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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Gavin Newsom, Governor

MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2021
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER CONSERVANCY

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GOVERNING BOARD

Mike Karbassi, Chairperson
Councilmember, City of Fresno

Steve Brandau, Vice-Chairperson
Supervisor
Fresno County Board of Supervisors

Brett Frazier, Supervisor
Madera County Board of Supervisors

Santos Garcia, Mayor
City of Madera

Kacey Auston, Director, Fresno
Metropolitan Flood Control District

Carl Janzen, Director
Madera Irrigation District

Julie Vance, Regional Manager
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Kent Gresham, Sector Superintendent
Department of Parks & Recreation

John Donnelly, Executive Director
Wildlife Conservation Board

Bryan Cash, Assistant Secretary
Natural Resources Agency

Jennifer Lucchesi, Executive Officer
State Lands Commission

Matt Almy, Program Budget Manager
Department of Finance

Bryn Forhan
Paul Gibson
Vacant
Citizen Representatives

John M. Shelton
Executive Officer

Board Meeting Location:

Consistent with Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29- 20, the public and Board members participated in a meeting via Zoom and teleconference. Public comment was accepted per the agenda.

MEETING AGENDA**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Karbassi called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., and Mr. Garcia led the pledge of allegiance.

A. ROLL CALL

Name	Present	Telecon- ference	Absent	Late
Mr. Karbassi	X			
Mr. Brandau	X			
Mr. Frazier	X			
Mr. Garcia	X			
Ms. Auston	X			
Mr. Janzen	X			
Ms. Vance	X			
Mr. Gresham	X			
Mr. Donnelly	X			
Mr. Cash	X			
Ms. Lucchesi	X			
Ms. Lukenbill	X			
Ms. Forhan	X			
Mr. Gibson	X			

Ms. Gavina confirmed a quorum was present.

Legal Counsel Present: Christina Morkner Brown, Deputy
Attorney General

Staff Present: John Shelton, Executive Officer
Rebecca Raus, Associate Governmental
Program Analyst

Vanessa Gavina, Staff Services Analyst

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Items identified after preparation of the agenda for which there is a need to take immediate action. Two-thirds vote required for consideration. (Gov. Code §54954.2(b)(2))

There were no additions to the Agenda.

C. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Any Board member who has a potential conflict of interest may identify the item and recuse themselves from discussion and voting on the matter. (FPPC §97105)

There were no potential conflicts of interest.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT & BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Ten minutes of the meeting are reserved for members of the public who wish to address the Conservancy Board on items of interest that are not on the agenda and are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Conservancy. Speakers shall be limited to three minutes. The Board is prohibited by law from taking any action on matters discussed that are not on the agenda; no adverse conclusions should be drawn if the Board does not respond to the public comment at this time.

None.

E. CONSENT CALENDAR

All items listed below will be approved in one motion unless removed from the Consent Calendar for discussion:

E-1 ACTION ITEM: Approve Minutes of October 7, 2020

Mr. Donnelly inquired if all items on the Consent Calendar would be voted on individually. To his knowledge, only one motion was necessary for the entire Consent Calendar; in which Mr. Karbassi agreed.

E-2 ACTION ITEM: Approve Board Meeting Calendar for 2021

Mr. Janzen inquired if it would be possible for board meetings to begin at 10:00 am rather than the currently proposed 10:30 am meetings, which were initially set during winter months because of fog conditions. He added that because meetings are currently virtual it would be more convenient for members.

Mr. Karbassi asked the Board if there were any issues to what Mr. Janzen proposed.

With none given, Mr. Karbassi approved it on the condition that should in-person meetings recommence, we would go back to the original 10:30 slot.

E-3 INFORMATION ITEM: Reminder to File Statements of Economic Interest and Complete Biennial Ethics Training, Due Thursday, April 1, 2021

Mr. Karbassi asked if there were any other discussions on the balance of the Consent Calendar.

Mr. Shelton reminded the Board that the Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700) are due on April 1st. He also noted that Board members must complete an ethics training course specifically for State officials within six months of their hiring or appointment, and every two years thereafter. Local agencies have a different ethic training course.

Mr. Gibson moved to approve the items from Consent Calendar; the motion was seconded by Mr. Frazier. The motion passed as follows:

Roll Call Vote:

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Karbassi	X		
Mr. Brandau	X		
Mr. Frazier	X		
Mr. Garcia	X		
Ms. Auston	X		
Mr. Janzen	X		
Ms. Vance	X		
Mr. Gresham	X		
Mr. Donnelly	X		
Mr. Cash	X		
Ms. Lucchesi	X		
Ms. Lukenbill	X		
Ms. Forhan			X
Mr. Gibson	X		

F. REGULAR SESSION ITEMS

F-1 ACTION ITEM: Authorize Bond Funds and Grant to Fresno Building Healthy Communities for the San Joaquin River Parkway Western Reaches Access Activation Plan: Camp Pashayan to Millburn Lookout.

