



**GREAT REDWOOD TRAIL AGENCY
Board of Directors Meeting
Zoom Teleconference**

MINUTES

Monday, December 19, 2022, at 10:30am

A. OPEN SESSION - CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hart called the meeting to order at 10:30am.

B. ROLL CALL

Directors Present: Madrone, Hunerlach, Mulheren, Haschak, Bagby, Hagele, Campbell, and Chair Hart.

Directors Absent: Connolly

Others Present: Interim Executive Director – Karyn Gear, Program Manager – Louisa Morris, Program Manager – Simone Nageon de Lastang, Legal Counsel – Elizabeth Coleman, Aycok & Edgmon – Stacey Edgmon, and Recording Secretary – Hiedy Torres.

C. AGENDA APPROVAL

Upon Motion by Director Campbell, seconded by Director Hagele to agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

Motion Carried:

AYES: 8 - Madrone, Hunerlach, Mulheren, Haschak, Bagby, Hagele, Campbell, and Chair Hart

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 1- Connolly

ABSTAIN: 0

D. PUBLIC COMMENT – *Please refer to notice at the top of this Agenda.*

Pete Johnston, President-Timber Heritage Association-

The THA has a longstanding commitment to preserving the rail and timber history in Humboldt County and has just closed on purchasing a 9-acre site in Samoa from the Harbor District after a 7-year process.

The

THA wishes to pursue an excursion train around the Humboldt Bay and is very excited to work with the GRTA in the future and to be a part of the success story. The THA wishes to obtain an agreement from the GRTA for their speeder ride program. The speeder program welcomed between 3,500 to 4,000 passengers to Samoa in past years that ran along 3 miles of track. The THA has engaged Hank Seeman, Deputy Director for Humboldt County, on the possibility of speeder rides through the City of Eureka and has had discussions about the Bay Trail South and how that will proceed as rail with trail. The THA is tickled about the portions of the trail that have already been constructed as rail with trail and believes a cooperative agreement with the Great Redwood Trail would continue the effort around the bay. The THA has an amazing volunteer base with well over 10,000 hours a year being dedicated by its community volunteers and invited the GRTA Board to visit the site in Samoa in the future.

Chair Hart thanked Mr. Johnson for his comments.

E. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

- 1. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Resolution in Opposition to the County of Humboldt's Proposed Vacation of a Portion of Fisher Road, Adjacent to the Carlotta Spur, in Unincorporated Humboldt County.**

Chair Hart called for public comment on this item. No public comments were made.

Elizabeth Coleman- Ms. Coleman said that Fisher Road runs up to the Carlotta Spur in unincorporated Humboldt County and it has come to the attention of the GRTA through conversations with Humboldt County staff that the vacation of this road would impact the future access of the GRTA and the public to the GRTA right-of-way that leads to the trail in this location. At this time, there have been changes to the physical layout of the Van Duzen River which has led to the public accessing private property in to gain access to the river. The adjacent landowner has called for the vacation of the implied dedication of the road at this location. At this time, GRTA staff has been in conversation with Humboldt County staff and in conversations with the adjacent landowner, but because of the ongoing potential impact to the GRTA's real property interest and this portion of the right-of-way is held in fee, it is the recommendation of legal counsel that the Board pass a resolution indicating the GRTA is objecting to the vacation of the road because of the potential impact and environmental impact to the property.

Bruce Silvey, Humboldt Trails Council- Mr. Silvey said that he wanted to speak in support of the resolution and said that this is an important access point that will hopefully be a branch to the trail. The Trails Council is confident that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors will not vacate this access and it seems to be that State of California that public lands will not be released unless the public has access to the property and this is in the public's best interest.

Dir. Haschak- Dir. Haschak said he is in favor of this resolution and public access is very important.

Dir. Madrone- Dir. Haschak said he is supportive of the resolution.

Dir. Campbell- Dir. Campbell echoed his support for this resolution.

