

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Agenda Item 2a  
March 17, 2022

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
November 8, 2021**

**November 8, 2021 (9:00 a.m.) Virtual Board Meeting**

Staff prepared the minutes from the same-day audio recording and transcription by Foothill Transcription Company, which were certified on November 25, 2021.

**Agenda Item 1. Roll Call**

Chair Sue Novasel called the meeting to order with a 9:02 a.m. roll call through the Zoom Webinar platform, with a teleconference option.

**Members Present:**

Sue Novasel, Chair, El Dorado County  
Cindy Gustafson, Vice Chair, Placer County  
Bryan Cash, California Natural Resources Agency  
Gayle Miller, California Department of Finance  
Tamara Wallace, City of South Lake Tahoe  
Vicki Lankford, USDA Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (ex officio)  
Jay Hansen, Public Member  
Adam Acosta, Public Member

**Others Present:**

Jane Freeman, Acting Executive Director  
Jason Vasques, Acting Deputy Director  
Michael Steeves, General Counsel  
Danae Aitchison, Deputy Attorney General

**Agenda Item 2. Consent Items**

**a. Approval of June Minutes (action)**

The Board considered the minutes from the meeting on June 17, 2021.

**Vice Chair Gustafson moved to approve Item 2a and Mr. Hansen seconded the motion. Resolution 21-11-01 passed unanimously.**

**b. Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisition – Timberland Tract (action)**

The Board considered authorizing the acquisition of 975 Chicadee Lane outside of Tahoe City (Placer County Assessment Number [AN] 084-032-022) for up to \$25,000.

**Vice Chair Gustafson moved to approve Item 2b and Ms. Miller seconded the motion. Resolution 21-11-02 passed unanimously.**

**Agenda Item 3. Executive Director’s Report**

Ms. Freeman and several guest speakers, including Chair Novasel, Vice Chair Gustafson, Mr. Stu Roll, and Mr. Brent Coe, recognized Ms. Lynn Suter, Mr. Patrick Wright, Mr. Joe Pepi, and Ms. Lori Uriz for their contributions to the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) and thanked them for their public service.

Ms. Freeman provided several updates. Ms. Freeman introduced and welcomed a new Conservancy employee, Mr. Daniel Huerta, Associate Environmental Planner in the Tahoe Livable Communities Program. Ms. Freeman announced that ten employees recently graduated from a year-long training with the Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity to learn how to integrate racial equity and diversity into the Conservancy’s work and programs.

Ms. Freeman discussed the Conservancy’s Fiscal Year 2021/22 budget. Ms. Freeman said Governor Gavin Newsom announced a \$15 billion commitment to climate change that included a \$1.5 billion wildfire package and a three-year \$3.7 billion climate package. Ms. Freeman announced that \$36 million was allocated to the Conservancy as part of the wildfire package. Ms. Freeman said that funding will help the Conservancy conduct forestry treatments to protect communities from wildfire, build capacity, and develop innovative approaches to dealing with biomass and increasing the pace and scale of treatments across the landscape to further the goals of the Lake Tahoe Basin Forest Action Plan (Forest Action Plan). Ms. Freeman said the Conservancy also received \$5.25 million for multi-benefit and nature-based solutions to address climate change. Ms. Freeman added that while this funding will help support some important projects and programs, more will be needed for the State to meet its obligations to implement the many Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) projects that protect state land and further climate adaptation, watershed protection, equitable access, and biodiversity protection.

In addition, Ms. Freeman said the State reinstated employees' salaries that were cut 9.23 percent during the last fiscal year and instituted a second year of a five percent overall budget cut to the Conservancy. Ms. Freeman also announced that the U.S. Secretary of the Department of the Interior approved \$10 million for the Conservancy for fuels reduction projects with the USDA Forest Service and local partners.

Ms. Freeman then introduced and played a video developed by the Conservancy's forestry and communications staff and many Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) partners. Ms. Freeman said the video illustrates how Basin agencies work together on wildfire prevention, defensible space, open-space lot management, and fuel reduction, and how that work benefits public safety, especially given the recent Caldor Fire. Ms. Freeman said that although we can never eliminate the chance of a destructive fire, defensible space and fuel reduction improve the odds for withstanding one. Ms. Freeman said the Caldor Fire shows the importance of past and future investments that the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team partners have put into implementing the Forest Action Plan. Ms. Freeman thanked the first responders who protected the Basin from the Caldor Fire.

