

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Parks and Open Space Committee Meeting January 10, 2013

MINUTES

ATTENDEES: Nona Dennis, Chair; Greg Zitney, Doug Wilson, Susan Stompe, John Natt, Larry Minikes, Tom Boss, Ernie Stanton, Rick Frites, Delos Putz, and Amy Brees, Superintendent of Angel Island State Park.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND AGENDA ADDITIONS: 1) Tomales Bay State Park 60th Anniversary events: Winter Sky Watch, Jan. 12, 5 – 8 PM, and Kayak Tour Saturday March 23, 9 AM, both at Hearts Desire Beach; MCL Business-Environment Breakfast, February 8, 7:30, with Assembly Member Marc Levine as speaker, Embassy Suites Hotel. Add to Agenda: AB 1478 update.

MINUTES for November 8, 2012 – Approved

ACTION ITEMS: None

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1) AB 1478 and China Camp State Park: This measure reconstitutes the make-up of the State Parks Commission, which will now include public members, cultural historian, park professional, administrator of a state-wide conservation organization, recreation development specialist, local business representative with relationship with State Parks. Further, it authorizes the Parks Department to begin distributing \$10 million in matching funds to those parks that were scheduled for closure and kept open through the donation of private funds and volunteer efforts (volunteer time equivalent is set at \$24.18/hour for purposes of reimbursement). Of the total \$20.5 million in funds that were located by State Parks in 2012, \$10 million is also allocated to the backlog of deferred maintenance, and \$500,000 is allocated to administration of these funds.

Ernest Chung and District Superintendent Danita Rodriguez met with Department personnel in Sacramento to discuss reimbursement to China Camp. Not many Park units received as many donations or logged as much volunteer time as China Camp, so matching funds should be considerable. However, they must be used by June 2014. Because the moneys will be more than needed by CCSP in that time period, some will go toward helping Tomales Bay State Park and Olompali, both of which will be expected to contribute matching funds. Under operating agreements, any fees collected by TBSP and Olompali, will stay with the parks and not go to Sacramento. With matching funds, CCSP is assured of remaining fully open for three years. The federal funds that have kept TBSS and Samuel P. Taylor SP open will last for one year only, until July 2014. Ernie Stanton reported that the new VenTek pay stations are now operational, and that passes can be purchased on line. CBC is helping with trail maintenance.

Among the Marin State Parks that are represented in the Marin County State Parks Association, Tomales Bay especially needs community support; Susan Stompe volunteered to help to rekindle community interest and try to get a “friends” group started.

- 2) Angel Island State Park: Superintendent Amy Brees attended the meeting. She gave an overview of the proposed Interpretive Plan that has been completed for refurbishing a number of interpretive features of the Island, particularly the entry point on Ayala Cove. The document is a concept only, and does not constitute a “permission” to implement the plan. The General Management Plan was prepared in the 1970’s, and the Interpretive Plan “tiers off” that document. The planning process has been funded in part by the Angel Island Conservancy, which has also raised substantial funds for the eventual project. The highest priority is to “fix” Ayala Cove so that it becomes a more welcoming information hub for visitors. It will be staffed by volunteers. In addition to private donations, the Conservancy has been awarded a \$450,000. grant from Prop. 84 funds for new signage. The Conservancy plans to hire an Executive Director. Other projects include replanting 5,000 oaks. Superintendent Brees stated that visitation is down on Angel Island from about 200,000/year 10 years ago, to between 140,000 and 165,000 currently. The Conservancy is trying to increase visitation to better support several concessions. Proposed projects are entirely separate from those funded by the Immigration Foundation.
- 3) Parks, Open Space and Agricultural Preservation – Ballot Measure A Citizens’ Advisory Committee. Everyone is pleased with the success of Measure A, but the group was surprised to learn that County Parks Staff intends not to form a separate Citizens Advisory committee, instead reassigning that function to the existing Parks Commission. That proposal will be taken to the Board of Supervisors on January 15. The Committee agreed that Nona should e-mail Director Linda Dahl urging her to reconsider; voters expect a fully independent committee to monitor Measure A expenditures, not a Commission that may have been involved in reviewing the Expenditure Plan. The e-mail will also reflect concerns over staff decision not to convene a Trail Committee for the Road and Trail Management Plan (see next)
- 4) Marin County Parks: Preliminary Draft Road and Trail Management Plan, Trail Committee: Rick Fraites, who tried to apply to be a member of the proposed Trail Committee, reported that there is no mention of the Committee on Parks web site. He learned that the Trail Committee had been eliminated from the Preliminary Draft RTMP, due to “many negative comments” and opposition. He said he was unable to find significant opposition, and what he did find was generally from biking interests, who feel they will be out-voted. Several people expressed concern that this eliminates a key provision in the Preliminary Draft Plan, a committee that would actually “put boots on the ground” to analyze proposed projects. It was agreed that Nona would include this concern in an e-mail to Linda Dahl, and bring up both committees at the next Commission meeting on Jan. 17.
- 5) Tomales Bay Ecological Reserve: A petition drive is underway to request California Dept of Fish and Wildlife (Game) to put an end to hunting in this Reserve. The MCL

committee is not prepared to become involved at this time. Perhaps at a later time, there will be greater interest.

- 6) Fort Baker Historic Boat Shop & Marina, GGNRA: A MCL member called our attention to an IJ article that describes this final phase of the overall plan for Ft. Baker that has been underway since the 1990s. It appears that the project is considerably beyond meaningful comment; Requests for Expressions of Interest have gone out to potential business partners to develop a public marina, food and beverage services, convenience store, and public educational programs. Environmental review has been completed.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 14, 3:00 – 5:00, MCL office at 175 Redwood Dr.

Minutes by Nona Dennis