

## **Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes**

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

December 1, 2021

**Present:** David Cooper (Chair), Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), John Brass, Jim Harris, Gary O'Neill, Ryan Cooper (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

**Absent:** John Hodge (BLM)

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

David added Establish Victorian Duplex Planning Work Group to the agenda under Discussion Items.

The agenda was approved by consensus with this addition.

### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the October 27, 2021, board meeting were accepted by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. Harry announced that an anonymous donation was received for approximately \$100,000 worth of Kellog shares. The shares are currently in the Fidelity account. Harry asked for a motion allowing him to sell the shares and re-invest in the two best-performing mutual funds, which would be more consistent with the Association's conservative investment strategy. Jim seconded the motion. David asked if the donor had any restrictions regarding the liquidation of the stocks; Harry said the only restriction was that the donation be spent on "brick and mortar" restoration work rather than studies or research. The finance subcommittee, including Harry, David, and John, will convene to make the decision when to sell the stock. The donor asked to be known only by necessary people. Vote passed to allow the selling of the shares. Overall finances for October were good due to memberships and donations and the gift shop performance. November will be down due to annual insurance payments. Third quarter sales tax has been paid and the BLM report submitted. Harry is waiting on invoices from school tours.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. Volunteer Azul has decorated the gift shop for the holidays. The gift shop is selling lighthouse-themed and wine-themed gift baskets; one has sold. Stock levels are overall high, though some items are unavailable from the vendor due to general issues with shipping around the world. A framed watercolor with a hand-lettered mat commemorating Holly Gant's service to PBLSA will be sent to her this month with the board's resolution commending her.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4. Ryan has had discussions with the BLM communications office on ways to survey community opinions on the lens without an in-person public meeting. David's letter in the upcoming Beacon is a good way to let people know that discussion is occurring; Ryan had some suggestions on wording, which have been incorporated. Chad from Acropolis Lighting has installed lighting samples in the Fog Signal Building for consideration; a formal estimate will come soon. There may still be additional period lighting added. There will also be portable lights for the parking lot for evening events.

Harry asked if a diagram of the parking lot lights will be available before installation; Ryan will show the board. BLM has not yet responded to the study on the tower. Ryan plans to organize a project priority meeting after the holidays. An AmeriCorps group has been staying at the light station, working on cleanup, painting, and setting up the watch room so Jesse's video can be shown on tours.

Harry commented that information boards and photos around the light station are looking worn; Jodie has been working on updating these and will take feedback on specific images to use and interpretive ideas. School events are ongoing until April. Jodie has followed up with schools regarding invoices for tours earlier this fall; she will check again. The Sierra Club will be working at the light station next week, as well as at State Park locations and Fiscalini Ranch. There may be an Eroica event in April; the permit is in progress. Jim asked if funding for the Great America Outdoors Act projects is based on fiscal year; Ryan said no, and last year's announcement came in February. Ryan is working with the company and BLM regarding restroom installation. David asked Jodie if signage will be replaced on interior or exterior spaces; Jodie is working on both but is beginning with the damaged signs. New signs will be partly based on work that interns have done. There is a Coast Guard sextant and the Thornton bed headboard that could be displayed in the museum with new interpretive material. The goal is to create more user-friendly displays for the more open tour format.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. There is \$12,000 left in the allocation for payment to Shoreline Engineering. There was discussion on asking Bruce and Dan for a formal proposal to restore one of the openings on the tower for approximately \$20,000, based on previous informal discussions with them. Harry pointed out that feedback on the report from BLM is necessary before taking next steps. It was decided that the proposal could be prepared so that it is ready when BLM engineers return an opinion on the report; Ryan said this could make the proposal a better candidate for funding. Jim will draft an RFP for the proposal requiring budget, cost estimates, and schedule for the prototype restoration of an opening on the tower using composite materials; it will be distributed to board members for approval before sending it to Bruce and Dan. Harry asked the board to approve paying the invoice from Bruce without an attached detailed breakdown of the costs; it was decided that the report was sufficient justification for the invoice.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. On hold until the first part of next year.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. Jim will create a summary of next steps in January. Harry needs to follow up with Cambria to see if they have a new director yet.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty). No activity.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Project Priorities Revisited (Harry Thorpe) – Addressed by Ryan above.
2. Fresnel Lens Update – Discussed above. David will draft a board resolution recognizing Zale's work on the lens. A brick will also be ordered for Zale, as a retiring board member.