Ms. Freeman announced that the Conservancy invested \$1 million of early action wildfire funding to implement work on its land. Ms. Freeman said, for example, the Conservancy is working with the City of South Lake Tahoe (City) to jointly prioritize and implement neighborhood-wide community protection projects, which will be implemented through a formal agreement with the City.

Ms. Wallace thanked Conservancy staff and partners for the video, and Caldor Fire first responders. Ms. Wallace reiterated that fuels treatments within the wildland-urban interface is an important piece to protecting communities as seen in the Tamarack and Caldor Fires.

Chair Novasel thanked the first responders for protecting the community of Christmas Valley in Meyers. Chair Novasel expressed excitement about the \$36 million of funding as part of the Governor's wildfire package. Chair Novasel also thanked Conservancy staff for the video, which showed how important this work is.

#### **Agenda Item 4. Chair's Report**

Chair Novasel welcomed Mr. Cash and Ms. Lankford to the Conservancy Board.

#### **Agenda Item 5. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

There were no comments from the public.

**Agenda Item 6. Renaming the South Tahoe Greenway Shared Use Trail to the Dennis T. Machida Memorial Greenway (action)**

Stu Roll, Watershed Supervisor with the Conservancy, presented Item 6 with two guest speakers, Rick Frank and former Conservancy employee David Gregorich.

Vice Chair Gustafson thanked the presenters for their remarks. Vice Chair Gustafson recalled how Mr. Machida was a meticulous, strategic leader and dedicated to the Conservancy and Lake Tahoe.

Ms. Lisa O'Daly, former Conservancy employee, thanked the Board for its consideration to honor Mr. Machida through the renaming of the Greenway Trail. Ms. O'Daly recalled Mr. Machida's efforts to enhance the environment of the Basin and his environmental legacy and leadership.

Mr. Bruce Eisner, former Conservancy employee, echoed Ms. O'Daly's comments and asked the Board to approve Item 6 to implement the long-lasting tribute to Mr. Machida. Mr. Eisner said the community and Lake Tahoe environment have benefited from Mr. Machida's vision and leadership.

Mr. Carl Hasty, District Manager of the Tahoe Transportation District, expressed support to rename the Greenway Trail after Mr. Machida. Mr. Hasty said he was a friend and colleague of Mr. Machida and that he learned a lot while working with him in the Basin in support of the EIP. Mr. Hasty credited Mr. Machida with implementing the EIP and aligning the different agencies to work together to benefit Lake Tahoe. Mr. Hasty recalled learning from Mr. Machida the value of local governments in implementing improvements and protecting resources.

There were no additional comments from the Board or public.

**Vice Chair Gustafson moved to approve Item 6 and Ms. Wallace seconded the motion. Resolution 21-11-03 passed unanimously.**

**Agenda Item 7. Closed Session**

Chair Novasel called for public comment on Item 7. There was no public comment.

The Board held closed session to confer regarding personnel matters pursuant to Government Code section 11126(a).

Following completion of closed session, the Board reconvened in open session. Chair Novasel announced there was no action to report from closed session.

### **Agenda Item 8. Land Bank Pier Program Guidelines (action)**

Amy Cecchetti, Public Land Management Specialist III with the Conservancy, presented Item 8.

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Ms. Jan Brisco, representative of the Tahoe Lakefront Owners' Association, thanked Conservancy staff for bringing the Pier Program to the Board. Ms. Brisco encouraged the Board to vote in support of Item 8.

**Mr. Hansen moved to approve Item 8 and Vice Chair Gustafson seconded the motion. Resolution 21-11-04 passed unanimously.**

### **Agenda Item 9. Forestry Program Guidelines (action)**

Whitney Brennan, Acting Landscape Forestry Supervisor with the Conservancy, presented Item 9.

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

There were no comments from the public.

**Ms. Wallace moved to approve Item 9 and Mr. Hansen seconded the motion. Resolution 21-11-05 passed unanimously.**

### **Agenda Item 10. Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisition – Motel 6 and Knox Johnson Parcels (action)**

Aimee Rutledge, Acquisition Specialist with the Conservancy, presented Item 10.

Vice Chair Gustafson asked whether the Conservancy has secured funding for the acquisition. Ms. Rutledge confirmed that the Conservancy has Proposition 68 funds secured and there may be funding from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Excess Coverage Mitigation Program. Ms. Rutledge explained that the Conservancy may need to pursue additional funding through grants as well. Vice Chair Gustafson said there may be opportunities for private donors given that the acquisition is a high priority.

