

**Sierra Club Santa Cruz Group Executive Committee  
Meeting Minutes, October 12th, 2016  
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM, Louden Nelson, Santa Cruz, CA**

**Called to Order 6:47**

**Attending: Gillian Greensite, Greg McPheeters, Jack Nelson, Jukka Naukkarinen, Erica Stanojevic**

**Online Votes**

Motion to donate \$500 to the Measure Z campaign to ban fracking in Monterey passed on October 6

**Presentations –**

Mark Mesiti-Miller, Rail Trail

RTC could decide to remove tracks from rail corridor within 6 months

Great Santa Cruz Trail Group formed in late spring and is pushing to remove the tracks  
¼ of which should be constructed by 2018

This group created a study arguing for removal of the tracks

Mark feels that the trail only solution would not attract more visitors nor be environmentally friendly

It will take some time for the rail to be implemented; the RTC is considering accelerating it by not having the rail

There are studies underway which would not even be heard if the trail only option is fast tracked

There will be a petition online promoting both rail and trail

Meeting of RTC at 9am Thursday October 20th

Gillian questions about whether the RTC seems likely to fast track or not; Mark feels the RTC members were talking as if no more study and fast tracking was potentially a good idea

Jack attended the meeting and heard more concern than urgency from the RTC meeting

Jukka asks about the safety of the rail trail option compared with a trail only option

Cynthia mentions that a rail in Chicago was taken out and people are really regretting it there

Erica motions that Mark drafts a letter for us to review with email communication with the transportation committee; Gillian makes a friendly amendment to review agenda for upcoming RTC meeting and use that as input for the letter; Gillian seconds; unanimous

### **Transportation Committee (Jack)**

Measure D

Member comments

First comment supports D and feels it is a compromise

Second comment - also for measure D - because 60% is for sustainable transportation  
Notes that many people want to bike however are afraid of doing so; having better bike pathways would help with that  
Also notes it will set aside money for bus system and rail

Third comment - multi modal user and advocates the measure and does not want to demonize cars; sees this as a measure that is a transition to support biking

Fourth comment - also supportive and mentions that it may take a very long time to produce another measure, which would have no guarantee of passing

Fifth comment - Also supports measure D - notes that there are 11 transportation measures on ballot in CA in various counties, which support active transit in much smaller proportions

Sixth comment - against as it would be for widening the highway and feels it would bring more traffic and not be an environmentally friendly solution; also mentions that

Seventh comment - supportive of D; feels it is a net positive; agrees not everything is perfect however feels it is a balanced measure

Eighth comment - Excited about potential for rail; notes that on bike to work day many people said they would ride bikes more if they had better options; notes it is a county wide measure - and notes that south county already feels that it has not got enough highway funding in for them

Ninth comment - against D - quotes Sierra Club language which is against highway widening; feels that this is a 30 year measure so we wouldn't be able to put something else in that is actually better; and feels that it short changes things that we really need such as the transit system

Tenth comment - against D - notes that the ballot measure shows how a car is the best way to get around; also notes that a different measure to support, for example, the bus system wouldn't have a chance to pass if measure D has passed; suspects that Measure D is actually about boosting the economy

Eleventh comment - supports D - notes that south county residents may spend an extra week per year in their cars due to congestion; notes that there would not be funding for many things unless D passes

Twelfth comment - against D - Avid bike rider - feels that it would be wrong to pass the measure and have 30 years of funding for good projects not be available; notes that San Francisco spends 80% of its money on transit and 20% on cars; and asks why we are so far behind on this

Note from Celia that the animal crossing funding will happen anyway - hears this from 2 sources

Gillian notes there are three possibilities - support, remain neutral, or oppose  
Notes that she was originally opposed to tax because it is a sales tax which is a regressive tax  
Currently leans towards supporting it because she doesn't see another combination of having a chance to pass. If it fails she doesn't see the energy coming forth to get another measure on the ballot and actually passing

Discussion about the Sierra Club policy

Jack notes that he's learned the philosophy that the means one uses to get to an objective is as important as the objective; feels that allowing highway widening into the picture as a political strategy is simply wrong; feels that widening the highway is really terrible for climate change; notes that a pill with 80% medicine and 20% poison isn't actually medicine; argues that another measure could come and pass; references the recent water desalination project as an example of something that went in a positive direction after community came into the picture; notes that campaign contributions include many from out of the county as well as business interests; total funding for the yes on D is over \$300,000

Jukka asks what the consequence would be if it failed - feels that another measure would be faster

Erica notes that growing bicyclists is a way to culturally change

Greg notes that getting a large percentage of funding for bicycling is a win in itself

