

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

Council Liaisons: Mayor Dwight Worden; Council Member Dan Quirk

City Staff: Clem Brown, Interim Assistant City Manager

Members: 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 5:03.

All are present

2) ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Carol mentioned that Love Your Wetlands Day is in February so maybe we should do something for it. Jill said she would note it.

3) ORAL COMMUNICATIONS (Non-action item):

No members of the public joined the meeting.

Clem stated that the City has a Clean Water Program and they are having a workshop on August 18<sup>th</sup> remotely from 10:00 to 12:00. He will forward the information on it to the committee. It involves the Water Quality Improvement Plan for the Los Penasquitos and San Dieguito watersheds. This is a storm water quality improvement requirement. It was suggested that someone from the clean water subcommittee attend.

Julie said that there is a adopt a kiosk program we might be interested in. She will forward the information to Clem and he will distribute it to the group.

4) APPROVAL OF MINUTES for April 20, 2022 meeting

June 8<sup>th</sup> special meeting minutes - there was no quorum at the meeting so no minutes to approve.

Minutes for April 20, 2022 - Udo moves approval, Donna seconds and all approve

5) CITY COUNCIL LIAISONS REPORT

(Followed the committee report outs) Dwight mentioned that the City Council had adopted a budget that will balance the books and that a city-wide work program has been approved.

## 6) NEW BUSINESS:

### A. Presentation from Dustin Fuller on the restoration work completed by the 22nd Agricultural District

Dustin Fuller (Sr. Environmental Planner at the Fairgrounds) gave the committee an update on the South Overflow Lot (SOL) restoration work.

There are two phases of the work that is underway. They involve two different permits with the CCC but many other permits exist for these projects as well.

Phase 1 in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of maintenance and monitoring and the area of concern is that 33% of native ground cover exists while it needs to be 62%. They will be planting additional plants and cordgrass as well. A total of 4,500 additional plants will be planted in the south lot area. Covid did affect them for 2 years as they had a stop work order in place and when work resumed there was a funding and resource issue. By end of 2024 they hope to be at a point to meet the requirements.

Phase 2 has similar success criteria however they added a lot of soil amendments before planting started so they were much more successful (lessons learned from phase 1). They are in year 5 of the reporting and they are tracking for success. The biologist told them they are doing "excellent in all habitat types". Covid impacted only one year of work on this project. They have one year left of maintenance and monitoring

Carol noted that the reason that they lost so many plants was due to salt in the soil and Dustin said agreed and said it was also due to the heat that summer they planted at the wrong time of year.

Jill asked about plans to plant more plants and Dustin said yes, they will make that happen.

Dwight asked if they re-graded some of the areas to get more tidal flow? No, but they did do additional irrigation lines and soil amendments. Will irrigation lines ever come out? Yes after they meet the success criteria.

Dustin also said they maintain 4 least tern nesting sites (from 2010 and 2011) and for the first 8-10 years only had one fledgling in 2020 and this year they had 28 nests on the west side and 17 fledglings). It was noted that there are more predators on the inland side versus the west side.

Karen suggested we might have Dustin present on the updates on the Show Park site at a future meeting. Jill noted for a future program.

### B. Overview of the SONGS annual presentation on the San Dieguito Lagoon (Jill)

Jill has a high-level overview she is going to share with the group. Dwight talked about what the SONGS presentation is and why it is important. We are compared to other lagoons of a similar type. Our lagoon has to meet two types of criteria. We have to be as good or better than the marker lagoons and also we need to meet the lagoons individual criteria.

Wetland restoration was completed in 2011 and has an annual review of the performance criteria. It is now 10 years of monitoring. 5 different areas must be met. Tidal Prism, Habitat, Exotic Species, Topography and Plant Reproduction. All 5 must be met before they get one year's credit. Several areas have been giving them challenges. Water quality standard has been met every year (Continuous Water Hypoxia). Jill will send the presentation to all after the meeting.

During the presentation they showed slides on habitat and they spoke about elevations extensively. There seem to be some issues with elevations and that is why there are issues with some other criteria (especially plants). They have planted a lot of plants and continue to have challenges with survival numbers.

The hypothesis they are exploring is the structure of the wetlands contributing to the issues with the tidal habitat and animals. Carpentaria and Point Mugu tidal creeks are deeper than ours which is why they believe we are having issues (ours are shallower). For the future of the San Dieguito lagoon, they want to better understand the invertebrates and the habitats and collect and analysis data in several areas for comparison. To flush out this hypothesis they will sample the deeper creeks in the 6-year-old 22<sup>nd</sup> Ag area versus the shallower creeks in San Dieguito Lagoon.

