

**Mission Canyon Association**  
**MINUTES**  
**January 7, 2020 7:30 p.m.**

**Minutes by Ray Smith**

1. Meeting called to order by Jason Saltoun-Ebin:
  - 1.1 Board Members Present: Jason Saltoun-Ebin, Erika Sharghi, Karl Hutterer, Ray Smith, Jean Yamamura, , Hugh Twibell, Sandy Robertson, Nancy Weiss
  - 1.2 Board Members Absent: Laurie Guitteau, Darby Feldwinn, Kellum de Forest, Alex Feldwinn, Kevin Snow
  - 1.3 Guests: Luke Swetland, Steve Windhager, Kadie McShirley, Marc Chytilo, Lisa Bogart, Rondi Guthrie (SCE Govt. Relations Manager, Local Public Affairs), Hazem Gabr (SCE Senior Manager, Water Quality, Environmental Services)
  
2. Minutes of December 2019 meeting approved.
  - 1<sup>st</sup>: Hugh Twibell
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Nancy Weiss
  - All approved
  
3. Treasurer's report (read on January, April, July, October) by Erika Sharghi.

We started with \$50,228.04 and ended with \$47,874.03. We receive \$1,313.00 from dues and County of Santa Barbara (Das Williams for portable restroom). We spent \$3,667.01 on donation to SBMNH, dues to MHTA, IT Communications, Admark for fall newsletter, mutt mitts, and monthly costs for portable restroom.
  
4. Old Business
  - 4.1 Museum of Natural History update (Luke)

Luke thanked the MCA for their donation to the Museum and briefly described their next project that includes: environmental control systems, new roof and solar panels. This work is aimed at improving protection for their collections. The new work will begin in March and is scheduled to take 5 months.
  - 4.2 Botanic Garden update (Steve)

Steve noted that the Garden had an excellent year. He then described a recent issue regarding the elimination of a parking spot located on their property along Mission Canyon Road. He recently met with Nancy Weiss, Ray Smith and a few neighbors to discuss the issue. Some neighbors were upset that the parking spot was being removed (citing the need for space for emergency ingress and egress and improved pedestrian and bicycle passage), while other neighbors requested that the parking spot be removed (citing transient parking with smoking and litter). Steve was concerned because this parking is located on Garden property, created a location for illegal entry to the Garden and was causing erosion problems on their hillside. After discussion, it was agreed that parking would be eliminated but that the area would remain wide enough to allow for increased emergency access.
  - 4.3 Meeting with Das Williams

There was no meeting with Das Williams last month. Kadie noted that the Rocky Nook Park issue raised at our December meeting was being addressed by the Parks Department. Over the next month or so the eroded path will be leveled and repaired. Williams' office was complimented for being "super responsive".

#### 4.4 Efforts to add Verizon service to the Canyon

Sandy reported that she has provided Verizon with possible coordinates for new tower locations. To date, no response from Verizon.

#### 4.5 Historic Bridge/Mission Heritage Trail Association

Erika reported that the American Institute of Architects, Santa Barbara Chapter, presented its 2019 Merit Award for Proposed and Unbuilt Projects to Fred Sweeney and Tom Jacobs. A nationally recognized jury selected the collective effort by MHTA in submission of its "Vision Master Plan" and associated work on the Safe Passage Mission Canyon Corridor. The awards are presented annually in recognition of excellence in the design and execution of architecture. The Design Awards entries will be exhibited at the Faulkner Gallery from February 2 to March 27, 2020.

#### 4.6 Insurance update

No update.

### 5. New Business

#### 5.1 Presentation by Ronie Guthrie and Hazen Gabr, SCE Environmental Services

Because of considerable community concern related to SCE's widening of Tunnel trail, Ronie Guthrie and Hazen Gabr from SCE's Environmental Services were invited to explain the why's and wherefore's of their activity on the trail. Ronie explained that they had hired a contractor to repair "damage due to recent storm activity" and that they had anticipated "minor road work". She explained that what the contractors did was "an oversight" and that SCE was working to ensure it "would not happen again". Hazen described the various ways they intended to "repair the damage" but noted that an "impact assessment" of the "actual damage" was being prepared for the relevant agencies including: Calif. Fish & Wildlife, City Water Department, County Public Works, Army Core of Engineers. These agencies (presumably with leadership from City Water) will then need to approve said impact assessment and provide clearance for a specific repair project.

Considerable discussion between Board members and SCE-folk followed. Barbara Lindemann's letter (see attached) provides a reasonable summary of this wide-ranging discussion. A further key issue, not covered in attached letter, was the question of having appropriate environmental, archaeological, historical, and ecological folk involved in the supervision and restoration of the trail. Also, it was not clear to this scribe that the issue of why the project was done at all was adequately answered. Time for start & completion of the project was not discussed.

