

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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December 21, 2018

TO: Commissioners and Alternates
FROM: Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
SUBJECT: Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
(For Commission consideration on January 3, 2019)

Staff Report

Background. Section 66636 of the McAteer-Petris Act mandates that the Chair of the Commission, “in collaboration with and with the concurrence of the Commission, shall appoint a citizens' advisory committee to assist and advise the Commission in carrying out its functions. The advisory committee shall consist of not more than 20 members.”

To ensure that the Commission performed significant public outreach, the legislative drafters designed the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to include individuals who would represent a broad spectrum of interests. The Act dictates that “at least one member shall be a representative of a public agency having jurisdiction over harbor facilities, and another shall represent a public agency having jurisdiction over airport facilities. The advisory committee shall also include representatives of conservation and recreation organizations, and at least one biologist, one sociologist, one geologist, one architect, one landscape architect, one representative of an industrial development board or commission, and one owner of privately held lands within the San Francisco Bay as defined in Section 66610.”

To the best of Commission staff's knowledge, there is only one file located at BCDC's offices or in long-term storage that details any CAC meetings. That file contains notes from only one meeting, which occurred on October 3, 2001. In early July 2009 and early July 2011, former Planning Director Joe LaClair submitted two staff reports and recommendations that urged the Commission to revise and/or revitalize the Citizens Advisory Committee, “[t]o achieve an objective in the Commission's Strategic Plan.” According to those staff reports, the CAC, “reviewed and commented on all BCDC planning studies” during the 1970s and 1980s, and the CAC was “revived” during the late 1990s to advocate on behalf of increased funding for BCDC. However, it appears that the CAC has not met since that meeting in October 2001.

Although not required by law, the Commission in 1986 created a “Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee,” but that body appears to be at least as moribund as the CAC. According to Mr. LaClair's 2011 staff report, that diminishing role occurred as BCDC and various other public agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector organizations have increased their scientific knowledge and ability to coordinate, collaborate, and partner on various policy issues.

Current Status. The Commission has significantly increased its public outreach efforts since the adoption of the Climate Change Bay Plan Amendments in 2011, although much more needs to be done. For example, since Chair Wasserman’s tenure began, the Commission has:

1. Made its strategic planning process more visible and more publicly inclusive, which has led to a fundamentally different type of plan that sets strategic goals and objectives for the Commission;
2. Created five Commissioner working groups (Rising Sea Level, Fill for Habitat, Environmental Justice/Social Equity, Financing the Future, and Public Education) that either meet publicly or have met publicly, engage[d] formally and informally with interested members of the public, and report[ed] their discussions and findings as part of regularly-scheduled Commission meetings;
3. Held a series of well-attended public workshops emanating from multi-year discussions of the Rising Sea Level Working Group that resulted in the adoption of the Commission’s October 2016 Policy Recommendations and the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan Update;
4. Scheduled public workshops in 2019 to discuss, and hopefully adopt, new Bay Plan amendments dealing with the issues of bay fill and environmental justice, among other topics;
5. Expanded its Planning Division’s outreach to local governments, private sector interests, and neighborhood- and community-based organizations as part of an expanded Adopting to Rising Tides program; and,
6. Has made more transparent the Regulatory Division’s approach to analyzing proposed development projects in light of rising sea level, among other accomplishments.

As part of this expanded outreach program, 2019 may be an appropriate year to reinvigorate the CAC given that numerous members of the CAC as formed in 2001 either have retired, passed away, or may assume that the CAC has been disbanded. Attached is a “current” CAC roster.

Recommendation

For purposes of the agenda item, Chair Wasserman proposes that the Commission take the following steps:

1. Revitalize the Citizens Advisory Committee;
2. Solicit nominations from Commission members and the public;
3. Discuss various ideas about the CAC’s purpose so that the Chair and staff can formulate an agenda for the first meeting;
4. Ask the Chair to nominate three Commissioners to act as liaisons with the CAC during its meetings in 2019; and,
5. Include on either a March or April agenda an announcement by Chair Wasserman that lists the members of a revitalized CAC, along with a proposed first meeting date.

Questions that the Commission may want to discuss include:

1. What are appropriate roles for the CAC in 2019?
2. Should BCDC create a formal application form for individuals who are interested in serving on the CAC to complete and, if so, what should that form include?
3. How can the CAC supplement or complement current outreach efforts?
4. What is the optimal “mix” of CAC membership given that the McAteer-Petris Act requires eleven members to fill specific roles, and that up to nine additional members may be selected by the Chair?
5. What is an appropriate method for Commissioners, Alternates, Advisory Board members, staff, and the public to provide the Chair with recommendations for CAC membership?

In preparation for the nomination process, staff have created the e-mail account to “cac@bcdc.ca.gov” to collect nominations.

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Appointed on 10/08/02

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John Coleman

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Vacant

(Conservation Organization*)

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Chief Deputy Director

*Membership Specified by Law 07/15/02

**At-Large Member