

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Public Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 23, 2006

Location: Resources Auditorium
1416 Ninth Street, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

I. Call to order

Chairman Chrisman called meeting to order at 10:10 a.m., in the Resources Agency Auditorium (1416 Ninth Street, First Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814).

II. Chairman's Report

a. Chairman Chrisman indicated that the Governor has put forth an aggressive strategic growth plan that includes: \$9 billion for flood protection, control and water management; \$5 billion water investment fund, water conservation and infrastructure investments on an ongoing basis; \$21 to 22 billion for local projects. The Department of Water Resources website has information on the bond package. The Chairman indicated this is not a traditional bond package, in that it does not include specific funding for conservancies and other organizations, but rather take a more strategic approach. There is also \$215 million for various park needs. The process is very fluid, efforts are being made to reach agreement so that the measure can be placed on the June ballot.

III. Oaths of Office

Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul administered the oaths of office to the three new Board members:

- a. Louis Boitano – South Central Sierra
- b. Allen Ishida – South Sierra
- c. Kim Yamaguchi – North Central Sierra

IV. Roll Call

Mike Tollefson, Dean Swickard, Kim Yamaguchi, Brian Dahle, Linda Arcularius, Mike Chrisman, Helen Baumann, Bob Kirkwood, Louis Boitano, B.J. Kirwan, Byron Sher, Allen Ishida, John Brissenden, and Bernie Weingardt
Members Absent: Carol Whiteside and Mike Genest.

V. Approval of December 2, 2005 Meeting Minutes

After discussion, it was determined that legal counsel John Gussman would make necessary changes to the December 2, 2005 minutes and the matter would be put on the agenda for the June 1, 2006 meeting.

VI. Executive Director's Report

a. Staffing and Administrative Update – Jim Branham noted that the SNC is being assisted by Resources Agency employees Vickie Key and Penny Harding as well as receiving support from the Tahoe Conservancy. Mr.

Branham expressed appreciation to all. He also indicated that he has hired two annuitants – Ken Jones (former Chief Deputy Director at Parks) who is working on a variety of organizational issues and John Nott (former Parks Superintendent) who will work closely on strategic planning (public outreach and meeting organization).

- b. Mr. Branham indicated that the SNC was anticipating receipt of the Data Inventory Project that was being conducted by Sierra Connections, through the support of the Resources Legacy Fund. This project is identifying and compiling various state, federal and local plans that address issues relating to the SNC's mission throughout the region. The SNC is in the process of determining how best to make this information available through the website, with the ultimate goal of a "point and click" map.

Chairman Chrisman asked precisely what kind of data is included.

Mr. Branham responded that the database included a broad array of plans including county general plans, water district plans, forest management plans and various program plans for parks and recreation. It does not include local watershed plans or fire safe plans, but it is a starting point.

There was a discussion regarding the linking to other agencies' information, level of detail of information, gaps in information and ongoing challenges of managing and maintaining an accurate database.

Kerry Timmer of Sierra Connections (the consultants that put together the data base) indicated that the focus was on plan level information identified in the legislation creating the SNC. She indicated that a total of 670 documents are available in the database.

Chairman Chrisman asked how Ms. Timmer envisioned the database maintained and expanded.

Ms. Timmer replied that (1) a significant effort was necessary to keep existing data up to date; some percentage of the documents have already changed; (2) there is a opportunity for users in the public to provide the SNC with plans and other information that meets the criteria.

- c. Budget Update. Mr. Branham indicated that the Governor's budget proposed same level 3.6 million (as current fiscal year). The SNC is working with the Department of Finance to assure that any unexpended start-up funds in this fiscal year will be reappropriated. The SNC also had a requirement in the 2005-06 budget to provide a report to the legislature regarding funding needs. The SNC staff is meeting with the Legislative Analyst's Office to discuss progress to date.

Boardmember Arcularius indicated it is important to stress the things that have been accomplished.

- d. Discussion on Conservancy Logo Project. Mr. Branham indicated he is having discussions with the California Association of Local Arts Councils regarding the implementation of the logo contest. The group has conducted similar activities previously and would provide a good fit for this project. He anticipates that a more complete will be presented at the June 1 meeting, with a plan to conduct the contest in the fall.

VII. Deputy Attorney General's Report.

Christine Sproul indicated that she had no specific items to report.

