



THE WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN AUTHORITY
FOUNDED 1992

San Diego County Water Authority
Dan McMillan – Kyle Swanson

Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
Lynn Neault – Sahar Abushaban

Helix Water District
Kathleen Hedberg – Joel Scalzitti

Otay Water District
Mark Robak – Jose Lopez

City of San Diego
Nicole Beaulieu DeSantis– (Alternate Vacant)

Sweetwater Authority
Steve Castañeda – Ditas Yamane

Water Conservation Garden
(Ex Officio)
Lauren Magnuson

Board Meeting Minutes – Special Meeting

**Otay Water District
Board Room**
2554 Sweetwater Springs Blvd.
Spring Valley, CA 91978

**Friday, February 9, 2024
2:30 p.m.**

Mission Statement of The Water Conservation Garden:

To educate and inspire through excellent exhibits and programs that promote water conservation and the sustainable use of related natural resources.

The meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m.

1. OPENING FUNCTIONS

1.1 Call to Order

Board President Mark Robak called the meeting to order.

1.2 Roll Call and Introductions

Voting Members Present:
Dan McMillan (SDCWA)
Lynn Neault, Secretary (GCCCD)
Joel Scalzitti (Helix)
Mark Robak, President (Otay)
Steve Castañeda (Sweetwater)
Nicole DeSantis (City of San Diego)

Voting Members Absent:
None

Water Conservation Garden/FWCG Representatives Present:
Lauren Magnuson, Interim CEO and Ex Officio Member of FWCG
Michael (Mick) Hager, FWCG Board President
Edward Woodruff, Garden Volunteer and FWCG Board Vice President
Harold Bailey, Garden Volunteer and FWCG Former President

Guests, Presenters, and Staff Members Present:
Tita Ramos-Krogman (Otay)



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2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2.1 Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 Public Comment

Lauren Magnuson, Interim Executive Director, Water Conservation Garden, addressed the Board as follows:

- Currently the Garden has one full-time staff member and nine part-time staff.
- The Garden is looking to the JPA Board for a lifeline to keep this community gem open.
- The Garden offers a safe space for wellness in addition to water conservation education.
- She has a plan for moving the Garden forward.
- The Garden needs to get back to its roots: education.
- She requested monthly funding through June.
- Letters from rate payers regarding the Garden were presented to the Board.

Michael Hager, Friends of the Water Conservation Garden (FWCG) Board President, addressed the Board as follows:

- The primary concern of FWCG Board is the survival of the Garden, regardless of who manages it.
- All stakeholders have too much invested to let the Garden fail.
- The FWGC requests help and guidance from the JPA Board to resolve the Garden's financial situation and plan for the future.
- Monthly support of \$30,000 was requested through June.
- Help was requested from the JPA Board with the Garden's emergency funding request to Metropolitan Water District, as well as other possible funders.
- The FWCG needs answers from the JPA Board so the future of the Garden can be planned.

Harold Bailey, Garden Volunteer and former FWCG Board President, addressed the Board on behalf of Steve Zolezzi as follows:

- Volunteers can function in roles they can support immediately, as well as expanded roles.
- Examples were provided of functions volunteers can serve.

Edward Woodruff, Garden Volunteer and FWCG Board Vice President, addressed the Board as follows:

- He shared his experiences as a volunteer, giving tours and providing background on the Garden.
- He hopes the JPA Board can work with FWCG Board to save the Garden.



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4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4.1 Approval of Today's Agenda

There was no discussion regarding Item 4.1.

Motion: Approve today's agenda.

Motion by Castañeda; second by Scalzitti

Final Resolution: Motion carries.

Yeas: Castañeda, DeSantis, McMillan, Neault, Robak, Scalzitti

Nos: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

5. CLOSED SESSION

5.1 Adjourn to Closed Session for Public Employee Appointment – Legal Counsel

The Board adjourned to closed session at 2:57 p.m.

5.2 Announcement of Action Taken in Closed Session

The Board reconvened in open session at 5:20 p.m.

The Board announced that it took action in closed session to retain the law firm of Rutan and Tucker as follows:

Motion: Retain the law firm of Rutan and Tucker.

Motion by Scalzitti; second by Castañeda

Final Resolution: Motion carries.

Yeas: Castañeda, DeSantis, McMillan, Neault, Robak, Scalzitti

Nos: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

The Board announced that there was no need for Items 5.3 and 5.4 below, and it was suggested that they be removed from the agenda.

Motion: Remove Items 5.3 and 5.4 from today's agenda.

Motion by Scalzitti; second by McMillan

Final Resolution: Motion carries.

Yeas: Castañeda, DeSantis, McMillan, Neault, Robak, Scalzitti

Nos: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None



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5.3 Return to Closed Session for Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation

Item Removed from the agenda.

5.4 Announcement of Action Taken in Closed Session

Item Removed from the agenda.

6. ADJOURNMENT

6.1 Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:
Mark Robak
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Mark Robak
Board President