![San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority logo]

SAN FRANCISCO BAY
RESTORATION AUTHORITY

Advisory Committee
MEETING MINUTES

October 11, 2019, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
Elihu Harris State Building
1515 Clay Street, 2nd Floor, Room 11
Oakland, CA 94612

Agenda and attachments available at:
www.sfbayrestore.org

1. **Call to Order**

   Luisa Valiela, Advisory Committee (AC) Chair, called the meeting to order.

   AC Member Attendance: Myla Ablog; Ana Alvarez; Sara Azat; Erika Castillo; Steve Chappell; Arthur Deicke; Letitia Grenier; Christopher Gurney; Shin-Roei Lee; Roger Leventhal; Sally Lieber; Mike Mielke; Anne Morkill; Erika Powell; Rebeca Schwartz Lesberg; Laura Tam; Laura Thompson; Luisa Valiela; Diane Williams; Bruce Wolfe; Beckie Zisser

   Staff Attendance: Jessica Davenport, Anna Schneider, Moira McEnespy, Linda Tong, Heidi Nutters

2. **Determination of Quorum**

   Anna Schneider, AC Clerk, determined there was a quorum.

3. **Public Comment**

   There were no public comments.

4. **Approval of Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2019 and AC Tour Minutes of September 20, 2019 (ACTION)**

   Decision: There was consensus to approve the meeting minutes for March 8, 2019.
   Decision: There was consensus to approve the tour minutes for September 20, 2019.

5. **Chair's Report (INFORMATION)**

   Chair Valiela asked for feedback on the AC tour (September 20, 2019) from AC members and SFBRA staff. In a sticky note exercise, tour attendees gave input on positives about the tour (+) and changes they would want for future tours (Δ).

   Chair Valiela welcomed new AC member Myla Ablog. Myla Ablog is an independent environmental consultant and master's student in environmental management, focusing

on wetland ecology and restoration, at the University of San Francisco. Myla is experienced in environmental justice advocacy and has gained environmental permitting experience through working at CalTrans and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Chair Valiela reported that the Governing Board meeting on September 6, 2019 included board's approval of the release the Grant Round 3's Request for Proposals. She invited new AC members to join the ad hoc subcommittee on the Annual Report and work with Taylor Samuelson, SFBRA Public Information Officer, over the coming months.

6. **Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT) Update (INFORMATION)**

Keith Lichten, Chief of the Watershed Management Division at the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Chair of the BRRIT Management Team (BMT), presented an update on the BRRIT and BMT. The goal of the BRRIT is to coordinate project review and permitting to get multi-benefit projects built, and to facilitate timely review and regulatory approval of Measure AA eligible projects. The goal of the BMT is to identify and address policy issues such as wetland/water type-conversions, putting fill in the bay for habitat, wetland regional monitoring, and public access versus habitat considerations. The BMT also aims to ensure smooth project review and work out issues early in the BRRIT process.

Since the kick-off in August 2019, the BRRIT/BMT has set up the process for handling project permitting requests and determined the role of each BRRIT staff person. Several projects are already under review: Lower Walnut Creek, 900 Innes in India Basin, and Heron's Head Park projects. The BMT wants to know how it can support the goals of the AC and what its relationship with the AC should be.

The following were questions from the AC, and answers from BMT/BRRIT staff:

- What is the BMT nexus with the BRRIT?
  - BMT has monthly meetings and the BRRIT reports to the BMT on project status. BRRIT staff can also raise questions to their managers at any time.
- Is the BRRIT supporting policy changes in dredging and adding fill to the bay?
  - BMT will try to streamline the process of permitting habitat projects that require dredging or adding fill to the bay.
- Can the BRRIT only work on projects that are funded by Measure AA?
  - No, any projects eligible for Measure AA can apply to use the BRRIT.
- How will policy changes made by the BMT be communicated back to project proponents?
  - Policy changes will be made through public processes, i.e., the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's Fill for Habitat Bay Plan Amendment. In addition, BRRIT staff could provide updates at future AC meetings.