Staff Recommendation: It is recommended the Board approve \$1,519,000 in Prop 84 bond funds and a grant agreement with the Fresno Building Healthy Communities for the San Joaquin River Parkway Western Reaches Activation and Restoration Plan: Camp Pashayan to Millburn

Overlook. Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) authorization would be requested at their February 2021 meeting.

Mr. Shelton provided a brief background of the project area. He noted that the Conservancy staff met with Sandra Celedon and others at Camp Pashayan to show the property and facilities. Camp Pashayan used to host group camping from the Boy Scouts. There are currently restroom facilities, picnic tables, and a gazebo. It is still being used for boat launches from some of the agencies working on the salmon restoration program. Partner organizations utilize it, such as RiverTree, for some of their canoe launches for picking up trash along the River. The property is near the construction of the High Speed Rail. Discussion included how to join Camp Pashayan to the rest of the Parkway with access through bicycle and pedestrian pathways, and potentially to finishing up the multipurpose trail from Milburn Overlook all the way to Camp Pashayan. This proposed project is a planning project that will be very intensive on public outreach. Mr. Shelton noted that one of the reasons he was interested in getting Fresno Building Healthy Communities (FBHC) involved is that their network of organizations are members of communities that do not necessarily realize that the San Joaquin Parkway is out there and accessible for public use. It is important to be able to get this information out to them, but also to have members in those communities involved in the planning process. The goal is to be able to figure out how to reactivate it as a group use area or possibly a seven day a week public area. That will be determined throughout this process. Another main component is to work with other landowners, such as Pacific Gas & Electric and the City of Fresno to collaborate on the best area for a potential trail.

There is a lot of work for the outreach portion, considering Fresno Building Healthy Communities' project duration and their schedule. The planning design is projected to move into the next phase of construction. For the trail itself, there are areas that may be more conceptual than other areas because it will be on other properties that we do not have authority for, but the hope is that it will push along any of the ability for construction of the trail. Mr. Shelton reminded the Board and public that there is a portion of the Eaton Trail behind Riverside Golf Course. It goes behind the golf course and then down to the river bottom, then stops just before the railroad trestles. On the other side of the railroad trestles is the rest of Riverbottom Park. The Conservancy funded River Partners to do a restoration project in the area. There are gravel roads that go through, but the focus would be on turning one of those into a permanent trail. There is a connection between the Riverbottom parkway and the San Joaquin river Conservancy's Liddell Property. Mr. Shelton noted that there are some areas in there that will be relatively difficult to design because there is hardly any shoreline between the bluff and the River, though there might be the ability to get the trail through there. The Conservancy plans to get a bridge to connect across the River to our Schneider property. Mr. Shelton then introduced Sandra Celedon to talk about her organization's proposal.

Ms. Sandra Celedon, President and CEO of Fresno Building Healthy Communities, expressed that she is enthusiastic to be working in coalition with Sheila Hakimipour's group, Urban Diversity Design, and WRT on this project. She noted that this is a project that has come out at a really great time where people are longing for outdoor accessibility. The goal is to reactivate Camp Pashayan and to engage with community members to expand access to the River and trail network. This falls in line with FBHC's vision of parks for all, which includes trails and programming. They have visited the site several times, and she was excited to see the potential for all the resources and assets that are already out there. Through this project, they hope to

continue to engage folks and to hear about what kind of activities they want to see along the River at Camp Pashayan. The group hopes to really build up the momentum for the River and outdoor access in the aim to have a completed document for action. This is necessary to outline the steps needed to finally be able to utilize this resource, not only for the residents in Fresno and Madera, but also for people in the region. FBHC is passionate in thinking more regionally, and they are thrilled to be engaging with young people who are also excited about being ambassadors on this project. With that, she thanked everyone for giving FBHC the opportunity to present this proposal.

Mr. Karbassi queried if there were any questions from the Board.

Mr. Gibson mentioned he was delighted to hear Sandra's voice and to be able to see this project in front of the Board. He stated FBHC was the inspiration and muscle behind Measure P, which is noted in Mr. Shelton's Executive Officer's Report. He also noted that he was involved to a much smaller degree with Measure P, but he is equally excited to see that those funds are going to finally have their impact on our community, as well as an impact on all the lands that the Conservancy has been able to collect and curate to help make them ready for public access. He noted that if you look at the key personnel involved in Measure P, you will see Sandra Celedon and Kim McCoy. Having watched these consummate professionals put their shoulders to the Measure P effort, he believes that this project would be equally well taken care of.

Ms. Vance thinks this is a great project and is happy that there are efforts moving forward to increase access along the river. However, she gave a precautionary note stating that half of the property is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), not the Conservancy, and it is part of the San Joaquin Ecological Reserve (ER). ER's are a class of land that are not generally for public access. They are for conservation, similar to a refuge. Elements such as boat launches, picnicking grounds, and trails should not be allowed on the ecological reserve. Also, there could potentially be some concerns with anything that happens on the Conservancy side that would increase trespass onto the CDFW parcels. Although this does not mean that things cannot happen on the Conservancy portion of the property, it just means they will all need to work closely together. Restriction on the CDFW portion needs to be kept in the forefront as things are being considered and planned.