Dir. Bagby- Dir. Bagby said the proposed vacation might be part of the county process for these types of situations and asked if Simone would be present at the Humboldt County Supervisors meeting.

Karyn Gear- Ms. Gear said the landowner has been in discussions with the County of Humboldt for some time. GRTA staff has just recently had discussions with the landowner and county staff to gain an

understanding of the issue.

Dir. Hunerlach- Dir Hunerlach said this is a no brainer and is in support of the resolution. He said he is very grateful for the staff and the work they have done on this matter.

Chair Hart- Ms. Hart said she is in great support of this resolution and sees great value in this access for the public.

Upon Motion by Director Madrone, seconded by Director Bagby the Board unanimously approved opposition to the County of Humboldt's proposed vacation of a portion of Fisher Road, adjacent to the Carlotta Spur, in unincorporated Humboldt County.

Motion Carried:

AYES: 8 - Madrone, Hunerlach, Mulheren, Haschak, Bagby, Hagele, Campbell, and Chair Hart

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 1- Connolly

ABSTAIN: 0

2. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Approval of Proposed Board Meeting Schedule for 2023.

Chair Hart called for public comment on this item. No public comments were made.

Upon Motion by Director Hagele, seconded by Director Hunerlach the Board unanimously approved the proposed board meeting schedule for 2023. The Board will meet every other month on the third Thursday at varying locations in Sonoma, Mendocino, and Humboldt Counties. The February 2023 meeting will be held by Zoom teleconference.

Motion Carried:

AYES: 8 - Madrone, Hunerlach, Mulheren, Haschak, Bagby, Hagele, Campbell, and Chair Hart

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 1- Connolly

ABSTAIN: 0

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes – Special Board of Directors Meeting – October 31, 2022
2. Approval of Financial Statements – October and November 2022
3. Approval of Warrants Issued - October and November 2022
4. Approval of Cal Card Statement – October and November 2022

Chair Hart called for public comment on Consent Calendar. No public comments were made.

Upon Motion by Director Haschak, seconded by Director Campbell the Board unanimously approved agenda items F.1 through F.4.

Motion Carried:

AYES: 8 - Madrone, Hunerlach, Mulheren, Haschak, Bagby, Hagele, Campbell, and Chair Hart

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 1- Connolly

ABSTAIN: 0

G. STAFF REPORT

1. Executive Director Report

Karyn Gear-

Dir. Connolly has been elected to the State Assembly and has resigned his seat on the GRTA Board. A new Marin County representative will be appointed within the next few weeks. GRTA staff is focused on modernizing the office. Files are being sorted and organized, scanned, and saved electronically to create a backup system of all paper documents. Staff continues to address property management.

The railcars located at the Willits yard are beginning to be dealt with. During the process, staff discovered several of the railcars had been sold in previous years. Railcar owners have been contacted and those railcars should be moved off the property by the end of January. There are still a small number of remaining railcars that staff continues to address. Also related to the Willits yard, GRTA sent a letter to the Skunk train in September that requested them remove debris and stored items from GRTA property. Some of the items have been removed, but there is still some ongoing cleanup under way. Staff will follow-up continually until all requested items are removed.

Louisa Morris has been working with the occupants of the buildings located on Durable Mills Road in Calpella. Ocino Inc., the lessee, has not making payments in their agreement. Numerous complaints from neighboring businesses have been reported. Subsequently, the occupant has been asked to vacate the property. There is still a large amount of cleanup that will need to be addressed and staff will work on a plan to remove the remaining items from the property. Adjacent landowners have been contacted about use of the property in the future. Staff will provide an update at a future meeting.

Next year, we have the goal of hiring a permanent Executive Director for the agency. Hopefully by February we will come back to the Board and create a sub-committee or an ad-hoc committee for the hiring process. Another goal for the coming year will be updating the policies and procedures of the organization as the current material is outdated.

