



## MINUTES

### Conservation District of Southern Nevada Board Meeting

Clark County Government Center- 500 S. Grand Central Pkwy., Bighorn Room 5<sup>th</sup> FL  
January 16, 2008 – 1:30 p.m.

#### Attendees:

Supervisor Jodi Bechtel, Chair  
Supervisor Jon Wardlaw, Vice Chair  
Supervisor John Hunt, Treas./Secretary  
Supervisor Dirick Van Gorp  
Supervisor Elise McAllister  
Supervisor Joseph Fortier

Alt. Supervisor Mark Silverstein  
Jarrod Edmunds (NRCS)  
Wilisha Daniels  
Jennifer Szwejbka  
Jennifer Espinosa

#### OPEN MEETING

**Consent Agenda:** Consent Agenda items are considered by the CDSN Board to be routine and may be acted upon in one motion. However, the Board may discuss any consent item individually if requested when the Consent Agenda is considered for approval. (Action item)

1. Compliance with Nevada Open Meeting Law
2. Approval January 2008 Agenda
3. Approval of November 2007 Minutes
4. Correspondence
5. Pay Bills
6. Introductions

Supervisor Bechtel called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

Supervisor McAllister moved to amend the November minutes and approve the consent agenda.  
Supervisor Wardlaw seconded. The motion passed.

#### Business Agenda:

7. Accept Nominations for Board Supervisor from Board and Requests for Consideration from Audience (attendees may be limited to 5-minutes to introduce themselves and explain their interest in serving) – (Discussion Item)

Supervisor Wardlaw nominates Joseph Fortier. No other nominations were made.

8. Appoint Board Supervisor for 3 year term- (Action Item)

**Supervisor Wardlaw motions to accept the nomination for Joseph Fortier to fill the vacancy.**

**Supervisor Van Gorp seconded. The motion passed.**

9. Appoint Vice Chair – (Action Item)

**Supervisor McAllister motions to nominate Supervisor Wardlaw for Vice Chair. Supervisor Van Gorp seconded. The motion passed.**

10. Appoint Second RC&D Representative –(Action Item)

No board members interested. Supervisor Bechtel motions for board to possibly appoint staff member. Supervisor McAllister is mildly interested in attending RC&D meeting. Supervisor Bechtel says this item is to be considered further in the next board meeting.

11. Appoint Second Check Signing Authority – (Action Item)

**Supervisor Hunt motions to appoint Supervisor Fortier as second signing authority. Supervisor Wardlaw seconded. The motion passed.**

12. Financial Report – (Discussion/Action Item)

Wilisha is putting in another request for reimbursement from DAQEM. **Supervisor Wardlaw motions to approve the financial report. Supervisor McAllister seconded, motion passed.**

13. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Jarrod Edmunds (Discussion/Action Item)

The 2007 Farm Bill has not been approved yet, they are still on a continuing resolution. Received 5 million for EQIP in Nevada. So far, 80% of that has been obligated for the state and over one million will be coming to Southern Nevada. A second sign up was announced and will remain open until February 15<sup>th</sup>. NRCS created a list of potential clients through the Clark County Assessors Office list of designated agricultural parcels. Clark County has a total of 244 parcels that are crops and/or livestock. Those parcels equate to 5,084 acres total of agricultural land. A mailing list was developed for properties about 10 acres which narrowed parcels of agricultural land to 109 with 58 owners, not including tribes. They will also be requesting \$750,000 for Ranch Land Protection Program of agricultural lands, \$100,000 for wildlife habitat program and \$700,000 for ground and surface water for irrigation projects.

14. Appreciation Plaque for Judy Currier- (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Wardlaw recommended that the board authorize staff to research plaque options with a limit of \$100. Via e-mail an example of text and price of plaque will be sent to the board. **Supervisor Wardlaw motions to have staff look into purchasing a plaque. Supervisor Van Gorp seconded. The motion passed.** Supervisor Bechtel will write a letter to go with the plaque.

