



**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE	March 13, 2024
TITLE	Approval of the Minutes for the Board Legislative Committee Meeting January 10, 2024
DIVISION	General Manager's Office
FROM	Debra Fuller, Recording Clerk

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend approval of the minutes for the Board Legislative Committee Meeting of January 10, 2024.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

The January 10, 2024 Board Legislative Committee meeting was held in-person and via video conference pursuant to the Brown Act, as amended by AB 2449.

Members of the public can watch the meeting on the Park District's website here:

<https://www.ebparks.org/calendar/public-meetings>.

Attendees:

Board: Chair Dennis Waespi, Director Colin Coffey and Director Elizabeth Echols

Staff: Dr. Ana Alvarez, Jason Rosenberg, Erich Pfuehler, Lisa Baldinger, Katy Hornbeck, Brian Holt

Consultants: none present

Public: Members of the public were able to access the meeting via live video stream.

This meeting was called to order at 10:37 AM.

Items discussed:

1. Roll Call

Debra Fuller, Assistant Clerk of the Board, conducted a roll call of Board Legislative Committee members and staff.

2. Approval of Board Legislative Committee Minutes – no minutes to approve.

3. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

Kelly Abreau commented on sea level rise and its costly impact to the Bay Area. Siting an article, he stated over the next 30 years there will be \$100 billion worth of need. Several jurisdictions are spending millions on sea walls, expanding wetlands, raising roads, etc. Currently, only \$5 billion is allocated for sea level rise mitigation. Municipalities are still investing in building housing in areas which may be under water in upcoming years.

4. Action Items

- a. Contract for Services with E2 Strategies LLC in the Amount of \$96,000 for General Federal Advocacy Consulting Services

Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs provided a presentation on the General Manager's recommendation for the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) to enter into a one-year contract with E2 Strategies LLC for General Federal Advocacy Consulting Services in the amount of \$96,000, with an option to extend the agreement for two one (1) year extensions. Peter Umhofer, E2 Strategies Principal, has been an effective advocate for the District for the past twelve years.

Director Coffey commented we've broadened resources in Sacramento in terms of advocates reaching out to administrative agencies. He then asked if an RFP was conducted in order to broaden resources in Washington DC. Pfuehler responded in the affirmative and noted there was one other competitive application that we may consider utilizing for additional/specific outreach.

Chair Waespi commented on E2's great work in the past. He asked if there is an alternative direction the District and its advocates could take in regard to the bifurcation of the Oakland Army Base. Pfuehler responded working directly with the Department of the Army and the two state agencies working on the cleanup has been a long process. Last year the District coordinated with Senator Padilla's office to add language to the National Defense Authorization Act which would allow for bifurcation of the property. This would enable the 14 upland acres to be transferred earlier while the dispute over the 6 acres of the marine sediment is resolved. Ultimately language was not included in the final version of the bill signed into law. The District and its advocates will attempt a similar strategy this year.

Public comment: None.

Chair Waespi requests clarification as to whether this contract will move to the full Board once voted upon by the Legislative Committee. Pfuehler responded in the affirmative.

Vote:

Motion: Member Coffey Second: Member Echols Vote: Passed unanimously

- b. Recommended Legislation to Support

Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs presented on Federal legislation recommended for support:

H.Res. 881 (Byer D-VA) Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the passage of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 aligns with the advocacy goal of ecosystem stewardship. The non-binding resolution is a commemorative piece of legislation recognizing the importance of the Endangered Species Act. Furthermore, the legislation recognizes, as of October 2023, a total of 2,363 species of animals and plants were listed as either endangered or threatened. This increased awareness allows the Park District to continue its conservation and stewardship work.

S. 3416 (Durbin D-IL) Climate Change Resiliency Fund for America aligns with multiple advocacy goals. The legislation would authorize the U.S. Department of Treasury to issue from \$200 million to \$1 billion in state and local tax-exempt “climate bonds” annually. The funding would establish grant programs to invest in national climate work. The Park District would likely be eligible to participate in such programs.

Director Echols commented it was interesting the legislation was set up to be under the Department of Commerce as opposed to Natural Resources. Pfuehler commented he was curious about that as well and his understanding is that because the legislation deals with a bond program through the treasury, it needs to be administered by the Department of Commerce, but funds can then be reallocated to other departments to be allocated to local participants.

Director Waespi commented on the success of the Endangered Species Act and the fact there’s a photo of a bald eagle who has taken up residence at Lake Temescal; truly amazing.

Public Comment: None.

Vote:

Motion: Member Echols Second: Member Coffey Vote: Passed unanimously

5. Informational Items

a. Update on Local Actions Taken By Other Jurisdictions

Brian Holt, Chief of Planning, Trails and GIS provided a regular update to the Board Legislative Committee of the East Bay Regional Park District’s (Park District) Strategic Actions of Governmental Entities (SAGE) Program, which is managed by the Acquisition, Stewardship and Development Division.