Dwight added – how long are they on the hook? 32 years and that comes from the original agreement. When they have met the criteria for the 32 years we can then use the money set aside with the foundation to support monitoring. They have not met all criteria once so it is still 32 years to go. The lagoon is 99% good but SCE is still on the hook because they have not met the criteria.

Karen asked if there was discussion to change the criteria? Yes, and especially due to the sea level rise.

#### C. Discuss adding a committee member to the Water Quality/Sand Replenishment Committee

Carol brought up that we needed one additional member to the committee and she reached out to Donna and Robbie to see if they had interest. Donna agreed to join the group. A motion was made to officially appointed Donna to the sub-committee. Bill made the motion and Udo seconded it.

#### D. Discuss endorsing the incorporation of Blue Carbon into local environmental review (CEQA) guidelines for future projects

Dwight discussed what and why the city is adding language to the documents. It had been agreed on by the committee did not move forward due to Covid. Udo said he had reached out to the Sustainability Committee to see if they wanted to take it to the City Council and they said no they did not think the council wanted to do this until they updated the Climate Action Plan. Dwight said we could take it forward ourselves instead of asking them to do so. Dwight and Udo read the language of what we wanted to add.

Jill asked about when are where this new requirement would be triggered. It becomes part of the environmental review process and it might require soil samples to determine it. Is this practical to ask developers or residents to do? Are there businesses out there that could do the measurements on a realistic level. How much blue carbon then would trigger blue carbon mitigation?

Udo said that Matt Costa has information about the blue carbon in the Del Mar Lagoon. He also noted that you can extrapolate what you find in one area for other areas. Dwight noted that this could be referred to the blue carbon sub-committee to look at further.

Dan said he was concerned about taking it to council and wondered how it was relevant as the blue carbon is only in the lagoon. Karen noted that there are lots along the lagoon that would be impacted by this like the Watermark Project. She suggested that it should come to the Council more fully vetted.

More conversation ensued about it with committee members. Geoff reminded us that it is only recently that we have gotten any measurements on it for our area. He did not want to see it weaponized by neighbors as this is not the idea. Udo wondered if a soil analysis firm could do this in the future? Dwight thought it was possible.

Jill brought up that it seems like the blue carbon subcommittee could do additional work on this and figure out how it will work in practicality and wait to take it to City Council.

It was asked if we are a pioneer on this? We were in the beginning but not as much at this time as other cities are discussing and looking at it. In the beginning it was about preserving and now it has shifted to creating blue carbon in our lagoon. Mitigation is the way that we could increase that by using the money in something like the Climate Action Plan. How much do we already ask on our CEQUA requirements that is above and beyond the state CEQUA guidelines? Dwight answered that we have several pages but not sure how much it goes above and beyond. He offered to support the sub-committee in this effort. Do we want to be a pioneer? It can be painful as everyone knows.

Udo suggested that we ask the team at the blue carbon collective about options for testing.

No action on this at this time. The committee members agreed it should go back to the sub-committee for more work.

#### E. Update on the 2022-2023 budget for the lagoon's trails (Clem)

Clem gave an overview about the trail maintenance budget for the city. There is no line item per se but money is set aside in the landscape and maintenance budget. It is done two ways. 1. With Public Works staff or 2. the City's contracted landscape maintenance company who does some of the work. The trails sub-committee was specifically asking about the erosion of the trail by the public works area. The city has a CIP program that would address this. While it is on the City's radar it is not approved yet by the City Council. To get there the Lagoon Committee should bring forth the request to have a CIP program address this.

What can the sub-committee do to support trail maintenance? Clem will share the e-mail he did back in April again. They (the city) would like help (by us getting them a scope of work) in understanding what the committee would be willing to do. Then they can say yes or no to what we are willing to do with a volunteer effort. Jill asked if it would just be the committee members or if it could be other volunteers. It could be others as well.

Dan had some questions about the pipes in one of the photos that Geoff took. Are the white pipes active? Clem said he could check on that and see if maybe they can just be removed. Dan thought it possible that with some of the funds being approved for the extension project some of it could be used to support this effort.

Discussion continued about the erosion. It was determined that no legwork is needed on erosion except advocating it get it added to the CIP list to get worked on. On the scope of work, he wanted to know more about just trail maintenance. He will re-send his e-mail.

