

Environmental Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2009

Committee Members Present:

Chair Patricia Bates, OCTA Board of Directors
Vice-Chair Melanie Schlotterbeck, Measure M Support Groups
Rose Coffin, Taxpayers Oversight Committee
Adam Probolsky, Probolsky Research
Jonathan Snyder, US Fish and Wildlife Services
Erin Wilson, CA Department of Fish and Game

Committee Members Absent:

Veronica Chan, US Army Corps of Engineers
Cathy Green, OCTA Board of Directors
Judy McKeehan, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Dan Silver, Endangered Habitats League
Debbie Townsend, California Wildlife Conservation Board
Sylvia Vega, Caltrans

Orange County Transportation Authority Staff Present:

Ellen Burton, Executive Director of External Affairs
Marissa Espino, Senior Community Relations Specialist
Janice Kadlec, Public Reporter
Hal McCutchan, Environmental Program Manager
Monte Ward, OCTA Consultant

Members of the Public:

George Basye, Newport Banning Ranch LLC
Tony Bomkamp, Glenn Lukos Associates, Regulatory Specialist/Biologist
Michael Nihan, RBF Consulting
Sharon Wood, Assistant City Manager of Newport Beach

1. Welcome

Chair Patricia Bates welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10 a.m. She asked Adam Probolsky to lead the pledge of allegiance.

2. Minutes

Because the meeting lacked a quorum, Chair Patricia Bates tabled approval of the March 4, 2009 meeting minutes to the next meeting.

3. Continued Pubic Workshop Presentation Items

A. Newport Banning Ranch

George Basye, Newport Banning Ranch LLC, gave a presentation on Newport Banning Ranch property, a 402-acre site. They would like 80 acres considered for the Measure M2 comprehensive mitigation program.

Jonathan Snyder asked what type of habitat on this property would be suitable for hydrology restoration. Tony Bomkamp, Glenn Lukos Associates, Regulatory Specialist/Biologist replied approximately 50 to 60 acres could be reestablished as salt marsh and the rest would be riparian habitat.

Melanie Schlotterbeck asked who would be managing the 80 acres in the development area. George Basye replied it is in discussion still; it would be a combination of the Homeowners Association and the City of Newport Beach Parks Department.

Adam Probolsky asked why this project would not be ready for four to five years. George Basye said the scoping period for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has just concluded and the City of Newport Beach is still preparing the Draft EIR. The current schedule is for the project to be approved by the city in the summer of 2010 and the next step would be to get approval of the Coastal Commission.

B. Siena Project

Michael Nihan, RBF Consulting, gave a presentation on the Siena property, a 57-acre site they would like considered for the Measure M2 comprehensive mitigation program.

Adam Probolsky asked if the property was currently attempting to be extracted from coastal boundaries. Michael Nihan said the effort was made to do this but the bill has currently been withdrawn. The Coastal Commission has also taken a position in opposition to the bill. Adam asked what the plan was for the remainder of the property. Michael said the plan for the remainder of the property is senior housing as well as some commercial along Crown Valley Parkway.

Melanie Schlotterbeck asked which property would be the commercial property. Michael said parcel 1 (3 acres), it has a lower value habitat.

4. Master Agreement and Planning Agreement Update

Monte Ward and Hal McCutchan gave updates on the following:

- Master Agreement and Planning Agreement. These documents should go before the OCTA Board of Directors in late June or early July 2009.
- Conservation Assessment Analysis. The biologist is looking into all the conservation values.

- NCCP/HCP Scope of Work. Approval by the OCTA Board of Directors will be sought in late June or early July 2009. Hal gave the schedule for the completion of the project.

5. April 15 Pubic Workshop Update

Hal McCutchan gave an overview of the April 15 Property Acquisition and Restoration Workshop. A total of 14 presentations were given at the Workshop along with 4 public comments. Hal provided the committee members with a matrix and quick reference of the presentations made at the Workshop.

Chair Patricia Bates thanked Hal for the presentation and said the matrix was excellent.

Melanie Schlotterbeck agreed it was an excellent matrix and asked if the other property presentation made to the EOC could be incorporated into it. Hal said yes, it should be ready at the next EOC meeting.

6. Public Comments

Sharon Wood, Assistant City Manager of Newport Beach, clarified the City of Newport Beach's position on the Newport Banning Ranch property. The city would like all the property acquired for preservation as open space. If this does not happen in a timely fashion then the general plan is to develop the property as residential with a majority of the land designated as open space. It was not the City's intention the city acquire the land but the city would facilitate the acquisition of the property as open space. In conclusion, Sharon Wood said the City of Newport Beach's goal is to have as much as possible of the property preserved as open space even though they are going ahead with the review of the property for development.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Environmental Oversight Committee will be June 3, 2009 at 10 a.m.

8. Committee Member Reports

There were no committee member reports.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 am.