Ms. Forhan stated that this is a welcome opportunity in terms of engaging the whole community and regionally as well. She asked Mr. Shelton if is this considered a sole source contract or if this was put out to bid?

Upon inquiry from Ms. Forhan, Mr. Shelton reported that the only competitive grant process that the Conservancy has is Proposition 1. The Conservancy is able to work with proponents for the rest of our Proposition funds. He noted that he wanted to get FBHC working on something to do with the Parkway, and this project happened to fit very well.

Mr. Brandau indicated he would like to know clearly what the Board was being asked to vote on today. Was it a release of funds, or was it to accept the activation of a planning process?

Mr. Shelton clarified FBHC is applying for grant funding to be able to do the planning process. The planning process is being referred to as the activation plan. If approved at our Board, then it would go to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) for their approval. If approved by WCB in

February, the project would commence in April, and FBHC can go through the planning and outreach process. The next step would be another proposal to build and/or remodel at some point in the future. For instance, at Camp Pashayan, there are restrooms, however, there is not a working water supply, so the plumbing would need to be addressed. There are existing facilities there but considering options for the additional or modified facilities would also be part of this phase. The major design work would likely be trail design from Camp Pashayan to the Milburn Overlook, and potentially even include some ideas for the overlooks at Milburn and Polk Avenues. Mr. Shelton specified that it is important to mention those areas particularly because a murder occurred there last year, and the local neighborhood is interested in doing something new that will make these areas more family friendly. Therefore, the ability to get this trail system all the way to the Milburn Overlook can really help the City of Fresno. The next step for doing any construction is integral in possibly getting the City interested in doing something in that area using the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process and the conceptual designs that the Conservancy helped fund through this project.

Mr. Karbassi mentioned that he went out to Camp Pashayan last year with Conservancy staff, and he appreciates anyone who wants to step up and take this project on. He stated his only concern is that he had not been involved in this process. Typically, when he makes decisions, he engages with the residents in the area. When the shooting occurred at the Milburn Overlook, he held a neighborhood meeting with residents to discuss safety and possible plans for the area. The San Joaquin River Socials group also started because of the shooting at the Overlook. Mr. Karbassi stated he does not think this project would clash by any means, however, if there is the potential for making structural long-term changes to improve the area, he would like to be directly involved with that process. He asked that the Board postpone this item for a month, so he can get together with FBHC, along with the other partners, the Board, and Conservancy staff to get it to a level where he feels comfortable. He would like to have a community meeting with residents in that area to talk about this plan.

Mr. Shelton stated that an issue with postponing this vote is that this project would miss the WCB's February meeting, and would subsequently be going to their May meeting for approval. He noted that Mr. Karbassi can be involved in the future planning process but is hesitant to recommend that the Board postpone this because it will delay the timeline of the project.

Mr. Karbassi expressed that although he appreciates being included in future planning, he must decide based on his constituents being involved or not involved. He maintained that he does not want to vote against this but would if it went forward today. He requested a postponement for the next Board meeting. He said it would put things behind by a month, but people have been waiting a long time for Camp Pashayan to be open, and he is confident we can get there; however, has to have the consent of his district, and he does not feel he has that right now. He asked if someone would like to make a motion to postpone, and what is the feedback of the Board.

Ms. Auston made a motion to postpone the item until the next board meeting. She stated that Mr. Karbassi's request is fair.

Mr. Frazier asked Ms. Auston if she would be willing to amend her motion to add an ad hoc committee with Chairman Karbassi, and possibly board member Gibson to have discussions on the focus of the planning.

Ms. Auston agreed to the amendment of her motion.

Mr. Frazier replied that he would like to hear more about the constituency and feels it would be well placed in the hands of Chairman Karbassi and Mr. Gibson.

Mr. Karbassi inquired if that is a second motion from Supervisor Frazier.

Mr. Frazier agreed.

Mr. Karbassi stated we would continue our discussion, but he would like to give Ms. Celedon a chance to respond. Also, if he hosts a community meeting, he would like her there to discuss the plans for this project.

Ms. Celedon thanked him for the opportunity to address questions and apologized that he was not involved in the earlier planning. She stated they have spent a significant amount of time in a very short period to put the application together. COVID also changed some of their activities in terms of engaging with community members directly. She emphasized that they do have connection with community members, specifically around Herdowntown, which they have been engaging with prior to this application. They have done trips out there in the past with residents who are excited about adding more green space and activities in our region. The core component of the project proposal is to engage with communities along, not just Camp Pashayan and the surrounding neighborhoods, but along the trail system because they want to make sure that this is a community led and informed effort. She hopes that whatever comes out of this process reflects the priorities and the intent of community members because they ultimately want people to take ownership, and they know that any long-term investment has to have ownership of the surrounding neighborhood and of the broader community. She believes they are in line in what Mr. Karbassi desires, and they are open to attending any community meetings. Ms. Celedon did inform the Board that postponing it and going to the WCB meeting in May would change the timeline they included in the proposal, so those dates would need to be amended.