Staff continues to work on gaining spending authority over remaining CalSTA funds appropriated for the GRTA. The funds transfer agreement will call for the remaining funds to be used by the State Coastal Conservancy for GRTA agency costs and dealing with legacy old problems of property management. Staff will also work on bringing agency audits up to date and continuing the next segment of the railbanking process.

Chair Hart thanked Karyn Gear for all the hard work that is being put towards this agency.

2. Update on Great Redwood Trail Master Plan

Simone Nageon de Lastang-

We are well underway, and we are amping up and hope to hit the ground running next year with a strong amount of community engagement and diving into more details for the Master Plan. Community engagement letters have been sent to tribes with ancestral territories that are currently located with lands inside the project area. Customized strategies will be developed in one-on-one meetings with tribal entities who wish to be involved. A webinar will be hosted in early February for those who may want to find out more about the project but may not have the time to be engaged in the planning process fully. The Community Engagement Plan is due back soon and will be a living document that is ready for updates and the addition of information as needed. The Community Engagement Plan will document our strategy,

which is a series of online, in-person community meetings, and tabling events to raise awareness at key public destinations, and also a significant amount of small group discussions, and site tours that will be led by GRTA and consultants.

To date, 9 trail operators have been interviewed. Operations, maintenance, policies, and planning have been huge topics of discussion. The GRTA Board has been asked for their input and staff looks forward to continued input and discussions with the Board. Staff will provide the Board with a memo that includes all Director input and suggestions. Other trail case studies are being reviewed and we look forward to integrating some policies and procedures that work for other trail agencies. The Board is invited to attend community meetings and events to provide their input and knowledge about the trail to the public. The Board is welcomed to be part of in-person meetings and kitchen table conversation type meetings.

The Draft Economic Impact Analysis should be available soon and will be provided to Board. The Great Redwood Trail website has been launched and has a wealth of information available on the site, as well as the link to the Great Redwood Trail Master Plan website.

Dir. Madrone- He thanked staff for all the hard work that has gone into the planning process and looks forward to helping with community awareness.

Dir. Hagele- He thanked the staff and has an interest of being involved. If there are some in-person meetings related to Sonoma County, he would be interested in assisting with feedback for the planning team.

Karyn Gear- The City of Eureka just completed a 1-mile portion of trail from the Elk River going south and it was exciting to see the community already using the trail, and the forward progress.

Dir. Madrone- He is willing and able to help other Board members to share knowledge and expertise about the trail.

Dir. Haschak- He presented at the Willits City Council and talked about community outreach and the public is very interested in the trail development.

Dir. Bagby- She reiterated her availability to assist with community engagement.

Chair Hart called for public comment on Staff Report. No public comments were made.

H. MATTERS FROM THE BOARD

No matters from the Board.

Chair Hart called for public comment on Closed Session. No public comments were made.

The Board convened to Closed Session at 11:28am.

I. CLOSED SESSION

1. Discussion with Legal Counsel Regarding Possible Litigation:

Abandonment and Railbanking Filings, commencement of filings before Surface
Transportation Board
[Government Code section 54956.9(a), (d)(4)]

2. Discussion with Legal Counsel Regarding Pending Litigation:
Dehran L. Duckworth v. John O. Thomas, et al.
Humboldt County Superior Court, Case No. DR190227
[Government Code Section 54956.9(a)]

The Board reconvened to Open Session at 11:51am.

J. ANNOUNCEMENT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

Legal Counsel, Elizabeth Coleman-

Regarding agenda item I.1, direction was given to counsel.

Regarding agenda item I.2, authority given to execute settlement agreement, easement agreement, and license agreement, and which agreements will be reported out after execution at a later board meeting

K. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Zoom Teleconference
Regular Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, February 16, 2023, at 10:30am

L. ADJOURNMENT

Upon Motion by Director Haschak, seconded by Director Hagele the meeting was adjourned at 11:53am.