



DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES
Delta Protection Commission Meeting
Thursday, September 15, 2022

Jean Harvie Community Center
14273 River Road
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

1. Call to order

Chair Nottoli called the meeting to order at 5:14 p.m. and led the meeting participants in a flag salute.

2. Welcome and roll call

Commission Clerk Morgan Matz called the roll. Present at roll call: Chair Nottoli, Vice Chair Winn, Commissioners Villegas, Burgis, Vasquez, Paroli, Slater, Bugsch, Agar (for Omishakin), Birdsong (for Ross), Vogel (for Crowfoot), ex-officio designee Udang (for Sen. Talamantes Eggman), and ex-officio designee Paderes (for Assemblyman Villapudua). Commissioners Kott, Steele, Nakanishi, and Mussi were absent with no alternate present.

3. Public comment - Opportunity for the public to address the Commission regarding items not on the agenda

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

4. Report on Delta Stewardship Council activities

Chair Nottoli noted that the Council would meet next on Thursday, September 22, and that former Vice Chair Virginia Madueño had assumed her new position as Chair.

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

5. Commissioner comments/announcements

Commissioner Vogel announced that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board are nearing completion of their Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, and expect similar plans concerning the North and South Delta to be ready before the end of 2022.

Commissioner Agar provided an update concerning the Clean California initiative, noting that there has been some difficulty establishing an interagency agreement, but that the agreement was expected to be announced on Friday, September 20. He also announced that Caltrans is continuing to pursue a number of statewide beautification projects; that another Clean California Day Of Action like the one that took place on July 7, 2021 would soon be announced for the 2022 Autumn season; and that the California Department Of Technology has asked

Caltrans to assist in the installation of 10,000 miles of statewide broadband internet connectivity infrastructure, with work beginning in December 2022. Commissioner Vasquez and Slater both emphasized the importance of extending broadband internet access into agricultural areas of the Delta, and Commissioner Winn expressed similar urgency in extending broadband internet into the disadvantaged communities of the Central Valley. Commissioner Agar assured them that agricultural lands are included in the project's master plan.

Commissioner Villegas announced that his office would be leading a waterways clean-up project scheduled for September 21, 2022.

Ex-Officio Designee Udang announced that SB1065 establishing the California Abandoned and Derelict Commercial Vessel Program within the Natural Resources Agency is currently on the Governor's desk awaiting signature. Commissioner Bugsch added that the derelict tugboats Standard 2 and All-American had been recently removed from Delta waterways and would soon be dismantled. Ex-Officio Designee Udang then suggested establishing a system by which the Commission would be notified when a derelict vessel had been successfully removed.

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

CONSENT AGENDA

6. Consider approval of July 21, 2022 meeting minutes

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Villegas and seconded by Commissioner Vasquez to approve the July 21, 2022 meeting minutes; in a voice vote, the motion passed 11-0-0 with all Commissioners present at roll call voting aye.

REGULAR AGENDA

7. Recognition of Service for Former Executive Director, Erik Vink

Former Executive Director Erik Vink was presented by the Commission with a card commemorating his years of service as well as a framed print by artist Gregory Kondos. Mr. Vink delivered remarks expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Commission and work with Commission staff, and all Commissioners were then given the opportunity to deliver a personal message to Erik in return.

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

8. Receive Executive Director report

Chair Nottoli briefly introduced the Commission's new Executive Director, Bruce Blodgett.

Executive Director Blodgett reported that the Commission had recently sent a letter to DWR director, Karla Nemeth, strongly urging DWR to hold multiple meetings in the Delta, rather than holding only virtual meetings, in order to provide Delta residents who may not be able to

reliably access virtual meetings an opportunity to offer their input on the Delta Conveyance Project. Although DWR has not been receptive to that suggestion, Executive Director Blodgett assured the Commission that those efforts will continue.

He also reported that efforts to fill two Commission staff positions are ongoing, led by Assistant Director Natasha Nelson and Senior Environmental Planner Kirsten Pringle; that plans to move Commission headquarters to a new office suite within the same building had been pushed from October to November 2022; that the Delta Protection Advisory Committee will meet at the Walnut Grove public library on October 4, 2022; and that recent meetings regarding land use in the Delta had focused on agricultural industrial truck parking in the Delta's primary zone and a proposal to build a wedding venue in the Delta named "The Rustic Chandelier". He then announced that the Commission is considering holding a special session on October 20, 2022 to discuss the Delta Conveyance Project, and that the next regular Commission meeting will be held on November 17, 2022; however, specific times and locations have yet to be determined.

Chair Nottoli commended Commission staff's work on establishing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area, especially Program Manager Dr. Blake Roberts, who is leading the program.

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

9. Receive Delta Protection Advisory Committee (DPAC) report

Executive Director Bruce Blodgett filling in for DPAC Chair Mariah Looney, who was absent from the meeting, reported that the Committee had recently heard a presentation from Dr. Blake Roberts regarding the NHA, and stated once again that the next DPAC meeting will be held on October 4, 2022 at the Walnut Grove public library. Agenda items planned for that meeting include discussion of the Delta Conveyance Project.