Can we take action at this meeting? Dan said yes, we can make the recommendation so it gets in the work queue but no promises. Dwight agreed with this and thought it was a good idea.

Dwight also noted that the City's sea level rise adaptation plan calls for the construction of a living levee along both sides of the riverbank in this area to mitigate against future flooding. The City is currently seeking state and federal funding for the initial concept design. Also, the river park JPA has an entire trail committee crew and they could come and talk to this committee or the sub-committee. Our parks and rec committee has jurisdiction over all trails in Del Mar but he felt that the Lagoon Committee should "own" the ones inside the lagoon area. If we agree it can be communicated to the Parks and Rec Committee, they have not focused on the River Path Trails and the Lagoon trails. Dwight said he would connect with the Parks and Rec Committee because he is the liaison on it as well.

Dan suggested a motion to add fixing the erosion of the river path trail by the public works yard to the City's Capital Improvement List. Geoff made the motion and Karen seconds it. All in favor.

F. Discuss the idea of a volunteer crew directed by Public Works to help with trail maintenance (Dwight & Geoff).

See notes above.

#### 7) REPORTS FROM OTHER AGENCIES:

A. Joint Powers Authority - Dwight

B. Citizens Advisory Committee - Julie, Jill

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

Dwight gave a brief update on the railroad trestle and the Camino Del Mar bridge. Clem noted we received notice that the recently adopted State budget included \$2.2 million in funds towards the City match dollars for the Camino Del Mar bridge which is scheduled for construction 2024/2025.

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

#### 8) SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

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

Udo reported that on June 22<sup>nd</sup> the blue carbon collective met and discussed the sampling that was done and that in our lagoon the carbon stock was 60 mg per hectares which is low by comparison to the others. So, the high sequestration rate was not met in this area. Discussion ensued about how to improve it and one way that was noted is improving tidal flow (even better than plantings). Jill wondered how many areas were sampled. Udo was not aware.

Dwight mentioned that the clear take away is that our lagoon has the best opportunity for credits for future blue carbon sequestration.

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

D. Penasquitos Lagoon - Julie

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

Carol discussed her presentation on what is going on with water quality reporting. She read part of the e-mail from Steve Schroeter about his role in water quality testing and what and how he does it. He offered to talk further on how to get us the data on a more frequent basis.

There are a lot of questions around what the actual requirements are and what we should expect. We have been unable to find the original contract with SCE for what they should be doing. Clem had reached out to the planning department to get a copy of the information – he will continue to pursue.

Dwight brought the group up to speed on who the players are in the agreement. Carol went on to note that we need to also get more frequent data and that the procedures need to be updated for water quality and dredging.

In her presentation, Carol mentions some potential solutions for the issues:

- We can work with scientist's, city staff, committee liaisons and lagoon committee members on solutions
- We could also work with other local wetlands volunteers to form a cooperative process. Several names and contacts have been given to us to date.
- We can pursue training to become water quality testing experts and use the offered instruments to test it.
- We can pursue getting dredging grants that are currently available

Next steps – looking for agreement on next steps and an action plan. Jill had some questions on what we are looking to achieve and maybe attending the upcoming meeting would be a first step.

Karen mentioned a discussion she had with Paige DeCino and the work she and a team are doing on several of the other lagoons. The fact that the city must participate in water quality testing (storm water testing) in our receiving waters (mouth of the lagoon) ties this all together. Clem thinks a first step is to attend the meeting and learn more about what is already being done.

Julie asked where would the testing data went after it was gathered? Eric Burrows at the Water Quality Board and also could be used for education of residents and visitors.

If we send an e-mail to Clem with our questions, he can help get answers for us about how it is collected and how it is available. He thinks the data goes to a Regional Clearing house and becomes public data.

Dwight noted that we cannot do dredging yet (the city) until we get our SCOOP permit which is in process now but not yet approved. Dwight suggested that the committee could endorse a water quality testing plan put together by the sub-committee and brought back to the next meeting. Yes, the committee approves this as an action step.

Donna noted that it will be some work to do it all so we should find out more about it and then we can come up with a plan.

#### F. Restoration - Jill (Lead), Geoff, Udo, Robert

G. Sea Level Rise - Karen (Lead), Carol, Udo

H. Website (Julie)

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

As we ran out of time, Jill suggested that everyone who had things to communicate but could not, type up and e-mail and send it to Clem for distribution.

10) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.