## **New Business:**

## **Discussion Items:**

1. Establish Victorian Duplex Planning Work Group (David Cooper) – David asked for board approval to create a work group to plan and oversee the construction of a replica of the Victorian house. The work group will explore possibilities and create a proposal, timeline, and business plan. Jim suggested keeping the Keeper's Cottage in mind as well when researching and planning. Harry suggested working with a local architect to create a project plan documenting the stages the project needs to progress as a preliminary step. The board had no objections to creating a work group; David will report back at the next meeting.
2. Harry suggested the board discuss adding new board members at a future meeting. David will prepare a memo.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on 1/22/22.

## **Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 12/1/21 – Cressant Swarts**

### **Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes**

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

October 27, 2021

**Present:** Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), John Brass, Jim Harris, Gary O'Neill, Ryan Cooper (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

**Absent:** David Cooper (Chair), John Hodges (BLM)

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Discussion of the next date for the board meeting was added to the agenda. Agenda approved by consensus with this addition.

#### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the September 22, 2021, board meeting were accepted by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. The Association continues to show a loss for the month and the year due to unusual payroll expenses. The Association's investments did not do well, due to a general downturn in the market.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. The question was raised as to whether the current closure of Hwy 1 will affect tour attendance and gift shop revenue. Jodie said it tends to help tours because most visitors come from the south and then need something to do. Sharon expressed her approval for experimenting with pricing in the gift shop. Jodie said the test webpage linking the store inventory to the website looks good and will be better long-term. The board discussed the previously proposed idea of offering a 10% discount to association members; there will be a four-month trial period, then an audit to see if the system is being abused by non-members. Jim moved to begin the member discount. There were no objections. Approved.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4. Ryan reported that he has had difficulty scheduling a meeting with the Coast Guard to discuss the lens. He suggested that it is time to have a public meeting to gauge the community's opinions on moving the lens to the light station or leaving it in Cambria. All BLM meetings are supposed to be virtual, but the PBLSA could organize an in-person meeting instead. It was suggested that an article be run in *The Cambrian* to open discussion and get feedback. There was further discussion about collecting feedback with a phone line, email address, or online survey, as well as whether the article should be an opinion piece by one of the board members or if it should be in the format of a public notice. Scheduling a meeting would have to wait until after the holidays, though an article could be submitted sooner. Ryan will contact BLM communications to see if PBLSA should handle the article submission. It was emphasized that questions on a survey should be clearly just gathering information, not implying that the community is voting. Also, it will be

important to make sure the community knows the funding issues and what work has already been accomplished.

Ryan reported that work on the parking lot will begin in early 2022 (not 2023 as stated in the report). Options for lighting of the parking lot will be considered; it will still be a gravel parking lot but with more space and a better design for larger events. Restroom construction will begin later in 2022; it will be a vault with flush toilets, manufactured by Greenflush Restrooms. Ryan will meet with Chad from Acropolis Lighting next Thursday to view samples for the Fog Signal Building. BLM staff were impressed with Bruce Elster's report on the tower, and it has been passed on to state engineers.

Dates were proposed to discuss the priority projects list at the light station. All board members expressed interest, and Sharon asked if the meeting could be a hybrid Zoom and in-person meeting to accommodate those who can't attend in person. Proposed dates are November 10 and December 15. Ryan will send out a project list from the last discussion. Harry suggested adding the boundary fence that was proposed in 2013, as a historical and practical separation from State Park property. It may be possible to fund this before the end of the current cooperative agreement between PBLSA and BLM.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. Jim thanked Cressant for taking minutes at the Shoreline Engineering meeting; the minutes are included in the board reports below. Bruce Elster also submitted an attached memo encouraging BLM and the board to not lose momentum, emphasizing the risk of continued rust-jacking to the longevity of the tower. Next steps include testing the exterior mortar, which needs to wait for BLM approval, as the process may be destructive.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Jim reported that progress on the project will need to wait until January or February at the earliest, as Connected Energy is in the process of finding a new expert in battery storage technology.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. Priorities for ongoing community contacts will be discussed at the project priority meeting being planned. Jim met with the Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce and requested further meetings. Harry will contact the Cambria Chamber of Commerce when the new chairperson is appointed.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) - Membership discount discussed in Gift Shop report; no further report.