Mr. Karbassi stated he understood and thinks they can get there together. He asked if there is any discussion from any Board members before there is a vote. He wants to make sure everyone has a say.

Mr. Gibson stated that he would be happy to participate in the ad hoc committee; however, given the timeline of the project, he asked Mr. Shelton if there was any way possible that this could still move forward to get to WCB's February meeting. In reading the report, he felt the proposal was all about community consensus. His previous involvement with FBHC gives him the confidence of knowing that they don't do anything without engaging the community. He is willing to do what he can to help but would like to speed up the process because access is so important and would hate to delay this.

Mr. Shelton responded that if the Board voted today to move forward it could make it for WCB's February meeting, otherwise it would miss that window and have to wait until their next meeting in May. He said the aim is to build a community of support and have those meetings. Oftentimes,

they are not able to do many meetings unless they have the funding to do them. Part of the planning and outreach portion of their proposal is to build up community acceptance and input on what we want to do at Camp Pashayan and how we want to work on it. Sandra, Sheila, and their teams are a big proponent in this. Staff is figuring out ways to reach communities like Herdowntown and other areas to get them involved. There was a lot of work that was put into this proposal, but staff will work with Chairman Karbassi to find ways to ensure neighborhood involvement.

Mr. Karbassi asserted that if he would have been involved in the process earlier his office would have had the budget for a neighborhood meeting. When the Milburn shooting happened, the issue of community accessibility to the area was brought to attention. Through this, all communities will be able to enjoy the River, and he wants to encourage that process. However, at the same time, it must serve everybody. Many people in that area want a better trail. They would like to be able to enjoy the amenity right there, but it just needs to be improved. He knows we are going to get there, but he needs community involvement in that process. Mr. Karbassi would like to hold a neighborhood meeting soon to provide more familiarity of the project to the public.

Mr. Garcia stated that he has a good relationship with FBHC for quite some time now and has the highest respect for Sandra and the organization, he does empathize with Mr. Karbassi regarding involvement in the project. He agrees with Mr. Karbassi's request for a postponement, otherwise, he would have voted today to continue with this because it is a worthy endeavor, particularly from a regional perspective. He hopes that the Board will be able to move forward with this in the future because it is a planning process, and FBHC is all about engaging the community for access to our natural resources.

Mr. Frazier added that he strongly believes in the staff at FBHC and their organization, but it needs to be done correctly by getting public say. It will be a good exercise in public engagement and bringing the community along, as well as the Board. This is on a good path right now, and although three months seems like a long wait, it is worthwhile in order to get a good project.

Mr. Karbassi said before the Board's vote he wanted to give FBHC one more opportunity to comment further.

Ms. Sandra Celedon thanked everyone for their vote of confidence. She hopes they can move it forward and looks forward to kicking off community engagement.

Mr. Shelton added that the public should also have the opportunity to comment.

Ms. Sharon Weaver, Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, is enthusiastic that FBHC has brought forward this proposal. She has been trying to get FBHC more involved in the parkway for several years and is pleased that they are taking this on. However, she was somewhat confused by how the consultants are involved in the grant proposal. Her understanding is that when a nonprofit is getting grant funding from the State of California, they must go through a competitive bid process before hiring consultants. In this case, a large part of the funding for this project is going to consultants which have already been selected and have been part of preparing this proposal. She said that as a nonprofit professional herself, she did not think they could apply for grants in that way.

Also, there was no mention of the previous plan for Riverbottom Park, which the City of Fresno was planning to construct and then lost due to the difficulty of getting Right of Way agreements under the railroad. Similarly, there was no discussion of the Fresno County Horse Park, who is also a major constituency in this region. Those are some things that should be included in the background documentation when the project gets started. She said the Parkway Trust has got a wealth of information on various projects that have been done along this reach, and she would be happy to provide those if needed.

Mr. Paul Duckworth, a Fresno resident of the Milburn Overlook, stated his involvement in some of the volunteer organizations in that area. He would like to see the Board move ahead on this vote. He understands Chairman Karbassi's comments about not being involved because it falls within his District; but the community outreach and comment part is part of the project, and he believes that this vote should just let the project go forward.

Ms. Jessica Vaughn, founder of the San Joaquin River Socials and a Fresno resident of the Milburn Overlook, stated she is willing to use her community group to host Mr. Karbassi for one of the meetings. She understands why Mr. Karbassi would want to wait because he should be involved, and we should hear community members through him. Either way, it is a wonderful project that is going to move forward, whether it can make it to the WCB in February or in May.

Ms. Lori Cegielski, a Fresno resident, stated that her and her husband went to Camp Pashayan for their anniversary. When they got there, there was a gate unlocked, and so they drove in. She said it was not clear if the area was available for public use. She loves the ideas being presented on the project but asked, in the interim, if there was a way that signs can be put up letting the public know it is closed.