15. Rotation of Meeting Location – (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor Hunt recounted what Supervisor Wardlaw had mentioned about continuing to have board meetings at the county, saying that by continuing the meetings at the county CDSN could possibly portray that we are favoring the County. Supervisor Hunt suggested having a meeting at the North Las Vegas offices or Henderson because of their continued financial support, annually donating \$10,000 each. Supervisor Wardlaw disagreed with rotating locations because it portrays “bad advertisement” and is a burden on staff. Supervisor Wardlaw suggested creating an accomplishment report to send to the Cities versus eating up more of their money for meeting rooms. Merely inviting them to board meetings would not be sufficient to show them what we do. Supervisor Fortier agreed with rotating the meeting location. Supervisor Bechtel concluded that the location of each board meeting will be discussed at the end of each board meeting.

16. Farm Bill “Thank You” letter review – (Discussion/Action Item)

**Supervisor Fortier motions to send the letter as it had been drafted. Supervisor Wardlaw seconded. The motion passed.**

17. NACD Conference February 10-13, 2008 - (Discussion/Action Item)

Wilisha Daniels stated that we usually send one person due to budget amount. Jarrod Edmunds mentioned that he will be going, but he will be flying in Monday morning, not driving. Jennifer Szwejbka will be unable to attend due to Clark County Outside Agency grant due February 14<sup>th</sup>. **Supervisor Wardlaw motions to have one person attend. Supervisor Van Gorp seconded. The motion passed.**

18. Tomi Garden Follow –up - (Discussion/Action Item)

Jennifer Szwejbka passed around pictures of the completed Tomi Garden. On Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup> Capriati completed construction of the Tomi Garden in the rain. Supervisor Hewitt delivered plants that morning. Six plants were put in at a later date because they had been left at the nursery, the plants are now currently in ground. Horizon donated the mulch and irrigation materials. Desert Gardens Center gave discount on plant material. Capriati provided labor and equipment. RC&D funds (\$1135) covered the cost of the plant material at a discounted price. Final report sent into Teri and CDSN was reimbursed. Horizon’s total donation equaled \$1,024 and Desert Gardens Center \$565 of plant material. No word was sent from Capriati about amount donated. CDSN made match between plant material and Horizon

donation, so Capriati information was not vital. Plant signs as well as a commemorative plaque or bench for Tomiyasu and opening ceremony still need to be completed. Henderson has approximately \$7,000 that may be able to be used for signage and bench. Supervisor Fortier suggested letting Henderson purchase the bench. Supervisor Hunt thanked everyone for spending the money before the deadline. Supervisor Wardlaw said to have the plaque completed before the ceremony as well as cost estimates for plaques and plant signs.

#### 19. Wells Fargo Debit/Credit Card – (Action Item)

Jennifer Szwejbka explained that the CDSN website had crashed and staff discussed with Supervisor Bechtel using Network Solutions to rebuild website. Currently Network Solutions is acting as host for CDSN website. Network Solutions does not accept check therefore a debit card would allow another way to access checking account funds. Supervisor Wardlaw suggested checking with Henderson or County to host the website. Supervisor Bechtel cautions that response may be slow from bigger entities like the County or Henderson. Supervisor Fortier suggested checking with Dennis Swartzell who is webmaster for the Southern Nevada Arborist Group (SNAG). Supervisor Fortier also said the District should have a debit card with restrictions. Supervisor Van Gorp motions for Jen S. to contact Dennis Swartzell. No second. Supervisor Wardlaw asks Supervisor Hunt if he had any suggestions for card restrictions. Supervisor Hunt wanted feedback from the board on debit card procedures. Supervisor Wardlaw suggested the treasurer be in control of restrictions on debit card use. Supervisor Wardlaw motions to support the card and recommendation of proper use from treasurer and that this item should be approved at the next meeting. Van Gorp seconded, the motion passed. Supervisor Bechtel is opposed to motion because of irrigation demonstration program with BOR, results must be posted on the CDSN by end of grant. Supervisor Bechtel says that because of the lack of staff time and difficulty of asking bigger entities for charity it might be simpler to allow one time use of card. **Supervisor McAllister motions to approve one time use of card for \$600 (cost of website construction). Van Gorp seconded. The motion passed. Supervisor Wardlaw is opposed to motion because Henderson may provide web services for free.**

#### 20. Clarification of actions that call for Board approval – (Discussion)

Jennifer Szwejbka wanted guidance on what actions exactly need board approval and which actions can be left to staff to decide. Supervisor Fortier said that anything that concerns money that has not been previously approved needs to be a board action item. Supervisor Hunt said any bills that are recurring or have a set dollar amount do not need to be approved, like our wages. However, personnel issues, problems with outside agencies, mission statement, one time purchases or new items, and new grants or anything that commits the Board needs to be approved by the Board. It may be something outside of what we normally do. Supervisor Hunt emphasizes that grants should be brought to the board. Supervisor Hunt suggested that if further counsel is needed concerning Board action items staff can consult with Kelly or Sandi.

