



**DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES**  
**Delta Protection Commission Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 9, 2023**

Peter's Steakhouse  
203 2<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Isleton, CA 95641

**1. Call to order**

Vice Chair Vasquez called the meeting to order at 5:08 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: Vice Chair Vasquez, Commissioners Villegas, Hume, Steele, Nakanishi, Slater, Bugsch, and Paroli. and ex-officio designee Udang (for Sen. Talamantes Eggman). Commissioners Ding, Mussi, Birdsong (for Ross), Vogel (for Crowfoot), ex-officio designee Udang (for Sen. Talamantes Eggman), and ex-officio Assemblymember Villapudua were absent with no alternate present. It was decided in an informal discussion to address agenda items in an order that would accommodate the expected late arrival of Chair Burgis.

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

Vice Chair Vasquez asked for public comment and there was none.

**4. Receive Draft Comment Letter on the Delta Conveyance Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

Program Manager Virginia Gardiner provided background information regarding the draft comment letter, explaining that a number of errors that initially appeared in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) had carried over into the EIS, and much like previous comment letters already submitted by the Commission, this letter attempts to address these errors.

She then noted that although many concerns about the project held by Commission staff had also been expressed by other agencies and stakeholders providing comment, this letter attempts to address issues of particular concern to Delta residents and visitors, including the project's visual impact on the Delta landscape, increased noise, cultural resource impacts, detrimental effects on fish and wildlife, and land use issues. She mentioned lower Roberts Island as just one of multiple areas that could be severely impacted by the project.

Commissioner Steele asked for more information regarding traffic impacts along Highway 160. Ms. Gardiner explained that the project would require re-routing Highway 160 in the town of Hood and building new, temporary levees, in addition to other traffic disruptions.

Vice Chair Vasquez asked for public comment and there was none.

## **5. Receive Draft Survey of Cultural Resources in the Delta Conveyance Project Area for Submittal with Draft EIS Comment Letter**

Program Manager Virginia Gardiner introduced the draft survey by referring to the presentation she gave at the previous Commission meeting in January. She reminded the Commission that this survey was meant to serve as a substitute for a larger ongoing cultural resource inventory regarding the heritage of the Delta region, and that it pertains only to the area directly impacted by the Conveyance Project.

As the comment period on the Conveyance Project was scheduled to close before the larger cultural resource inventory would be finished, Commission staff requested that the Commission approve the draft survey as an attachment to its comment letter.

Vice Chair Vasquez asked for public comment and there was none.

**Motion:** It was moved by Commissioner Villegas and seconded by Commissioner Hume to approve the Draft Survey of Cultural Resources in the Delta Conveyance Project area for submittal with the draft EIS comment letter; in a voice vote, the motion passed 8-0-0 with all Commissioners present at roll call voting aye.

## **6. Commissioner Comments/Announcements**

Commissioner Slater announced that the Central Valley Flood Control Association had introduced California Senate Bill 638, the Climate Resiliency and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2024, which, if passed, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$6 billion for flood protection and climate resiliency projects.

Commissioner Steele announced that the 2023 Isleton Crawdad Festival is scheduled for June 18, 2023, and that the city of Isleton had won a \$125,000 grant to restore its baseball field.

Commissioner Hume commented that multiple projects aimed at improving recreation in the Delta including the building of a Gateway Monument and a publicly accessible boat launch site in the Delta Shores area are in progress.

## **7. Consider approval of November 17, 2022 meeting minutes**

**Motion:** It was moved by Commissioner Villegas and seconded by Commissioner Hume to approve the January 19, 2023 meeting minutes; in a voice vote, the motion passed 8-0-0 with all Commissioners present at roll call voting aye.

## **8. Receive Executive Director Report**

Executive Director Bruce Blodgett reported that Commission Staff is looking for new venues in each Delta county that may be suitable for Commission meetings, and invited suggestions from Commissioners on an ongoing basis.

He then reported that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently held a comment workshop on the Delta Conveyance Project, which provided the public an opportunity to comment on the project in person, and that Commission staff is moving forward with development of a comment letter regarding the project and expect to submit it before the comment period closes on March 16, 2023.

He also reported that development of the Delta Levee Investment Strategy (DLIS) is ongoing, and thanked Commissioner Slater for his assistance in organizing a tour of Delta Levees for the Delta Stewardship Council whose work concerns the DLIS. He noted that the Delta Stewardship Council had made encouraging commitments regarding Delta levee subvention funding; that the search for candidates to fill two staff vacancies continues; that a consulting contract with Point Heritage Development Consulting (Point HDC) to develop the National Heritage Area Management Plan had been signed, and that the Management Plan is expected to be complete in March 2024; that he and Program Manager Blake Roberts attended the National Heritage Area (NHA) Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. in February and met with multiple congresspeople representing portions of the Delta including Representatives Garamendi, Harder, DeSaulnier, and Duarte; that Commission staff is monitoring a planned housing and hotel development on Jersey Island that appears to be inconsistent with various land use and development plans established for that area; that Caltrans signage projects appear to have been delayed by poor weather, but are expected to begin shortly; and that the Commission is currently facing a budget surplus, largely due to staff vacancies.

Nancy Morgan, a representative from Point HDC, then addressed the Commission, explaining that she is working with Augie Carlino, Executive Director of the Rivers of Steel NHA, and Peter Samuel, formerly of the National Parks Service, on development of the NHA Management Plan, and that they hope to produce a draft version of the Plan in Fall 2023.

Commissioner Steele expressed concern that the length of the projected timeline for development of the Management Plan may be too long and offered his support in speeding up the process.

Commissioner Villegas expressed concern that development of the DLIS may be taking long enough that there is a danger of confusion about what has already been done and decided in relation to the project, and suggested establishing a protocol for tracking various decisions and conversations surrounding it.

Vice Chair Vasquez asked for public comment and there was none.

## **9. Receive Delta As Place Report**

Jean Yokotobi, president of the Isleton Chamber of Commerce and founder of Delta Life magazine, recounted her experiences living in northern California as the child of Asian immigrants. She highlighted her experience being born in an internment camp before being raised in Gridley, CA, living through the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 70s, developing a passion for fishing in the Delta as an adult, and finally getting involved in building preservation in the Delta and the publication of Delta Life magazine.

It was noted that Commission Chair Diane Burgis arrived to the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

**10. Report On Delta Stewardship Council Activities**

Chair Burgis reported that the Council has been discussing the DLIS and has grown concerned that action is needed in order to continue the levee subvention program.

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was none.

**11. Special Recognition of Former Chair Don Nottoli**

Chair Burgis led a recognition of outstanding service for recently retired former Commission Chair, Don Nottoli.

**12. Receive Delta Protection Advisory Committee (DPAC) Report**

DPAC Vice Chair Russ Ryan reported that the Committee met on February 7, 2023 and discussed various issues related to the Delta Conveyance Project including construction impacts and outreach to local marinas. Members of the Stakeholder Engagement Committee expressed disappointment with their ability to make their input heard. He then assured the Commission that the DPAC is working on levee modernization with a team of others, and more information about that work will be forthcoming over the next several months.

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was none.

**13. Adjourn**

Chair Burgis adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.