VIII. Adoption of Conflict of Interest Regulations.

Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul reviewed the proposed regulations with the board. She indicated that language had been submitted to the Office of Administrative Law and available for public comment. No public comment was received.

A discussion occurred relating to the type of activity that needed to be reported, timeliness of reporting, location of filing and the timing of reporting by alternates.

Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Dahle seconded a motion to approve proposed regulations. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Update on Resources Agency's Sierra Cascade Grant Program

Stan Bajorin of the Resources Agency provided the board with an update on the Sierra Cascade Grant program that was included in Proposition 50 in 2002. After releasing draft guidelines, the agency held three public hearings in Nevada City, Susanville and Bishop. The guidelines include a provision that requires projects within the SNC boundaries to demonstrate how the project will further the goals of conservancy. In addition, the SNC will have a person on Mr. Bajorin pointed that out that while the grant funds are to be used for acquisition, the term is broadly defined to include things such as conservation easements, lease and the purchase of development and water rights. A total of \$15.8 million is available to local public agencies, water districts, and local agencies (state agencies are not eligible). Mr. Bajorin indicated that decisions on grant will be made by Secretary Chrisman in the late spring.

Boardmember Arcularius commended Resources staff for conducting the outreach meetings, indicating she attended the Bishop meeting.

X. Strategic Planning Process

Mr. Branham described process to date, which includes the following: approval at the December meeting of a planning process and identification of members Kirwan and Brissenden as a sub committee; a number of discussions with

stakeholders and the sub committee; a review of various formats used by other agencies, concluding that the Department of Finance format is preferred; development of a set of guiding principals, which will assist the SNC and the public in understanding the organizations core principles and how we will conduct ourselves; review of extensive public comments received at last year's workshops and organizing them to fit in the strategic plan.

Mr. Branham also indicated that he is working to identify resources to carry out this ambitious plan in order to be ready for July.

Boardmember Kirwan stated that the team had hit the ground running, a lot had been accomplished. She indicated that the set of guiding principles for future conduct was important as it provides people with a framework and foundation as to who we are. Ms. Kirwan enumerated the various principles for the board.

Boardmember Kirkwood suggested that the principles should address "downward collaboration" with local community groups. He also indicated his belief that projects should not be funded where local entities adopt incompatible zoning and land use planning policies. Mr. Kirkwood also expressed the view that the SNC must deal on a watershed scale and be cognizant of impact of and on surrounding lands. He indicated he would provide specific language to staff.

A discussion occurred relative to establishing criterion for projects based on "regional significance," recognizing the clear preference from stakeholders for local priorities.

Public Comment

Izzy Martin, The Sierra Fund, congratulated the SNC for producing the principles and an approach to the strategic plan. She reminded board members that 90% of funding will come from outside of the conservancy area and that the urban areas are important to the success of the SNC. She also indicated that a great deal of scientific research exists and should be used to guide the SNC plan. She noted that the area does not favor regionalism, but taking advantage of region-wide thinking is essential.

Julie Leimbach, Sierra Nevada Alliance, expressed appreciation for the efforts of staff and the subcommittee and generally supports the guiding principles.

Kerry Timmer, Sierra Cascade Lands Trust Council, agrees with the comments of Ms. Martin and Leimbach. She indicated appreciation for development of the guidelines.

Boardmember Brissenden thanked everyone for their input and involvement. He wants to be certain that we have an open process, open to comments from the

public. He also concurred with Ms. Martin's comments relative to the importance of the urban areas.

Boardmember Kirkwood indicated that visitors and part time residents are not referenced in the principles. He believes the SNC needs a way to involve them.

Boardmember Arcularius wants to be sure that the SNC recognizes the value of agriculture to the region, believes that the workshop summary should reflect this.

Boardmember Yamaguchi supports the idea of leveraging funds, but wants to be sure that local matching funds are not required of communities without resources.

Boardmember Brissenden suggested that development of a guide to potential funds could be developed.

Mr. Branham indicated next steps are critical and will involve receiving input from wide array of stakeholders. He indicated that he was close to agreement with two entities, CA State University Center for Collaborative Policy and the UC extension, which has staff in the region. A draft plan will be released in coming weeks and public workshops will be scheduled in each of the sub regions. The board will review the plan at the June 1 meeting with a final plan before the board in July.

