during May through August, Trail Watch filed 137 reports with 227 volunteer hours, and Adopt-a-Trail filed 115 reports with 148 volunteer hours.
- B. Ranger Operations and Maintenance Activities verbal report was presented by CRPD Park Superintendent Kouba who commented on the number of trees that have gone down and the low water table levels. He noted fence repair work that has been done due to accidents. Mr. Kouba also stated the Rangers have moved into Ranger Headquarters, and there will be an Open House on October 26th. The new Rangers that were recently hired have started. There will be four new ranger trucks by the end of October. He responded to Director questions regarding staff coverage and recruitment, noting of the four new hires that three are local and their collective experience includes fire, trail work, State Parks, and law enforcement. He noted that the two annual Trail Work Days will continue with the next being October 15th on the Wishbone Trail.

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

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

CRPD General Manager Friedl commented on City partnerships, including Paige Lane Park which will have a soft opening early in October, and a ribbon-cutting a few weeks later. There will be no turf at this new park now, but potentially in the future. The Teen and Goebel Adult Center improvements will have a ribbon-cutting and open house will be in November or December. November will be CRPD's 60th Anniversary and there will be a party to celebrate.

Deputy City Manager Rogers announced his retirement noting this will be his last COSCA Board Meeting. He commented how fortunate he feels to have worked with such a dedicated Board, and noted the amazing things COSCA, City, and CRPD staff have done. City and CRPD staff and the Directors thanked him for his excellent service, leadership, and guidance and for acting as an advocate for COSCA, and as a bridge between COSCA and other agencies, bringing the full resources of the Joint Powers together.

Chair Skei commented that the dedication of Tex Ward Point at Rancho Potrero was a great event and thanked CRPD for putting it together.

9. **BOARDMEMBER COMMENTS:** None.

10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. to the next Regular Meeting on Wednesday, November 9, 2022.



Rorie Skei, Chairperson

Minutes Approved: November 9, 2022