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

10. Receive report on 2022 Delta Flood Preparedness activities and consider approval of Delta Flood Preparedness Week resolution

Senior Environmental Planner Kirsten Pringle provided a brief introduction to California Flood Preparedness Week, noting that it was first instituted in 2012 and had given rise to the website deltafloodready.com. She reported that this year the Commission plans to focus on encouraging Delta residents and stakeholders to visit the website and make use of the information contained therein. She then volunteered to lead the Commission's public outreach efforts. Commissioner Burgis commented that drainage issues have proved to be a difficult problem in flood preparedness, especially for new landowners who are often not familiar with the drainage situation on their property, and offered Contra Costa County's assistance in promoting the website.

Chair Nottoli recommended reaching out to each Delta county individually to encourage them to adopt their own Flood Preparedness Week resolutions.

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Burgis and seconded by Commissioner Bugsch to approve the Delta Flood Preparedness Week resolution; in a voice vote, the motion passed 11-0-0 with all Commissioners present voting aye.

11. Receive report on Delta National Heritage Area (NHA) and consider delegation of authority

After offering his condolences on the recent death of prominent Locke historian and National Heritage Area Advisory Committee (NHAAC) member, James Motlow, Program Manager Dr. Blake Roberts reported that the NHAAC last met on September 1, 2022 and discussed a draft version of a Management Plan Resource Inventory listing the various resources available in the Delta region, with additional discussion and revision planned for the Committee's upcoming meeting on October 6, 2022. At the same September meeting, CA State Parks presented its goals and strategies for the NHA's Interpretive Plan, outlining how it intends to curate and deliver relevant historical, scientific, and cultural information to Delta NHA visitors.

Dr. Roberts also announced that the National Parks Service had made grant money available to the NHA for federal fiscal year 2022 in the amount of \$157, 500, and requested that the Commission delegate authority to Executive Director Bruce Blodgett to amend the NHA's existing cooperative agreement to accept that funding.

Chair Nottoli requested general information about the Delta NHA Forum event planned for November 3, 2022, and Dr. Roberts responded that although the program for the event is still being developed, the 2021 Forum event involved an informative overview of the NHA's current progress followed by workshops addressing the needs of the NHA, and this year's event is likely to be structured in a similar way.

Commissioner Villegas suggested that it may be especially productive at this stage for Dr. Roberts to schedule a series of speaking dates in various locations around the Delta where he could deliver information about the NHA and its intended goals.

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Vasquez and seconded by Vice Chair Winn to delegate authority to Executive Director Bruce Blodgett to accept additional federal funding for the NHA for federal fiscal year 2022; in a voice vote, the motion passed 11-0-0 with all Commissioners present voting aye.

It was noted that after voting had been completed, Commissioners Burgis and Vasquez left the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

12. Receive update on Delta Conveyance Project environmental review

Program Manager Virginia Gardiner first provided some historical background, reporting that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Preparation was the first opportunity available to the Commission to comment on the Delta Conveyance Project's environmental impact. At that time, the Commission offered extensive comment recommending methods of evaluation of multiple mitigation measures and project alternatives including: improving through-Delta conveyance; reducing reliance on water exports; analysis of the far eastern alignment; analysis of alternative points of diversion; and further hydrological study related to various water resources such as groundwater. In the area of land use analysis, comments focused on preserving the Vision 2030 goal of developing "Delta as place"; protection of agricultural land and use of conservation easements; impacts on levees and drainage; impacts on local recreation; noise and aesthetic impacts; and issues related to local culture and environmental justice.

Ex-Officio Designee Xochitl Paderes asked to receive copies of all previous comments on the project offered by the Commission, and Commissioner Villegas extended that request on behalf of all Commissioners.

Vice Chair Winn requested an example of an environmental justice concern recognized by Commission staff. Ms. Gardiner noted that although the Environmental Impact Statement is not yet available, DWR prepared related environmental justice information in a Socio-economic section of the EIR. She cited degradation due to business closures, increased traffic, and decreased air quality as potential issues. Vice Chair Winn then mentioned that operations at a quarry in San Joaquin County had caused significant damage to local roads, and suggested that this project may have a similar impact. Ms. Gardiner noted that potential damage to roads is being considered in the Commission's response.

Commissioner Villegas asked when Commissioners can submit comments about this project to Commission staff, and Ms. Gardiner answered that comments are welcome at any time.

Ex-Officio Designee Lilliana Udang asked which stakeholders are already involved in developing comment on the project. Ms. Gardiner answered that the issue had been brought before the DPAC for consideration, and that discussions between DPAC Chair Mariah Looney and Commission staff are ongoing. She also noted that Commission staff regularly distribute a newsletter to the public, and recent issues of that newsletter provide comment submission instructions for anyone living or working in the Delta to provide input. Designee Udang noted that the DWR has published an effective explainer/summary of the project and various concerns surrounding it.

Chair Nottoli commented that he feels strongly that holding at least one in-person meeting in the Delta is essential to establishing adequate opportunity for public comment, and that he agrees that an extension of the public comment period would be appropriate. He then asked what reasons DWR has given for their refusal to hold in-person meetings, and Executive Director Bruce Blodgett answered that DWR has cited COVID-19 safety concerns as their primary reason.

Commissioner Slater noted that all Delta counties and all Delta water agencies are in favor of an in-person meeting and an extension of the public comment period.

Chair Nottoli expressed his support for convening a special session on October 20 to discuss the project and develop further comment.

Chair Nottoli asked for public comment and there was none.

13. Adjourn

Chair Nottoli adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.