

CITY OF DEL MAR
LAGOON COMMITTEE MINUTES
VIA TELECONFERENCE ONLY
APRIL 20, 2022, 5:00 P.M.

Council Liaisons: Mayor Dwight Worden; Council Member Dan Quirk

City Staff: Clem Brown, Environmental Sustainability/Special Projects Manager

Members: Ellen Breen; Robert Chase; Geoff Criqui; Jill Gartman, Chair; Julie

Kawasaki; Carol Kerridge; Karen Lare, Secretary; Bill Michalsky; Donna

Shaw; Udo Wahn

1) CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 5:04pm

Ellen, Jill, Carol, Julie, Bill, Donna, Udo, Karen, Geoff, Dwight, Dan and Clem Brown are present (Geoff joined a little late and Robert is absent).

Matt Bator and Adrianna were also in attendance from the planning department. They will make a presentation on the River Path Phase 3.

2) ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

3) ORAL COMMUNICATIONS (Non-action item)

No members of the public were present

4) APPROVAL OF MINUTES for February 16, 2022 meeting

Donna moves to approve the minutes as drafted and Julie seconds. All are in favor.

5) CITY COUNCIL LIAISONS REPORT

Dwight: The City has decided to return to in person meetings starting in September – between now and then we have relaxed the mask rules and it is advisory not mandatory to wear a mask in City buildings.

6) NEW BUSINESS:

A. Receive a presentation on the River Path Del Mar Phase III Extension Project Mitigated

Negative Declaration (MND);

Matt Bator and Adrianna Jaramishian from the planning department gave us a presentation on the River Path Phase 3 Project.

The Phase 3 Project will be approximately 1.5 miles. The path will be comprised of Decomposed Granite and an elevated boardwalk.

Potential Impacts are categorized under Biological Resources, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources and Noise Issues.

Mitigation measures will be taken on-site for the permanently disturbed biological resources and wetlands on the land just to the west that was recently acquired by the San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy. Throughout construction they will take additional measures as stated in the report to minimize impacts.

Cultural / Tribal Cultural Resources – they will have two monitors present during construction.

Noise – they will use construction techniques to limit noise and lower impacts (running noisy equipment only 24 minutes out of an hour, etc.) and only one piece of noisy equipment at a time. This brings the noise down to the hourly allowed levels of decibels.

B. Discussion of River Path Del Mar Phase III Extension Project MND

They are asking the Lagoon Committee to give feedback and comments. The feedback will go to the City Council at their next meeting.

Several of the members had questions as follows:

- Bird nesting season – how will we avoid impacts? Construction starts in August and finishes in December to avoid the bird nesting season.
- Tidal impacts on the trail (high tide) – trail is being designed to support high tides
- What will restoration look like – planting native plants, etc. The actual plans will be drafted later but the ratio will be forthcoming and also a decision on the trail will be made separately.
- How do the trails get maintained long term (Phase 1-3) Matt was not sure exactly but felt it would be part of the City's actual maintenance plan.
- There is a gap at the end of the river path trail and the start of the Crest Canyon Trail – right now the Phase 3 design plan ends at the city boundary. The thought was to not have it end at the boundary line and instead it would end at the controlled intersection and allow people to cross at a cross-walk. Trail users could then connect with an existing City of San Diego sidewalk.

- What is the ratio for mitigation? It is 3 to 1 for permanent impacts, but impacts to certain plant species can be 4 to 1. Riparian plants can be 3 to 1 or 2 to 1 depending on the type. We have enough land with the newly acquired parcels for all required mitigation.
- Current parcels are mostly covered with ice plant - will it be removed? Yes. All non-native species will be removed. They are not sure whether the Eucalyptus trees on the land will be removed at this time. Other Eucalyptus trees in the area have been removed during past improvements.
- There was discussion about the length of the document and process. The length and content of the document is impacted in many ways by the permits needed to complete the work on the project. i.e., Coastal Commission and the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

C. Committee comments on the MND

Carol made a motion that we recommend that the city accept the River Path Del Mar Phase III Extension Project Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) report and that the city approve the project to build the River Path Phase III Project and Bill seconded the motion. All in favor.

- Next steps will be a May 10th Planning Council meeting and then a June 6th City Council Meeting for approvals.

D. Discuss options for a field trip committee meeting

We have had an invitation from the Executive Director of Wild Coast to discuss blue carbon in the field. It was suggested that we do the field trip at our July meeting, but committee members were in agreement it would take up the entire meeting. So, Jill suggested we ask for a special meeting to discuss blue carbon.

A motion was made to ask for a separate meeting as follows: Request a special meeting for the Lagoon Committee to discuss blue carbon in the field with representatives from Wild Coast. Karen made the motion and Bill seconds. All are in favor. The group will try for a weekday afternoon or a Saturday in the second half of May up to June 11th.

7) REPORTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES:

A. Joint Powers Authority – Dwight

The JPA adopted the budget for the new year. W-19 project, east of 1-5, is in construction phase. They are getting ready to start excavation work and the trails will be closed during this process. Udo asked about the trail head being closed on weekends when it is supposed to be open, and noted later that day the trail gates were open. Is there a timeline for when it is open and closed? Dwight will follow-up.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) - Julie, Jill

No April meeting but there was a March meeting. Most of the discussion was about the W-19 project. There is a meeting scheduled for May.