Vice Chair Gustafson asked if the Conservancy was planning to bank any coverage and/or development rights associated with the parcels. Ms. Rutledge said the Conservancy's Tahoe Livable Communities Program acquires aging, developed properties, restores the sensitive land, and banks the coverage and/or development

rights. Ms. Rutledge explained that the Conservancy may either retire or bank the coverage and/or development rights to help implement the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan depending on the acquisition funding sources.

Ms. Wallace expressed excitement about the acquisition. Ms. Wallace asked how many units are in Motel 6. Ms. Rutledge responded that there are 143 units in Motel 6. Ms. Wallace asked whether the Conservancy had considered pursuing an affordable or workforce housing redevelopment project on the developable portion of the parcels. Ms. Rutledge said that staff had discussed that possibility; however, these parcels have been identified as one of the highest priorities for stream and floodplain restoration. Ms. Rutledge explained that the current buildings have approximately eight feet of fill under them that enabled their construction, which occurred in the 1970s. Ms. Rutledge said, for those reasons, staff recommends acquiring these parcels for the purpose of restoration.

Chair Novasel commented that she is always supportive of creating affordable housing; however, she agrees with the staff's recommendation that these specific parcels be acquired to preserve open space and for potential restoration purposes. Chair Novasel asked how this acquisition fits within the larger effort to restore the Upper Truckee River. Ms. Rutledge explained there are multiple benefits that will be achieved if the Conservancy acquires these parcels, including preservation of the meadow habitat and allowing for potential future restoration opportunities.

Ms. Rutledge also commented that staff is sensitive to affordable housing needs in the Basin. Ms. Rutledge stated that the Conservancy is supporting several housing efforts, specifically near the "Y" area of the City. Ms. Rutledge explained that staff cares about stream and meadow restoration priorities as well as affordable housing needs in the Basin. Ms. Wallace acknowledged the Conservancy's role in advancing affordable housing needs in the Basin and expressed support for additional ways to improve housing in her community.

Mr. Cash expressed support for the acquisition. Mr. Cash said he was also looking forward to seeing the parcels restored in the years to come.

Ms. Cheryl Vonbargen, on behalf of the Tamarack Meadows Homeowners Association Board of Directors and Residents, commented that the current buildings are a major blight on our community. Ms. Vonbargen said Motel 6 poses a significant visual eyesore and safety risk to the community as well as causes environmental impacts to the natural habitat and wildlife. Ms. Vonbargen expressed support of the Conservancy acquiring the parcels and demolishing the buildings.

Mr. Tom Rosenberg, resident of South Lake Tahoe, commented that he lives in a neighborhood that could be impacted by the Conservancy's future restoration and management activities on the subject parcels. Mr. Rosenberg expressed support for the acquisition because the Conservancy will preserve the privately owned parcels and attain responsibility to manage the parcels.

Mr. Rosenberg stated four concerns of the neighbors, including whether the future restoration activities have been adequately analyzed, how developed properties are extremely close in proximity to the Upper Truckee River and historical floodplain, that the densely populated area is unique and situated differently compared to other Conservancy projects and river restoration areas, and that future restoration and/or public use could adversely increase flood risks and decrease neighborhood property values.

Mr. Rosenberg requested that the acquisition be undertaken for its land preservation value alone and with a commitment that any future restoration and public-use activities be preceded by public disclosure to neighbors. He also requested minimization of actions to neighbors, and explicit reaffirmation to do no harm to developed parcels; and to provide further detail and explanation of the assertion of a categorical exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Ms. Jessica Hill, resident of South Lake Tahoe, commented how the Conservancy's demolition of Motel 6 would result in unemployment and may perpetuate the affordable housing issue.

**Ms. Wallace moved to approve Item 10 and Vice Chair Gustafson seconded the motion. Resolution 21-11-06 passed unanimously.**

#### **Agenda Item 11. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

There were no comments from the public.

#### **Agenda Item 12. Board Member Comment**

There were no comments from the Board.

#### **Agenda Item 13. Adjourn**

Chair Novasel adjourned the meeting at 1:27 p.m.

California Tahoe Conservancy  
Resolution 22-03-01  
Adopted: March 17, 2022

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the November 8, 2021, meeting of the California Tahoe Conservancy adopted on March 17, 2022.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 17th day of March, 2022.

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Jane Freeman  
Deputy Director