Jurisdiction	Body	Date	Description
Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA)		End of 2023	Dynamic Personal Micro Transit (DPMT) Project. A multi-city, on-demand transit option designed to meet the diverse mobility needs of people in Eastern Contra Costa County (ECCC). In 2021, the cities of Antioch, Brentwood, Oakley and Pittsburg completed the East County DPMT Feasibility Study to support a potential micro-transit deployment with autonomous vehicles in ECCC. Updated costs and ridership analysis is expected in 2024. Environmental clearance and design are still TBD.

Martinez City Council Dec 20

Staff presented the **Alhambra Hills Public Access and Habitat Management Analysis** and received direction from Council on next steps to prioritize for the management of the Alhambra Hills Preserve. Briones Regional Park is adjacent to the Preserve's southwestern boundary, and a proposed segment of the Martinez-Briones Regional Trail extends through the Preserve.

CA State Parks Nov 14

A Visioning Workshop for the **Alameda-Tesla Plan** was held at the Livermore Public Library. The project seeks to develop a comprehensive plan that will incorporate the Alameda-Tesla's 3,100-acre property in the Bay Area as a new park unit within the CA State Parks system.

Director Coffey commented approximately a year ago CCTA gave him a tour of the East County facilities, including a ride in one of the vehicles. The understanding was the vehicles required a dedicated pathway which would not apply to the multi-use Delta DeAnza trail. Holt responded that CCTA believes the Delta DeAnza trail to be wide enough to be divided into a dedicated lane for the vehicles while still maintaining a multi-use trail on the other side. Staff feels the path for these vehicles should be taken from the existing motorized transportation right-of-way rather than the limited land reserved for non-motorized right-of-way. Coffey then commented to the extent CCTA is interested in providing access from BART to the park, it would be advantageous to the District. Holt agreed.

Director Coffey shared he attended the City of Martinez council meeting at which the Alhambra Hills Public Access and Habitat Management Analysis was discussed. The City and John Muir Land Trust were very reliant on East Bay Parks developing the Martinez-Briones trail in order to open the Alhambra Preserve for public access. He inquired if the District has communicated to the City of Martinez and John Muir Land Trust about plans for that trail. Holt responded the District's master plan is a conceptual and broad planning document. In some cases it designates a trail as a regional trail not necessarily owned or managed by the District. The District has had initial conversations with the City of Martinez in regard to how the separate areas will be managed. Coffey comments he could advocate for the District to play a role in managing the preserve as it is to the District's advantage. It would be a good topic to pursue during discussions about the 2nd Century Plan.

Director Coffey noted he would like to hear about Contra Costa's general plan work at a future meeting.

Director Waespi inquired as to who would manage the new park to be developed under the Alameda-Tesla plan. Holt responded it would be a State Park and managed by the state.

Public Comment: None

b. Update on Grants from November 21 to December 20, 2023

Katy Hornbeck, Grants Manager provided a briefing report on recently applied and awarded grants, as detailed in the attached Grants Report. As of November 21, 2023, the Park District submitted four grant applications to support capital improvement and restoration projects with a value of \$4.6 million. All projects are in support of the 30x30 Initiative. Additionally, during

this reporting period, the Park District received notice of one funding award in the total amount of \$1 million to support the Martinez San Francisco Bay Trail project in Martinez-Radke Regional Shoreline.

Director Echols inquired about whether the Wildcat Creek Restoration and Brooks Road project is fully funded. Hornbeck replied the District has \$500,000 from the State which has not yet been appropriated. The District additionally received a grant from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency for this project. The project is approximately halfway funded.

Public Comment: None

c. 2024 State Priorities and Advocacy Conference

Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs introduced the item and thanked Lisa Baldinger, Legislative and Policy Management Analyst for all the work she has put into this conference. He also thanked Temporary Executive Assistant, Lauren Blanchard for her work in scheduling and organizing details. He also thanked the Board Members and Deputy General Manager for their support.

Lisa Baldinger, Legislative and Policy Management Analyst provided a presentation on the East Bay Regional Park District's (Park District) annual State Advocacy Conference (conference) which is set to occur on Tuesday, January 30 through Wednesday, January 31, 2024. During this conference, the Board of Directors and Park District staff will discuss several important issues with state legislators and their staffs, and agencies.