### **Old Business:**

1. Project Priorities Revisited (Harry Thorpe) - Addressed in BLM report.
2. Fresnel Lens Update - Lens update discussed in BLM report. Appreciation was shown for Zale's efforts in the lens project; it was suggested that formal recognition be discussed at a future meeting.

### **New Business:**

1. Rack card distribution company information (Cressant Swarts) – Cressant reported that a year's subscription to the Certified Folder rack card display service would cost \$3,286 for the SLO area, including discounts for hosting a brochure display and a tourism recovery discount only available this year. It is also possible to try the service for a few months at a higher monthly rate. It will be necessary to provide Certified Folder with a minimum of 18,000 rack cards or brochures for a shorter trial period, or 25,000 for an annual contract. There was discussion on contacting the Friends of the Elephant Seal and the Point San Luis Light Station for information on how they like the service and how they are funding it; Cressant will follow up. Ryan suggested asking the San Simeon Tourism Alliance for assistance with funding. Rack card distribution has been done by volunteers until recently; it has been hampered by the reduction in volunteers due to Covid. Jodie reported that most visitors say they learn about the light station by word of mouth or the internet. Rack cards at the gate have also not been going out as frequently. Jodie suggested it may be worth doing a survey to find out where people are getting their information about the light station. A decision is pending further investigation on funding sources.
2. Zoom account purchased for Association (Cressant Swarts) – Cressant will send out information and instructions to all board members after the meeting. Harry suggested board members think about how to best use the service.
3. Participation in the scarecrow festival and Pinedorado Parade (Jodie Robb Nelson) – Jodie reported that there has been involvement in both events in the past, but the people involved are no longer with the Association. It would be good public relations in advance of a capital campaign, as well as possible volunteer recruitment; Jodie would like to have board member and other volunteer involvement in the creation of new scarecrows and a float for the Pinedorado Parade. Harry agreed that both events show good community involvement and suggested board members ask anyone they know who might want to be involved. Ryan observed that this could be good board member recruitment as well.

### **Discussion Items:**

1. Brief discussion on whether the board should continue to conduct meetings via Zoom or go back to in-person meetings. – No discussion
2. Discussion on date for the next board meeting. – December 1 is the tentative date for the next board meeting.
3. Additional discussion items were raised: Ryan will be working out of the Central Coast field office in Monterey for a couple of months starting in January; there will be a fill-in manager for the light station, but Ryan will also be involved in ongoing projects. The video that Jesse created will be shown in the watchroom; Ryan would like to have a volunteer gathering to show the video. There is a possibility that a permanent park ranger will be added to the BLM staff at the light station; an intern will likely be hired on a contract basis before that happens. There may be future discussion about adding an intern to the BLM agreement with PBLSA. The possibility of a holiday party was discussed; due to BLM restrictions the gathering would have to be under 50 people. An open-house format during the day so that food and socializing can be outside was suggested by Jodie. The Association will pay for refreshments as in the past.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on 11/28/21.

## Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 12/1/21 – Harry Thorpe

### TREASURER'S REPORT for October 2021

**1. OPERATIONS INCOME:** Last Month: \$8,193.70\* YTD: \$55,494.04  
**PROFIT:** Last Month: \$2,849.48 YTD: <\$4,072.85>\*\*

**TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE:** \$12,662.03

**BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:** Last Month: None YTD: \$33,319.00  
**BALANCES:** P.P. Bank: \$2,439.68 ASAP: \$19,965.18