Mr. Shelton answered that the area is on the Conservancy's and the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) property, and it is currently not open to the public at this point because there is no maintenance funding to keep it running. However, we would like to get it open as part of this planning process. Also, the Conservancy has replaced the chain many times over the last six months, but people will typically cut through the lock and get in.

Ms. Auston moved to postpone item F-1 until the next board meeting and to create and ad hoc committee to work with FBHC to plan a community meeting; the motion was seconded by Mr. Frazier. The motion passed as follows:

Roll Call Vote:

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Karbassi	X		
Mr. Brandau	X		
Mr. Frazier	X		
Mr. Garcia	X		
Ms. Auston	X		
Mr. Janzen	X		
Ms. Vance	X		
Mr. Gresham	X		
Mr. Donnelly	X		
Mr. Cash	X		
Ms. Lucchesi	X		
Ms. Lukenbill	X		
Ms. Forhan	X		
Mr. Gibson	X		

F-2 ACTION ITEM: Authorize Bond Funds and Grant to US Green Building Council Central California for the San Joaquin River Conservancy Circle V Public Access Plan.

Staff Recommendation: It is recommended the Board approve \$1,050,000 in Prop 40 and Prop 84 bond funds and a grant agreement with the US Green Building Council Central California for the San Joaquin River Conservancy Circle V Public Access Plan on 20.76 acres of Conservancy property within Circle V Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) authorization would be requested at their February 2021 meeting.

Mr. Shelton stated that all project activities will occur on the Conservancy, Circle V property. US Green Building Council Central California (USGBC Central California) proposes to develop a public access plan that will serve as a guide for future implementation projects on the 20.76 acres. The property includes two residential buildings and a storage shed. The two residences have been emptied since the Conservancy acquired the property in 2016. The residential buildings do not meet the specifications required for office and meeting usage. This project will prepare the site for public access by discussing programming, usage, and will deliver a schematic design package for the buildings and site. The project will also include site and geotech surveys and the filing of a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document. The end product of this planning project will include 65% of design plans completed for the structures and their immediate area, with conceptual designs for access improvements for the rest of the property.

USGBC Central California in collaboration with the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival are looking to engage stakeholders and the general community in a discussion on potential uses of the property as Indigenous and Environmental Resource Center. The objective of this project is to create a vision for the public usage of the building and site, including access to the river.

The main goal of this project is to reuse the existing structures and develop highly efficient office and meeting spaces with low operational costs. The resulting structures and adjoining campus will also serve a demonstration of current Green Building technology and building design. Through this project, impacts to the environment will be minimal by following the Green Building guidelines

and evaluating and preparing for the third-party green building certification. Landscape design will be considered for the design package and will engage the stakeholders in a discussion on options for native plant gardens and habitat restoration opportunities.

Mr. Shelton introduced Lara Gromis, the Executive Director for the US Green Building Council for Central California. Ms. Gromis gave some background on the organization and explained some the goals for the project. They are a local 501C3 nonprofit organization located in Fresno with a mission to transform the way buildings and communities are designed and operated. Work is focused on education networking and advocacy for Green Building and Community Solutions to get us on the right path to tackle climate change and create healthier and more prosperous places through transformation in the environment. Her team includes, Angela Cardona, who is the finance and operations consultant. She has a degree in business from Fresno State and is currently pursuing an MBA from UC Davis and has 10 years' experience with finance and operations in the nonprofit field. Their organization is strongly connected to Fresno State, and they have a strong history of education concerning green building solutions. They believe that this project is very unique and wonderful learning opportunity. They are planning on working together with several professors and their classes on the Circle V Public Access Project. Those professors include Dr. Fairborz Tehrani, who is a civil engineer an Associate Professor at the Lyle College of Engineering, who will be working with engineering, planning, and design classes on this project. Ms. Michele Randel is an architect and assistant Professor in the Construction Management Department, and USGBC Central California are looking to work with her on conceptual design. Dr. Lubo Liu is a licensed environmental engineer and professor in the engineering department who will be working with them on a conceptual design for storm and water management. Dr. Laura Huising, an assistant professor in the Department of Art and Design, will be working with two of her classes focused on graphic design and interactive multimedia, and lastly, Dr. Chris Sterling, is the Director of Solutions Help at the Craig School of Business and an Associate Professor of Management.

As the application shows, they are planning on adding architectural and engineering teams through an RFP process, so it is not yet included in this application. The big focus is going to be on public outreach with a special focus on the Native American community. USGBC Central California are looking to have a lot of input and engaging conversation with the local tribes on getting access to this part of the river, and they are aiming to represent their cultures in the building design. She introduced her collaborator, Ms. Carly Tex, Executive Director for the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survivor, who will be a big part of the outreach to the Native American community.