Topics to be discussed with each Representative or Agency:

Senator Dodd

- Investments in Ecologically Sensitive Vegetation Management Sponsored Legislation: California Environmental Quality Act Existing Roads and Trails Statutory Exemption
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Senator Glazer

- Park District Update: Roddy Ranch Public Access
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps
- Sponsored Legislation: California Environmental Quality Act Existing Roads and Trails Statutory Exemption

Senator Skinner

- Tidewater Day Use Area Public Access Project
- Sponsored Legislation: Statutory Exemption to Restoration Permitting
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Senator Wahab

- Sponsored Legislation: Statutory Exemption to Restoration Permitting
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Assembly Member Grayson

- Sponsored Legislation: California Environmental Quality Act Existing Roads and Trails Statutory Exemption
- Sponsored Legislation: Statutory Exemption to Restoration Permitting
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Assembly Member Wicks

- Wilson Point – San Francisco Bay Trail Gap Closure
- Sponsored Legislation: Statutory Exemption to Restoration Permitting
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Assembly Member Bonta

- Tidewater Day Use Area Public Access Project
- Sponsored Legislation: Statutory Exemption to Restoration Permitting
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Assembly Member Wilson

- Restoration Efforts at Big Break Regional Shoreline
- Sponsored Legislation: Statutory Exemption to Restoration Permitting
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Assembly Member Bauer-Kahan

- Investments in Ecologically Sensitive Vegetation Management
- Sponsored Legislation: California Environmental Quality Act Existing Roads and Trails Statutory Exemption
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Assembly Member Ortega

- Oyster Bay Public Access Project
- Sponsored Legislation: Statutory Exemption to Restoration Permitting
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Assembly Member Lee

- Investments in Ecologically Sensitive Vegetation Management
- Sponsored Legislation: California Environmental Quality Act Existing Roads and Trails Statutory Exemption
- Support for Workforce Development: East Bay California Conservation Corps

Assembly Member Garcia

- Discussion on the Proposed Climate / Resources Bond

California Conservation Corps

- Discussion on Spike Camp and Future Permanent Crew Facilities

Request Pending: Deputy Secretary of Forest and Wildfire Resilience Lisa Lien-Mager

- East Bay Regional Park District History
- On-Going Wildfire Mitigation Efforts and California Conservation Corps Partnership

Director Echols inquired about the language of the CEQA exemption for existing roads and trails. Specifically, she wanted to know if the District is seeking an exemption only for our agency or for agencies similar to ours. Baldinger responded this is for all land acquired for park or open space. Director Coffey remarked we should tie this advocacy into the 30 by 30 initiative.

Director Coffey recommended the District pay special attention to Contra Costa legislators Grayson and Wilson to tee up discussion for regional trails for the Bay trail, the Iron Horse trail, Marsh Creek trail.

Director Echols noted due to the state of the budget, member asks are reduced. She then inquired if there's a sense of how much discretionary money is provided for member asks this year. Baldinger responded the budget was released this morning so she didn't have an answer at the time but will after having a chance to review.

Director Coffey commented District partners in West Contra Costa and Alameda counties are concerned about the Point Molate allocation due to budget issues.

Director Waespi inquired how many legislators have confirmed meetings for the advocacy conference. Baldinger responded meetings with California Conservation Corps and Assemblymember Garcia are confirmed. Temporary Executive Assistant, Lauren Blanchard, is working on scheduling the remaining meetings.

Public Comment: None

d. 2024-25 Fiscal Year State Budget

Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs presented on the budget, noting the Governor announced a \$291 billion budget this morning, a reduction of \$20 billion from last year. The Governor's budget anticipates a \$37.9 billion deficit. The deficit has been estimated in light of weaker than expected tax returns. The Governor also may revive his support for a climate / resources bond during budget discussions. The bond could backfill some expected General Fund cuts to resources agencies. The legislature continues to maintain a commitment to climate investment with bond proposals AB 1567 and SB 867, both of which became two-year bills at the end of the last session. The bonds include money for regional parks, vegetation management programs, the Coastal Conservancy Bay Area program, the San Francisco Bay Area Restoration Authority, Conservation Corps, sediment removal and language to expedite opening of Marsh Creek State Park. There could be as much as \$10 billion available with these bonds, although the Administration may tighten the overall amount.

Legislative Committee Comment: None

Public Comment: None

e. Update on Site Visits and Meetings

Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs presented on site visits conducted between December 15, 2023 to January 10, 2024.

Site Visits and Events recently hosted by the East Bay Regional Park District include:

- I. Office of U.S. Representative Garamendi Staff Site Visit, Point Pinole, December 20. Attendees included Direct Coffey, Government and Legislative Affairs staff, Trails Program Manager and Park Operations staff met with two staff members from the Representative's district office to discuss the Bay Trail Gap Closure Project at Wilson Point and environmental remediation at Lone Tree Point. An invitation was extended to invite the Representative to the site in the future.

Legislative Committee Comment: None

Public Comments: None

6. Announcements - None

7. Adjournment - The Committee adjourned at 11:47 AM.