- Will there be a joint application between regulatory agencies for the permitting process?
    o No, each agency requires its own application. However, going through the BRRIT should ensure a smooth process after the separate applications are completed.
- According to the flowchart showing the process for projects going through BRRIT, the pre-application process takes the longest time. We need accountability for this part of the process.
    o This question will be brought back to the full BRRIT group.
    o How feasible is this timeline?
    o Other Qu's?
- How do you plan on engaging economically disadvantaged communities?
    o We need to do it. We will invite some representatives to talk with us.
- Will BMT plan to meet with other agencies?
    o Yes, e.g., flood control agencies. BRRIT is on the agenda for the next meeting of the Bay Area Flood Protection Agencies' Association.
- Can you create an FAQ on your website? Having the website up ASAP would be good, because some project proponents are confused about whether they are eligible for BRRIT.
    o Suggestions noted.
- Can the BRRIT/BMT use EcoAtlas to track applications, project progress, etc. so AC members and public can view that info?
    o Suggestion will be considered.
- Can other agencies sit in on the pre-application meetings?
    o Good suggestion; BRRIT staff will need to think through logistics.
- Will amendments to permits for wetland restoration projects be handled by the BRRIT?
    o Hopefully yes.
- When will be the next call for BRRIT proposals, and how can project proponents get early feedback from BRRIT so they have a good proposal for Measure AA?
    o The next call for BRRIT projects will be late November 2019 for projects in 2020; the call for BRRIT projects will happen periodically throughout the year.

7. **Recommendations on Next Steps for Economically Disadvantaged Communities (EDCs) (ACTION)**
Dr. Ana Alvarez, EDC Ad Hoc Subcommittee Lead, described how the ad hoc subcommittee developed their set of recommendations to the Authority on engaging economically disadvantaged communities. The set of recommendations were based on an equity report from EcoEquity Consulting, and ideas from Greenlining Institute and AC members. Dr. Ana Alvarez summarized the scope and methods of the ad hoc subcommittee's work, and explained that the recommendations include "near-term," "short-term," and "long-term" goals for the Authority to strive for.

Nahal Ghoghaie Ipakchi (EcoEquity Consulting) presented her community-based report. Establishing an Equity and Community Engagement Program that Benefits Economically Disadvantaged Communities (Item 7A). Representatives from low-income communities of color were interviewed; most were from the Bay Area, but a few were from other parts of the state. Focus groups were conducted in partnership with community-based organizations, which were key in recruiting participants who could offer unique perspectives.

The five major themes from the report are Perceived Relevance (Communicating Measure AA), Barriers to Engagement, Capacity Building and Investments, Grant Funding Program Operations, and SFBRA Representation. One takeaway from the process of soliciting community feedback was that there was a general lack of trust in government processes, but also a willingness to learn and help others in the community handle climate impacts. EDC members also wanted culturally relevant education campaigns to be implemented early on (i.e., when Measure AA was put on the ballot, before the grant program started) so people would understand and remember the importance of regional measures like Measure AA. Ms. Ipakchi recommended that community organizations be hired as consultants to develop action plans. It was noted that using consultants to implement the recommendations would require the use of administrative funds, which are capped at 5 percent. Another approach would be to provide grants to projects led by community organizations that implement the recommendations.

Dr. Ana Alvarez presented the Report of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Recommendations to Benefit Economically Disadvantaged Communities (Item 7B). Dr. Ana Alvarez and Chair Luisa Valiela facilitated a lengthy AC discussion. The AC finally reached consensus on endorsing the "near-term" recommendations (to implement in 6-12 months), which will be taken to the December 6 Governing Board meeting. Discussion of the other longer-term recommendations will be pushed to the December AC meeting.

Below were discussion points on the proposed AC Recommendations, process and new recommendations.

Comments on Proposed AC Recommendations:

- Questions on recommendation to "build trust" (1.2): When and how will this be defined? What is meant by "Trust building should be prioritized over capacity building"? The applicant, rather than the Authority, should be building trust with communities. **Clarify this so that it says, "project applicant," not "environmental organizations" are responsible for building trust. "Build trust" (1.2) and "Foster partnerships" (1.7) should be reframed as guiding principles rather than action items.**