Ms. Tex stated that she is Western Mono with an affiliation to the North Fork Rancheria. She is a descendant of the Dunlap band of Mono Indians. Her organization is all native led and run. It supports the revitalization of languages and cultures indigenous to California. They do that through a variety of events, programs, and services that have been modeled nationwide and internationally, and also, through education. That will be her focus in contributing to the partnership and project. She hopes to provide education about the indigenous people, the languages of the area, knowledge about the river, plants and waterway utilization, and their continued connection with it. Although the organization has a statewide reach and her board members are located throughout the State of California, she and staff are located locally. They have the network and capability to collaborate in this project during the planning stages and to realize the potential of the project. She feels that the Circle V project has immense potential to

demonstrate, not only green building through United States Green Building Council, but also the collaboration with tribal stakeholders of the area. She stated that designing a space from the perspective of the people with their input is very important for cultural sustainability, creating and maintaining positive partnerships and education of the public about their people from the valley. She looks forward to working with USGBC Central California and seeing the outcome of the project.

Chairman Karbassi recused himself and asked Vice-chairman Brandau to temporarily oversee the meeting in his absence.

Mr. Brandau asked if there are any questions from the Board regarding the projects.

Mr. Frazier mentioned he toured the property with Conservancy staff. He thinks this is one of those projects that hits all the bases. The difference with the Madera County side versus the Fresno side is that Madera does not have the development that is in Fresno. He just wanted to emphasize that point when the Board considers the difference between this project and the previous one presented having been postponed. It is important to seize the opportunities available on the Madera County side. He appreciates the aspect of tying in the cultural resources to the project and highlighting it at the beginning, and not as an afterthought. Showing the cultural ties to the land and the indigenous people that were along this area are important. He believes this project would be celebrating that. It is a beautiful piece of property. However, he did state that some work needs to be done to the houses, as well as down to the river. He thinks this will be something that we can all be proud of.

Mr. Brandau called for public comment.

Ms. Mona Cummings, CEO of Tree Fresno, thanked Mr. Shelton for taking her around the property and getting to see the access to the River. The view from the two homes is phenomenal. It is great that the property is conveniently accessible to Fresno and Madera. From the perspective of Tree Fresno, in which they focus on urban tree canopy coverage, it is incredible to be able to take people out so that they can see the native species of trees along the waterways. She loves the cultural component, which includes the Native American heritage in the region, and she values the input that has already taken place there. She expressed her appreciation for that property and the work that the Conservancy has done in securing that. She believes that the future for this project is going to be spectacular.

Mr. Gary Bowser, a member of the Central California Off Road Cyclist's (CCORC) club, inquired where are the funds coming from to construct and do the actual operation and maintenance. It comes across as plan implementation without an idea of how it will be operated beyond that.

Mr. Shelton answered that this is just the planning process at this point. When it gets to the construction phase, the operation and maintenance will be figured out. The hope is that through this planning process, we have a project that is maintainable and operatable by either the partners, who want to be a part of this as we go forward, or a joint powers authority with the two counties that the Conservancy has been in discussions with. There are several possibilities, but it is all a matter of trying to work with the tribes and the nonprofit, who may want to operate it for the Conservancy. He emphasized that he cannot say with certainty what the future of this project will be because he is interested in getting Native American and other indigenous groups in Ms. Tex's network to give their input and ideas of what they feel the project should be and transpire into. We have some concepts, but the idea is to plan it, and then build it. The two buildings will

not be demolished. This structure and the bones are already there, and so we will work with that. Some of these ideas include community meeting rooms, office space for a non-profits or State agencies, and definitely a learning center that can eventually support itself; but that is what staff and partners will all be working through in the planning process.

Mr. Frazier said that before this planning process occurs, staff should reach out to the Madera County Public Works Department to see how it ties into the Rio Mesa Drive near the ranch.

Mr. Shelton replied that we often see the ranch manager out there, as he runs cattle on the green pasture just north of the property. He has spoken to him about this. The owner and ranch manager have not been included in the initial discussions, but they do know that the Conservancy is looking at doing something in the area. In talks with Ms. Gromis and the USGBC Central California, one of their main concerns is getting to the property without needing a motor vehicle, and rather using bikes. One of the issues with this property is there may be development on either side of it. Another issue is figuring out how to make it contiguous with the rest of the San Joaquin River Parkway area on the Madera side. There are some possibilities, but we will need to work with the Madera County Public Works to discuss the long-term plans of Madera County. The hope is to be able to make this fit and work well.

Mr. Brandau asked if there were any final comments before taking a vote. With none given, the vote proceeded.

Mr. Frazier moved to approve the item; the motion was seconded by Mr. Janzen. The motion passed as follows:

Roll Call Vote:

Name	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Brandau	X		
Mr. Frazier	X		
Mr. Garcia	X		
Ms. Auston	X		
Mr. Janzen	X		
Ms. Vance	X		
Mr. Gresham	X		
Mr. Donnelly	X		
Mr. Cash	X		
Ms. Lucchesi	X		
Ms. Lukenbill	X		
Ms. Forhan	X		
Mr. Gibson	X		

G. ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Information Items. No action of the Board is recommended.

G-1 Organizations' Reports: If time allows, the following oral reports will be provided for informational purposes only and may be accompanied by written reports in the Board packet.