#### 21. Update of CDSN Strategic Plan – (Discussion/Action Item)

No record was found in files or storage of CDSN Strategic Plan. Jennifer Szwejbka also contacted both Sandi and Judy Currier and neither had any recollection of a CDSN Strategic or Long Term Plan. The Board recommended having a full blown listed meeting to be held to discuss a strategic plan. Supervisor Wardlaw suggested getting a working group together instead of a committee to start a strategic plan to bring forward for approval at a later board meeting. Supervisor Fortier, Wardlaw, Silverstein, McAllister as well as Jarrod Edmunds from NRCS and Jennifer Szwejbka are interested in helping with a strategic plan. A timeline for creating the strategic plan will be an agenda item at the next board meeting. Staff will set up a meeting with those interested.

#### 22. Staff Report – Jennifer Szwejbka (Discussion/Action Item)

Jennifer Szwejbka will be teaching classes at Acacia Demonstration Gardens. The next class dates are March 22<sup>nd</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup>. March 15<sup>th</sup> will mark the date of the first event at Acacia Gardens (open house). The event will take place from 9a.m- noon. Strawbale construction is complete. Plastering alone of the strawbale cost \$16,500. Southwest Homes were responsible for providing the subcontractors for the plastering and painting who will be acknowledged on the strawbale brochure. Demonstration garden at strawbale structure can go forward once weather permits. During the week of January 16<sup>th</sup> Jennifer Szwejbka launched stormwater pollution poster contest as well as the stormwater workbook. Henderson

has already started putting stormwater plaques above storm drains. CDSN has two years to complete this project. A link to the workbook can be found on the lvstormwater website. A total of 8,104 recycled Christmas trees were chipped. Friday January 18<sup>th</sup> will mark the last chipping date. A total of 13 boxes of Drip Irrigation guides were sent out, 25 were mailed individually.

A mention was made of the untimely death of Olin Sims, president of NvACD. He died Friday, December 7, 2007.

Wilisha Daniels reported 25,000 conservation calendars were printed. 22,000 went to local schools. Every school in Clark County received a box of 65 calendars. Wilisha will be putting on a new outreach training course for DAQEM. Wilisha will be revising student outreach program called DAQEM for Kids. Wilisha will also be designing the website for this program. School District will be aiding DAQEM with a curriculum for grades K-12 for teachers to use that fit Nevada standards. An RFP was put out approximately 6 months ago that received 2 responses for DAQEM's new outreach campaign. Vanguard Media will help launch new public outreach campaign in May. This new campaign will focus on introducing DAQEM in place of the Dusthole Campaign. Two events coming up are Preview Las Vegas and Women's Health Fair in February. Wilisha will coordinate Clark County fair community environmental tent this year.

#### 23. Supervisor's Report – (Discussion/Action Item)

Supervisor McAllister complimented strawbale structure and greenhouse that is up and running with lettuce and other plants at Moapa Valley Farm. The high school is working on getting the insurance for selling their vegetables to the local grocery store and restaurants. Supervisor McAllister also reported that she was appointed for first recreation of state on the BLM Resource Advisory council.

Supervisor Silverstein reported that the Stormwater Quality Management Committee kicked off a stakeholder working group that is looking at home builders, utilities, SNWA, engineering companies, etc. that will hopefully work together for a more cohesive stormwater pollution prevention program.

Supervisor Hunt thanks everyone for spending RC&D monies for the Tomi Garden on time. He also reported that he will be attending the next RC&D meeting.

Supervisor Fortier reported that to his surprise many commercial entities were supportive and interested in the Drip Irrigation Guide. He also reported that the CDSN needs to get an original copy of the guide to make proper edits due to copywriting problems that could arise.

Supervisor Bechtel reported that John Tenner was hired by the CC Desert Conservation Program for MSHCP permit amendment and compliance efforts.