Chairman Chrisman asked if board members were clear on the process.

Boardmember Kirkwood moved, Boardmember Kirwan seconded, authorizing Executive Office to enter into agreements necessary to develop a strategic plan. Motion passed unanimously.

XI. Conservancy Headquarters Office Search

Mr. Branham indicated this was an issue of great interest and importance to the conservancy and the region. He thanked Linda Arcularius and Brian Dahle for spending considerable time on the project including two full days reviewing potential sites. Mr. Branham reminded the board that at the December meeting they approved a set of criteria for evaluating office locations. Staff worked with the Department of General Services (DGS) in getting information out and available to targeted area. Mr. Branham also communicated directly with many local jurisdictions. Eight communities within the region submitted proposals by the deadline. DGS reviewed the proposals for minimum specifications and conducted some site visits prior to the sub committee visits. The sub committee visited six communities and viewed a number of sites. All of this information is included in the staff report.

Mr. Branham thanked Eileen Pope of the SNC staff and Patrick Foster of DGS for their work. He also commended the communities and individuals who came forward with their offers for their efforts.

He indicated the decision was a difficult one. The recommendation of selecting Auburn is before the board.

Board Members Arcularius and Dahle expressed their support for the recommendation and indicated they were impressed with the level of interest among communities. It was emphasized that the recommendation was for an interim location and that by limiting the search for a permanent home to within roughly 30 minutes of Auburn; it would provide enough certainty for employees being hired.

Mr. Branham recommended that the SNC establish an interim office in Auburn, and continue exploring a permanent office within general geographic area (30 minutes driving distance of Auburn), as well as potential satellite offices.

Boardmember Baumann asked for clarification as to when search for a permanent facility would occur and whether a similar public process would be used.

Mr. Branham stated that there was no clear timeline, but that a public process would be utilized

Public Comments

Kevin Handley, City Councilman from Auburn, thanked the board for the opportunity and expressed his appreciation to sub committee and staff for road tour. He indicated Auburn looked forward to a partnership with the SNC.

Bob Perrault, City Manager of Colfax thanked the subcommittee and staff for considering Colfax. He indicated they believe they are the right community for the SNC and will continue to work to secure the permanent site in their community.

Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Yamaguchi seconded, a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to secure an interim headquarters office in Auburn, continue to explore options for a permanent location within 30 minutes of Auburn and to look into possible locations for satellite offices. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Review of 2006 Meeting Schedule and Format

Mr. Branham indicated a proposed meeting schedule for 2006 was in the board packet. After some discussion the following dates were identified for board meetings:

Thursday, June 1 (Central sub-region)
Thursday, July 20 (South)
Wednesday, Oct 4 (East)
Thursday, Dec 7 (North Central)

XIII. Board Members' Comments

Boardmember Sher asked Chairman Chrisman if the bond proposals being discussed in the legislature had funds to support conservancies.

Chairman Chrisman indicated many conversations were being held, but at this point the administration proposal does not have specific funds for conservancies.

Boardmember Kirkwood asked if workshops would be held along with board meetings to gain a better understanding of issues facing the conservancy.

Mr. Branham indicated that he planned to schedule workshops in conjunction with board meetings held in the region, in addition to strategic planning workshops.

Boardmember Brissenden urged board members to review the Sierra Nevada Alliance's publication "Planning for the Future" and their Sierra Climate Change Tool Kit.

XIV. Public Comments

- a. Betty Jones, Sierra Business Council (SBC), expressed support of the headquarters decision and for strategic planning process. She stressed concerns for maintaining a regional perspective, and to include the Cascade portion of the region. She also urged forum locations to be central. She also indicated that SBC had developed a report using applied network mapping software to analyze last year's workshops.
- b. Claudia Elliott stated she published the Southern Sierra Messenger in Tulare County. She urged more coverage of the SNC's activities and indicated she will work with weeklies and dailies in area to find a way to maximize the limited resources and to cover this conservancy and its programs.
- c. Terry Davis, Motherlode Chapter of the Sierra Club, stated that the chapter includes 24 counties and 24,000 members. He stated the guiding principles were impressive and she appreciated the "bottoms up" nature of the approach. She indicated she believed the SNC was off to a great start and she supports the decision to locate in Auburn.

XV. Adjournment

Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Baumann seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 12:52 p.m.