\* Gift shop: \$5,581.70, Membership/Donations: \$2,512.00

\*\* Payroll: \$20,700.26, excludes BLM restoration expense

### 2. INVESTMENT BALANCE – FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

| <i>Month</i>     | <i>Beg Bal</i> | <i>Market Chg</i> | <i>Div/Int</i> | <i>Deposit</i> | <i>W/D</i> | <i>Ending Bal</i> |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------------|
| <b>Oct 2021</b>  | 609,430.59     | 6,270.76          | 7,281.13       | --             | --         | 622,982.48        |
| <b>Sept 2021</b> | 628,288.44     | <9,671.01>        | 813.16         | --             | <10,000>   | 609,430.59        |
| <b>Aug 2021</b>  | 582,804.03     | 4,747.73          | 736.68         | 40,000         | --         | 628,288.44        |

### 3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for Sept/Oct. Posted adjustments.
- Gift shop manager is now posting majority of initial accounting entries. Reconciliation training to follow.
- Filed/paid 3QTR sales tax.
- Submitted SF 425 annual performance/financial status report to BLM.
- School outreach invoices for transportation costs are pending.
- Paid Wellsona invoice for detailed cost estimate to repair lens enclosure. Expense will be submitted for Cooperative Agreement reimbursement.

*Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.*  
*Treasurer*

### Attachment 3: Gift Shop Report 12/1/21 – Cressant Swarts

#### October Gift Shop Revenue

|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| On-site sales | \$5,214.08        |
| Website sales | \$168.58          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$5,382.66</b> |

#### November Gift Shop Revenue

|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| On-site sales | \$3,249.84        |
| Website sales | \$224.44          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$3,474.28</b> |

#### NET SALES COMPARISONS

Shaded month indicates lower sales than that same month last year. Figures include website as well as on-site gift shop sales starting in 2021. Excludes donations and memberships.

|      | Jan   | Feb   | Mar   | Apr   | May   | Jun   | Jul   | Aug   | Sep   | Oct   | Nov   | Dec   |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2016 | 1,798 | 2,609 | 2,830 | 1,988 | 2,142 | 2,586 | 4,861 | 3,410 | 2,716 | 2,647 | 1,930 | 2,103 |
| 2017 | 2,196 | 1,461 | 2,678 | 3,909 | 2,864 | 3,350 | 4,666 | 3,701 | 2,218 | 3,022 | 2,793 | 3,491 |
| 2018 | 3,077 | 3,094 | 3,104 | 3,316 | 3,133 | 3,707 | 6,225 | 4,157 | 3,383 | 2,552 | 1,597 | 1,730 |
| 2019 | 1,015 | 1,605 | 2,565 | 3,350 | 3,641 | 4,665 | 6,804 | 4,722 | 2,070 | 3,656 | 2,717 | 3,719 |
| 2020 | 2,202 | 2,764 | 1,653 | 215   | 164   | 189   | 524   | 244   | 136   | 56    | 220   | 376   |
| 2021 | 108   | 1,291 | 2,198 | 3,723 | 4,276 | 5,363 | 8,469 | 7,588 | 4,238 | 5,383 | 3,474 |       |

Government shutdown affected Dec 2018 and \*COVID-19 affected 2020/2021 beginning on March 19, 2020.

#### Yearly Comparisons

|      | Jan - Jun | TOTAL    |
|------|-----------|----------|
| 2016 | \$13,953  | \$31,620 |
| 2017 | \$16,458  | \$36,349 |
| 2018 | \$19,431  | \$39,075 |
| 2019 | \$16,841  | \$40,529 |
| 2020 | \$7,187   | \$8,743  |
| 2021 | \$16,959  |          |

## Appendix 4: BLM Update 12/1/21 – Ryan Cooper

### Ongoing Projects

#### **Lens**

No progress since last month. David wrote a letter to put in the Beacon.

#### **Parking Lot Redesign / Restrooms**

Parking lot redesign is planning on occurring early in the calendar year 2022 by an inhouse crew from the Central Coast Field Office. I am working on the environmental work for the restroom.

#### **FSB Lighting**

David, Harry, and I looked at the samples last Monday. We concurred the higher output lights looked better. Chad is putting a quote together for us. We also All thought the strip lights could be augmented by some period light fixtures. Possible portable or possibly hanging from the roof.