G-1a. San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust

Ms. Weaver thanked the Board for voting yes on the grant proposal that allowed the Parkway Trust to acquire the Sumner Peck Ranch. They invited people out to visit the property on Thursday, January 7; Friday, January 8; and Saturday, January 9 for an open house. The Parkway Trust had people schedule in advance, so they could space people out and make sure that the parking area does not get too crowded. So far, 220 people have scheduled to come out over the next three days to visit the site. They are hopeful that the site will be able to open on a regular basis starting very soon. The Parkway Trust is trying to get their operational details in place before they make any more dates public so that they can make sure that they have everything set up in order to operate the property appropriately. She also thanked Conservancy staff for helping to get Sycamore Island opened early. It will be opening Friday, January 8, and they will be giving a press release. They are excited to be able to offer these Parkway properties to the public.

G-1b. River Tree Volunteers.

Mr. Richard Sloan, Founder of River Tree Volunteers, was not present at the meeting.

G-1c. Central California Off Road Cyclist (CCORC)

Mr. Gary Bowser briefly mentioned that ongoing work is being done on the Van Buren property, with single-track work for mountain biker and gravel riders.

G-1d. San Joaquin River Access Corporation (SJRAC)

Ms. Kristine Walter of the SJRAC, shared that easements have been approved by both the WCB and DGS, and they are moving closer every day to vehicular access at Palm and Nees. They are continuing to see a lot of activity at the Palm and Nees access. People are parking at Spano Park and then continuing to go down the road or the bluff to access the property to go hiking or fishing. She stated they are continuing to supply a dumpster at the end of the gravel haul road which helps makes the work of the River Tree Volunteers a little bit easier. She praised River Tree Volunteers, stating they are heroic in their ongoing efforts to keep things clean in the area.

G-1e. San Joaquin River Socials

Ms. Jessica Vaughn, founder of the San Joaquin River Socials, shared that she worked with Chuck Kroger from River Tree Volunteers recently, along with the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Eagle Scouts to do some tree planting at the Liddell property. Community member, Paul Duckworth, has been growing oak trees from the seeds that are from his oak tree. Mr. Kroger instructed them on how to properly plant and protect them down at Liddell. The group is working together with Mr. Duckworth and Mr. Sloan to try to do another tree planting at the end of winter. She is hoping that once the surge of COVID-19 decreases they can start getting groups together to do more volunteer work. She is eager to help Fresno Building Healthy Communities with any volunteer work and whatever else they might need after their project gets started.

G-1f. River Partners

Mr. Reyn Akiona, Regional Director of River Partners, thanked everyone for all their collaboration in the past. Because of the nature of their collaboration, he stated he just wanted to bring the Board up to speed on projects they are currently working on. In the future, they would like to provide a project-by-project update to inform the Board on current restoration activities that are occurring in the region. He then introduced Ms. Haley Mirtz.

Ms. Haley Mirtz, a Wildlife Ecologist with River Partners, spoke about the goals and mission of River Partners. They aim to help create new habitat, both for the wildlife and the community. The goal at River Partners is to give new life to river landscapes. A lot of the work that they do is riparian restoration throughout California, from Redding to as far south as San Diego. A lot of the work that they do is geared towards environments where riparian restoration is most valuable. The San Joaquin Valley is a prime area for that. In the 23 years of the organization, they have protected over 12,000 acres of habitat for over 58 threatened and endangered species. She proceeded to show a presentation showing the major watersheds they are working on and spoke then about the major objectives, such as being able to conserve fresh water for local communities to reinvest the money back into those communities and helping to mitigate some climate change implications by sequestering over a million tons of carbon every year with the planting that they do. They are specifically interested in the San Joaquin River Corridor. They have a lot of projects going on in the area, as far north as the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge all the way down south to Ball Ranch, in which they look into new and interesting ways of restoring the habitat out there.

G-2 Deputy Attorney General Report

Ms. Christina Morkner-Brown indicated that she has no updates from the Attorney General's Office.

G-3 Executive Officer Report

Mr. Shelton mentioned that most of his updates are provided in his written report, and he let the public know that it is a part of the Board packet that they can find on the website. He provided a brief overview about the Sycamore Island Fishing Pier Project. He stated that the off-stream fishing pier will most likely be available when Sycamore Island opens this Friday. The restrooms should be ready for use, and there is a fishing pier that has American Disability Act (ADA) access to it. There is a gravel road up into the pond, but once there, parking is right next to the restroom. There is a very long gangway that goes down to a floating dock which moves with the water level. One of the interesting parts of this process is the French drain that was installed to be able to make the pond itself more hydrologically connected to the river. With the drain, you can tell the water quality within the pond is much better, and much more supportive of fish, and should give a better overall fishing experience.