C. NCTD & City of Del Mar (Railroad & Hwy 101 Bridges) - Dan, Bill

Nothing specific to report. It was asked if we would get funding for the railway and highway bridge? Yes, the highway bridge was funded 87% federal and the county gave us \$3.5m and we are looking for additional funding to close the gap. The shortfall is \$2.5. Railroad bridge replacement is a SANDAG project but money is not expected from Del Mar. The design is funded but not the construction.

So Cal Edison is planning to dredge this fall depending on the presence of tar balls.

D. SANDAG/ Railroad Track Re-location - Karen, Bill, Julie

Nothing at the current time. Dan shared that Jim Benedict contacted a SANDAG representative asking if he had missed a community meeting about the relocation and was told that no the community meetings had been held yet but will be in the future. The environmental document is due in the new year (2023) and then financing will be due in 2025 and the work done in 2035.

8) SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Events & Education - Robert (Lead), Jill, Donna, Bill

Robert is out and Jill noted that they have met and discussed ideas and are landing on an Education series that would talk about invasive plants in the lagoon. Robert is searching for an expert on this topic. The program could be done at City Hall. They are considering having information about Chemical free pesticides, a place to buy native plants, education materials and a panel discussion with an invasive plant speaker.

They also plan to do a bird watching event that we could offer to the community.

Donna had approached the chair of the Del Mar Foundation to see if they want to co-sponsor the event and they were very receptive to it.

Jonathan Applebaum was suggested – Carol will help connect him with Robert or Jill.

B. Blue Carbon - Udo (Lead), Ellen, Carol, Bill

Last Saturday a small group went out to look at the W-19 project. They approached from Mary's Tack and Feed side and in wading the area noted that you could see it from the Coast to Crest Trail. From the area by the Ranger Station, they could really see the scope of the projected and it is huge.

It was brought up that there is a bill before the Senate by Rep Horvath about Blue Carbon testing in impacted areas before projects are done.

The group discussed the past committee discussion on the City's role in identifying blue carbon impacting projects. The idea is to add this question to the CEQUA documents by amending the city's existing documents. The Lagoon Committee had formally asked the city for this (pre-covid).

Udo suggested that we make a motion to formally ask the City Council to get this change back on their work schedule. It was agreed to circulate the letter written a few years ago by the Committee to current committee members and allow all to read it and put it on our next meeting agenda.

Jill asked if we could have the blue carbon in the lagoon measured and use it as part of our climate action plan. Dwight added that yes, we could identify it as part of our climate action plan. It is carbon credits that can be measured and used. It was suggested that we ask a few representatives of the blue subcommittee to meet with the Sustainability Committee at the city and collaborate with them on blue carbon and get it measured. Udo was going to reach out to Sylvia De Dea (who is the chair) and Ann Feeney (vice chair).

C. Trails - Geoff (Lead), Karen, Bill, Julie

Geoff shared a presentation he had put together after the sub-committee walked the trails. This presentation noted all trails in the prevue of the Del Mar and the condition of each of them with photographs.

Based on findings, it was suggested to ask Dustin Fuller at Fairgrounds to attend a Lagoon Committee meeting to get an update of the area by the wetlands bridge/boardwalk loop that is not doing well (Ag Department would be the ones who owned this restoration).

Dwight offered to work with Goeff to put him in touch with the right person at the Riverpark and or the Ag Department. Dwight is working on a sub-committee for the JPA on "Reach the Beach" i.e., how to get to the beach on the Coast to Crest Trail.

Clem will share the presentation that Geoff went through with the entire committee and it will be posted.

Jill brought up the newly vegetated area in Solana Beach / Cardiff and how great it looks versus some of the areas by our lagoon.

Jill mentioned the upcoming SONGS meeting. The date is May 2nd 2022. It will be on zoom this year. All are invited to attend and it will be recorded.

Ellen noted that the trail behind the publics works area is an area for us to continue to work on having the pollution in the area mitigated. Would this be the fairgrounds? No, it is the City's property.

D. Penasquitos Lagoon – Julie

Nothing to report

E. Review Water Quality/Sand Replenishment Reports (Bill, Ellen, Carol (Lead))

The group has met twice and we are working to see who is measuring the water quality for the lagoon and also the nearby ocean waters. We have learned some information but have more to do. Steve did send an updated report from March 15th and that the report shows that all is good but he is still having trouble with the equipment and in getting reliable data and measurements. Carol's concern is we need to look at the whole picture to get a comprehensive view. She agreed that the May 2nd report / talk will be important.

The National Resource Defense Council is focusing on wetlands and on protecting more of the wetlands and watershed areas. More to come on this.

Bill commented that Steve Schroeter has not gotten out the required reports. He was going to contact Hanny to see if he can help get more frequent and better data.

F. Website (Julie)

Del Mar Foundation will help to support the running of the web-site and with on-going updates. The plan is to get funding for the next few years.

9) OTHER BUSINESS (Non-action item): Discussion items not on agenda/items for next agenda.

A. Watermark update

The city has been sending out updates for the project. The coastal permit was just issued by the City Council and approved by the planning director. Now there is a 10-day appeal process. There is a 50 ft set-back to the Lagoon versus the 100 ft required set back and they got the 10% encroachment allowance into the bluff and a floor area ratio above what is standard and will be allowed to build 4 stories high. There will be 10 affordable housing units in the building. Next up is the Coastal Commission process.

10) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44pm.