#### 5.2 Presentation by Lisa Bogart: Nextdoor and Short Term Rentals

Lisa Bogart (Nextdoor "lead" for Mission Canyon) gave an overview of Nextdoor for Mission Canyon. She stressed the need to keep the conversations on Nextdoor "civil". She also noted that Nextdoor is an excellent way to share information within the canyon and is a potential method for quickly spreading an alert during an emergency. The Nextdoor website provides additional details regarding its use.

## 6. Additional Committee Reports

### 6.1 Mission Heritage Trail Association/Safe Passage (Ericka Sharghi)

See section 4.5 above.

### 6.2 Newsletter (Jean Yamamura)

(Nothing discussed)

### 6.3 Architectural Design Review (Hugh Twibell)

(Nothing discussed)

### 6.4 Parking & Traffic (Jason Saltoun-Ebin)

(Nothing discussed)

### 6.5 Land Use Committee (Kevin Snow)

(Nothing discussed)

### 6.6 Membership (Laurie Guitteau)

(Nothing discussed)

### 6.7 Fire Committee (Ray Smith)

Ray noted that we will have a brush clearance day with support from County Fire. Date to be determined. The cost to MCA will be between one and two thousand dollars.

### 6.8 Website (Alex Feldwinn)

(Nothing discussed)

Next Board Meeting: February 4, 2020.

**Addendum: Letter from former MCA Board President Barbara Lindemann regarding SCE work on the the trail above Tunnel Rd**

Dear Jason,

I wish I could be at the meeting tonight, but I have another commitment.

I live along Mission Creek just below the Tunnel Trail, and heard the extensive work that SCE was doing while the trail was closed to hikers and bikers. I hike the trail about 4 times a week up to the powerlines on the highest ridge. I made the hike as soon as it was opened again to the public, and was shocked at what I saw.

SCE had very big equipment working on the trail for a good 10 days, including weekends. If indeed the management and executives did not know what their crews were doing with all those big rigs over that length of time, they are in big trouble.

They built a berm 3-5 feet high along the canyon side of the road with insufficient places for the water to run off into the arroyos. So mud will flow down along the roadway with the water during heavy rains, finding the few places where previously there were metal lined drainage ditches. Indeed in the rains since the project was stopped, the paved road is covered in mud in many places.

On the uphill side of the road they cut into large rock formations, took down chaparral and trees to widen the road and make pull-out points. The rubble from the cuts was dumped into the canyon, clogging every arroyo that feeds into Mission Creek. Large rocks were perched on the canyon edge as well.

At the top of the hill before the bridge and down to the bridge, they similarly cut away the rocky cliff and dumped the rubble into the creek, also making the same dirt berms along the road on the canyon side. That cliff side has always been subject to dangerous rock fall in rainy weather, and sure enough, there were new rock falls with the recent rains. When City Water Dept. officials saw what had been done, and there was a public outcry, SCE put sand bags along that cliff side, which were subsequently covered with rocks and mud in a subsequent rain.

These curiously placed sand bags and sisal netting placed on some large rocks along the trail and on the banks of Mission Creek by the bridge have done little to stem the potential damage, and reveal very little understanding of the natural terrain in this area.

The banks along side the bridge are covered with very large rock rubble and dirt, and the pond beneath the bridge has been filled in with rocks. This rubble and mud will wash its way down the creek, filling in swimming holes in the creek between the bridge and the Botanic Garden, and clogging the debris dam above the Botanic Garden, endangering as well the historic Indian dam at the Garden. The houses that line Mission Creek between the Garden and Rocky Nook Park, as well as the bridge at Route 192, are threatened with serious debris flow and flooding as time passes, or sooner when there is a major rainfall over several days.

The creek normally swells at the Botanic Garden and at De la Vine street in a big rainfall, and the flooding will be exacerbated by these new loads of rock and mud that have been loosened in the upper canyon.

**In sum, SCE needs to remove and haul away all the rubble that was dumped into Mission Creek directly in the vicinity of the bridge. As well, they need to clear and haul away the rocks and dirt that fill the arroyos between the gate and the bridge, and make sure that the drainage systems so carefully constructed by the City Water Dept. (or whoever did it before) are restored so that water flows freely from the trail into the creek.**

I don't know what problem the mile of berm presents. If weeds and grass grow on it, as is already starting, and provision is made for water to flow around it into the creek at carefully selected spots, it probably does not present a problem, but that is for people more expert than myself to decide.

Barbara Lindemann