A request was made to do an update on the River West Timeline at each meeting. There has been a brief pause while waiting for the City of Fresno's new administration to get into place. There is currently at least a conceptual agreement with the Mayor's office. They are willing to move forward with the next step, and we will need to get the whole organization up to speed with this. Mr. Shelton noted that this does extend the process a little longer

than he would have hoped. At this point, he thinks they can move forward with the City, and discussions could happen to be able to get it to the next phase which would be design and permitting approval. He hopes to still get that to the WCB's May 21 meeting. The Conservancy would need an application put together in the next month or two in order to be able to make it into the May meeting. These are rough estimates, but we are looking at February 2024 before we get to the construction end. That might be optimistic because government always seems to have some sort of delays, but he thinks it is achievable.

G-4 Board Members' Reports and Comments

Ms. Vance stated that her understanding is that the items that were specified in the settlement agreement have now been met, and the legal challenge will be dropped. She inquired if that was correct. She asked Mr. Shelton or Ms. Morkner-Brown to specify.

Mr. Shelton replied that even though the easement has been agreed to, the State's Department of General Services (DGS) has to do a final approval, and there were a few questions that were raised on some of the easements, but it is in the process of getting worked out. He stated that it is close, and everything looks promising, but we have not quite signed off on the last of it.

Ms. Vance stated that she seemed to recall that in the settlement agreement something was supposed to happen at the execution of the agreement, and it was not contingent on the recordation of the easement. She asked if this was correct.

Mr. Shelton stated that Ms. Morkner-Brown would answer Ms. Vance's question, but from his understanding, the easement was part of the settlement and it needed to be completely signed off.

Ms. Morkner-Brown agreed and said that with regards to the easement, everything had to be approved, the easement recorded, and escrow closed. Then, the dismissal would be filed.

Ms. Vance thought there were two steps. There was the dismissal against the individuals named, which she thought was supposed to occur at the time that the agreement was signed (which had not occurred to her knowledge), and then the overall suit was to be dropped when the easement was recorded.

Ms. Christina Morkner-Brown stated Ms. Vance might be correct, and she would check with David Pai on that. She believed that the first step had already occurred, but she would get clarification.

Mr. Garcia mentioned he had a question regarding the vacancy of the citizen representatives. He asked if there are any updates regarding that position.

Mr. Frazier responded in the past few days they have gotten multiple people that are interested from various organizations. For years, they would only have one or two people interested who would not quite fit the requirements. However, now they have a few

different options that they can send to the Governor's office, and he is confident in the choices.

Mr. Shelton provided details on the requirements for the two counties. Prior to January 1, Fresno County members had to be nominated by environmental groups. The nominations go to the County Board of Supervisors, then the list of nominations is forwarded to the Governor's Office for final selection. For Madera County, the requirement was that they had to be a Riverbottom Landowner, with a list of landowners applying sent to the Governor's Office for final selection. The City of Fresno's only criteria are that the applicants be residents of the city, with a list of residents that apply sent to the Governor's Office for final selection. All the Citizen Representatives are ultimately selected and approved by the Governor's office. Recently, it was reversed where Madera County just needed a resident that was nominated by an environmental group. The list is compiled, and the County Board of Supervisors have the discretion to put extra requirements into their selection process. Mr. Shelton worked with Supervisor Frazier and his staff to try to get people to be interested, and he stated members of the public might still be able to go back to environmental organizations and let them know they are interested. He confirmed with the Governor's Office that they would like multiple candidates for each position. His hope is that they have a list of individuals they can pick from there. He believes we have got some good candidates at this point.

Mr. Garcia commented that this is great, and it is important opening it up to the environmental groups to help in the efforts of getting a good candidate because this has been vacant for a while. He would like to see representation for that region.

Mr. Frazier stated that the vacancy did happen because of the bylaws, as it switches back and forth between environmental to a resident along the area.

Mr. Brandau called for any comments from the public, and with none given, he commenced closed session.

H. CLOSED SESSION

Before convening in closed session, members of the public will be provided the opportunity to comment on Executive Session agenda items.

None.

H-1 Government Code Section 54956.8

Consultation with real property negotiators concerning terms of negotiations, including price and terms of payment.

Property: Johnson
Fresno County (APN 300-250-26)

Negotiating Parties: Erick Johnson

Agency Negotiators: John M. Shelton, San Joaquin
River Conservancy
Daniel Vasquez, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)

REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Christina Morkner-Brown reported the Conservancy Board received an updated on the status of negotiations on the Johnson property and no vote was taken and no decisions made.

I. **NOTICE OF ADVISORY AND BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS, OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS RELATED TO CONSERVANCY MATTERS**

None.

J. **NEXT BOARD MEETING DATE**

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 3, 2021, location to be determined.

K. **ADJOURN**

Board meeting notices, agendas, staff reports, and approved minutes are posted on the Conservancy's website, www.sjrc.ca.gov. For further information or if you need reasonable accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Conservancy at (559) 253-7324.

Mr. Karbassi adjourned the meeting at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

DocuSigned by:

John M. Shelton

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John M. Shelton
Executive Officer- San Joaquin River Conservancy