Supervisor Wardlaw reported that Clark County adopted an energy element plan for Southern Nevada and Clark County. The plan is called "The Energy Plan". The plan addresses using BLM lands for renewable energy production.

#### 24. Open Discussion and Public Comment – (Discussion Only)\*

None.

#### 25. Next Meeting Date- (Discussion Only)

Next meeting will take place on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm. Location will be the NRCS office.

#### 26. Agenda Items- (Discussion/Action Item)

Agenda items to be continued:

- Appoint Second RC&D Representative
- Tomi Garden Follow-up
- Update of CDSN Strategic Plan
- Wells Fargo Debit/Credit Card

*The Board moves to conduct a closed session for the next portion of the meeting.*

27. Supervisor Wardlaw made a motion to enter into a closed session to discuss CDSN employees Jennifer Szwejbka, Wilisha Daniels & Jennifer Espinosa, possible discussion including, but not limited to, position roles and responsibilities; termination, suspension, demotion, and reduction in pay, as they may relate to fiscal restrictions; promotion, endorsement, engagement, retention, and hiring of additional employees. Supervisor McAllister seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Supervisor Bechtel stated that this was a session for Board Supervisors to discuss the staffing roles and responsibilities given the fact that Wilisha Daniels is 95-100% contracted to DAQEM and Kim Vilt has resigned as a contract employee providing grant writing and fundraising services. Wilisha was going to train Jennifer S. to take over her CDSN responsibilities, which included the accounting and bookkeeping. Given the current workload, Jennifer S. does not feel she has the time to take on these additional tasks. In addition, because fundraising and grant writing was performed by Kim, other staff members do not have extensive experience in performing these tasks. Supervisor Bechtel expressed concern that staff is not adequate in number and experience to cover the necessary tasks to keep the CDSN operating smoothly without clear direction, defined expectations, and Supervisor oversight and mentoring. She stated that she does not have the capacity to take a more active role, and would be willing to step down as Chair if the Board so desired, so that a Supervisor that may have the time to take this task on could do so. The Supervisors expressed no desire for Supervisor Bechtel to step down as chair at this time. Supervisor Wardlaw stated that at one time the CDSN did have a staff member at the managerial level with greater authority and autonomy than current staff but that did not work out. The CDSN has always been challenged with being able to generate enough funds to hire staff at that level. Supervisor Fortier stated that he believes the CDSN has to make grant writing and research a priority and this should be done strategically, as will be outlined in the upcoming strategic plan. Supervisors Hunt, Van Gorp, McAllister, Wardlaw, Bechtel, and Alternate Supervisor Silverstein concurred.

The Supervisors discussed staffing capabilities and agreed that staff could benefit from training in grant writing and research. It was agreed that this should be a priority and a better use of current available funds than attending the NACD conference. Supervisor Fortier volunteered to periodically meet with staff to get up to speed on CDSN operations and projects, which will enhance Board awareness and identify where additional oversight and direction may be warranted. Supervisor Bechtel expressed the importance of providing mentoring to staff and to ensure staff was aware they could contact the Board with questions and for advice. All supervisors agreed that mentoring would be very beneficial and it would be good if everyone could try and find room in their schedules to provide some mentoring.

Supervisor Wardlaw expressed that the strategic plan will help to evaluate and prioritize activities and projects and should help provide staff with direction regarding day to day activities as well as long-range activities such as fundraising and grant writing.

28. The open meeting was reconvened at 4:50p.m. Supervisor Fortier made a motion to cancel the earlier motion under item #17 to send one individual to the NACD conference in Reno and instead flag those funds for grant research and writing training for Jennifer S. and possibly Jennifer E. and that staff should be involved in the development of the strategic plan. Supervisor McAllister seconded the motion. Motion carried. The supervisors agreed that the strategic plan should be completed within three months.

To assist staff with the current workload and transition to Wilisha being dedicated to DAQEM full-time, Supervisor Fortier asked Supervisor Bechtel to request that DAQEM remain flexible for a few more months while the CDSN finalizes their strategic plan, prioritizes workload, and is better prepared to cover all activities formerly covered by Wilisha. Supervisor Bechtel agreed to get in touch with DAQEM.

29. Supervisor McAllister made a motion to adjourn. Supervisor Wardlaw seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:03p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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John Hunt, Sec./Treasurer

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Date