- Comment on recommendation that Authority staff develop an implementation plan (1.5): The Authority may need to hire a consultant because staff may not be the right people to do this. **(1.5) should be pulled out as an overarching recommendation to address the other points.**
- Comment on recommendation to "Begin simplifying language and phrasing in Measure AA grant materials" (1.11): Are there materials between the third and fourth grant rounds than can be simplified in language? Currently staff is doing phone consultations to clarify any questions. Some AC members were not comfortable with the recommendation (1.11). **This can be changed to "simplify communication materials," instead of "simplify grant materials."**
- Comments on recommendations to "amend scoring criteria" (1.4): If projects that benefit EDCs are to be more highly prioritized under the current scoring framework, grant application reviewers would need to be given specific guidance in terms of scoring. The Authority should be open and transparent if the weighting of priorities has changed. Changes to prioritization should only be made through a public process. Due to concerns about the impacts of amending scoring criteria, some AC members wanted to see the staff implementation plan before it goes into effect. However, this could result in delaying implementation for another year. The AC will have a chance to review request for proposals, grant program guidelines, and application before they go to the board. which means they will be able to give input on how these recommendations are being implemented.
- Question about amending scoring criteria to prioritize community support: What if a project is good ecologically or provides flood protection, but some community members oppose it?
- Comment on recommendation to "develop a second, separate application track for small community groups" (2.3): Several AC members supported a separate track as a preferable way to achieve the goal of the recommendation to amend the scoring criteria (1.4)**.** However, this was not included in the current recommendation because it is part of the "Short-Term – 1-2 Years" recommendations.
- Comment on recommendation to "Seek more diverse and accurate representation" (2.1): Can the membership of the Governing Board be diversified?

Process Comments:

- It will be important to give the Governing Board a lot of background on the history and process behind these efforts to make sure they embrace the AC Recommendations. The Board will also hear the staff's set of vetted recommendations.
- Is this long list of recommendations practical? It seems overwhelming. Concern that this is more than the Authority can do. **AC can endorse the near-term recommendations and the rest of the recommendations can be discussed at future meetings.**

- **Ad hoc subcommittee will add a glossary of terms and maps to the near-term recs (6-12 months).** They can add disclaimer that says staff will determine feasibility of implementing the recommendations.
- Are these recommendations directed towards board or staff? Clarify.
- How can these reports and recommendations be packaged and communicated to other agencies?
- In future presentations, **provide a slide that shows how the recommendations in Nahal's report were integrated into EDC subcommittee's recommendations**. Board doesn't need that much detail.

New Recommendations:

- Can there be a new oversight committee that would specifically oversee these equity recommendations, or someone from current Oversight Committee that focuses on it?
- Can you have a series of workshops for people implementing projects, so people learn how to do community engagement?

DECISION: Reached consensus on endorsing the "near-term" recommendations – with the following changes:
- Add a glossary of terms and maps of the locations of EDCs.
- Provide a slide that shows how the recommendations in Nahal's report were integrated into EDC subcommittee's recommendations.
- "Develop an implementation plan" (1.5) should be pulled out as an overarching recommendation to address the other points.
- "Build trust" (1.2) and "Foster partnerships" (1.7) should be reframed as guiding principles rather than action items.
- Clarify language in (1.2) so that it says, "project applicant," not "environmental organizations" are responsible for building trust.
- In recommendation (1.11) change "simplify grant materials" to "simplify communication materials."

8. **Targeted Project Solicitations (INFORMATION)**
   Chair Valiela
   This agenda item was pushed to the December AC meeting. It will be a discussion about creating buckets in the grant selection process for small and large projects or for different project phases to get a diversity of projects funded. (Topic raised by Erika Powell and suggested for further discussion by Anne Morkill at 6/28 AC meeting.)

9. **Proposed 2020 Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule (INFORMATION) (5 minutes)**

Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager, announced that the 2020 AC meeting schedule has been set. (See Item 8: Proposed 2020 Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule.)

10. **Restoration Authority Grant Reviewer Selection Process (INFORMATION)**
    Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager, announced that staff is requesting AC members who do not have a conflict of interest to serve as grant application reviewers. Conflicts include not just one's employer submitting an application, but also if one significantly contributes to writing a partner's application. Providing letters of support will not prevent you from being a reviewer at all, but it will prevent you from reviewing those particular applications. Giving general advice is permitted.

    Staff will be assessing the need for reviewers after reviewing what kind and how many applications are received. The tentative time commitment is 10-20 hours in the months of January and February. AC members interested in serving as reviewers should email Linda Tong (Linda.Tong@scc.ca.gov). A reviewers' meeting will be held tentatively in early January. An email with the above information will be sent out to all AC members.

11. **Meeting Process Check-In: What's Working, What's Not (INFORMATION)**
    Chair Valiela requested input on topics to be covered at future meetings. Agenda item 8 (targeted project solicitations) will be covered in December. AC meeting locations in Oakland, not just San Francisco, were requested – the San Francisco meeting location has already been booked for next year, but staff will see if there can be any changes.

12. **Announcements (INFORMATION)**
    There were no announcements.

13. **Public Comment**

14. **Adjourn**