Jack says that he thinks we should also take into account all the diverse views of Sierra Club members; says a neutral position respects views of all members. A noisy neutral which would say why we don't support or perhaps a more silent neutral

Celia notes that the EIR, funded by us and not the state, has some very interesting things and encourages us to read it as well as the comments made by the Center for Biological Diversity

Another member notes that the move towards electric vehicles will shift the greenhouse gas emissions caused by highway widening

Not possible to take a vote right now as six excom members are needed to endorse a ballot measure and so we may do this by email

Next Transportation Meeting – Date TBD – location TBD

### **Approval of September Minutes**

Greg motions approval of motions - Jukka seconds; unanimous

Greg notes that there is a chapter meeting on October 18th; Gillian and Erica may go

### **Treasurer's Report (Mary)**

Relayed from Greg - says we may have gained money however that may be because chapter hasn't been billing us for payroll so likely net loss over past few months

### **Political Committee (Ron)**

- Candidate Endorsements – Election Update - successfully completed our endorsements

Jack appreciates that our candidates are able to use our endorsements

Gillian mentions that if one of us is going to be gone for an extended period to be cautious of being heavily involved in an effort as it ends up being difficult on others

- Measure Z – Voted to make a contribution to Measure D and we will be making a donation as well; apparently well received that we made a donation as well; an opportunity to write about Measure Z on website

### **Events and Outreach Committee (Morgan)**

- o Jessie Street Marsh

- o Steve Mandel

- o Monterey Birding Festival

- o Measure D Forum

- o Open streets

Morgan says they all went well; notes that we did get volunteers however that because the events were so close together that it was hard to get volunteers and it would be good to space our our events

Greg notes that there may be something connected with National about having people check that they are interested in in

Gillian notes that it would be good to follow up with volunteers and give a thanks to them; Morgan asks how we can use Sierra Club stationary for this; Morgan also wants to get volunteering info/asks on our website

An ask to get the Jessie Street Marsh write up on the website

Gillian notes that the birding festival is something maybe we shouldn't spend time with because there were few people reached by tabling there. Morgan notes that it is thus far the only event in Watsonville so she wanted to check it out; and that maybe other events are better and she has reached out to other groups

A compliment from Paul about the forum being successful

Gillian requests that the volunteer lists get followed up on

## **Upcoming Events**

- o Proposal Thursday November 17th - Jan Nodo - slide show about animals
  - o Third Thursday March - kayaking the Grand Canyon
- Gillian motions to approve events; Jukka seconds; unanimous

Community Calendar - Morgan attended training and feels it is positive; \$10 a month; Jack notes that when he checks it he does learn about a lot of events; a lot of organizations are using it; if we don't like it later we can abandon it.

Gillian motions to approve \$10 a month to participate in community calendar; Jack seconds; unanimous

Website - would we like Morgan to invest time to make improvements? Sounds like Ted is open to assisting with this;

- Next Meeting – Date TBD in November – location TBD

## **Conservation Committee (Gillian)**

- Soquel Creek Water Transfers

Doug mentions that there are three technical issues holding up the transfers - flushing, permitting, and water chemistry work. He notes that the water rights issues shouldn't be an issue as the water rights are pre-1914

Doug will help with getting some factual edits in there

We will get a draft revised and send it for an email vote.

- PG&E - didn't get on agenda; today Don Lane has said he has asked to get it on a November agenda - so we should really try to rally people to be active for this

- Aptos Village Soil Contamination Issue - Next steps? Seems that the critical issue is whether or not the soil had been tested in a different area from where the tank was removed; county says they did good testing. Gillian emailed Becca and asked for evidence about the different tank location. There is a video interview of someone saying they saw it in a different location; the county did not interview anyone. Becky is asking for an independent study to be done - a citizen group is willing to pay for it - however is not able to get permission to get onto the land even with direct supervision of the county. Becky has filed a notice of intent to sue asking the site be completely cleaned up. After 90 days the state attorney general might be willing to step in with community support of an independent investigation. Becky asks for another letter in response to the letter we received; saying that we would support an independent investigation. Becky will keep us informed of the results of sending out an intent to sue.

Gillian asks for evidence to support us if push this issue as we will be going up against the county which says everything is fine. So she asks for the video of the interview Becky talks about.

- Jessie Street Marsh, next steps (Erica)

#### **Nominations committee -**

Timeline must be reviewed; stay tuned; Morgan can promote

- Next Meeting: Oct 26, 6:30-8:30, Loudon Nelson

**Transportation** - Jack notes that at the Measure D forum there were people who applauded for both sides

**Adjourned at 8:43**