#### **Tower**

No updates since last meeting.

#### **Priority Project Meeting**

I have not scheduled the meeting yet. I am thinking after the holidays.

#### **Wild Corp Crew**

We have had a crew of 8 doing work at the light station the last week and a half and they will be here for another week and a half. They have done a lot of general clean-up and weed work.

#### **Special Event:**

2021/2022 School tours

-Cambria and Cayucos are complete.

-Los Osos this week

Sierra Club work crew will be out next week.

April 2022      Possible Eroica Event

### **Tour Numbers**

| Month     | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| October   | 637  | 605  | 516  | 500  | 506  | 441  | 535  | 22   | 552  |
| November  | 622  | 503  | 474  | 357  | 523  | 433  | 334  | 56   | 375  |
| December  | 404  | 464  | 426  | 273  | 829  | 251  | 518  | 0    |      |
| January   | 661  | 731  | 623  | 266  | 608  | 0    | 715  | 0    |      |
| February  | 573  | 570  | 572  | 284  | 780  | 318  | 578  | 108  |      |
| March     | 696  | 754  | 560  | 502  | 662  | 784  | 185  | 160  |      |
| April     | 663  | 616  | 581  | 666  | 684  | 790  | 0    | 399  |      |
| May       | 432  | 629  | 352  | 572  | 362  | 555  | 0    | 446  |      |
| June      | 658  | 916  | 521  | 787  | 732  | 698  | 0    | 643  |      |
| July      | 1178 | 990  | 850  | 1125 | 1169 | 1085 | 0    | 972  |      |
| August    | 985  | 809  | 693  | 836  | 1001 | 819  | 0    | 834  |      |
| September | 601  | 481  | 442  | 437  | 591  | 374  | 0    | 547  |      |
| Total     | 8110 | 8068 | 6610 | 6605 | 8447 | 6548 | 2865 | 4166 | 927  |

\*partial

## **Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 12/1/21 – Jim Harris**

We await a formal reaction from the engineers at BLM to Bruce's design document. Bruce has submitted an invoice for the completed work documented in the design document submitted in October, and there is a balance of about \$12K that was not spend. Bruce's memo presented at our last meeting is presented below for reference, and it outlines additional work that could be performed. The work includes masonry mortar testing of the external tower and geotechnical testing around the foundation of the tower. These items would be necessary before additional restoration design work could be performed. In addition, David Cooper has mentioned an idea from Dan Murphy to restore one of the openings of the tower, removing the iron work and replacing with composite material which would arrest the rust jacking that is occurring and provide additional insight into the work that needs to be done for restoration. Dan's estimate for the work is reported to be around \$20K. Thus there are a number of options that could be considered by the PBLSA to continue the tower restorations effort. My recommendation is that the board ask Bruce and Dan to combine their two efforts into one project and submit a proposal to the board for consideration in the January meeting. The intent is that the current project be amended, and the balance plus additional money provided by the PBLSA be used to fund the work. It should be understood that this work would be done anyway and will provide foundation for the next steps in the restoration.



## Memorandum

Ref: Follow-up to 20 October 2021 Meeting.  
From: Bruce Elster, PE  
To: Piedras Blancas Lightstation Association

A lot of material was covered during the meeting on 20 October. While a fair amount of technical material was discussed and explained, there were other items that also needed attention that we just did not have time to get into. This correspondence is directed to the PBLSA to go over items that in the short term, should be considered.

1. Additional testing.
  - a. Perform in-situ masonry mortar testing at locations on the exterior of the Tower. The only tests currently completed have been made on the interior of the Tower. Mortar on the exterior of the tower has visible deterioration. Evaluation of the exterior portion of the masonry will provide valuable information going forward.
  - b. Geotechnical testing around the Tower to determine the depth of the Tower foundation as well as the characteristics of the underlying materials.
  - c. Exterior ironwork in the form of door and window lintels, sills, cornice, and entry door coverings, and related framework is corroding. The work related to the ironwork could be performed as a separate phase, independent of other rehabilitation work.
2. Rust jacking is an on-going problem and will not slow down over time. Intrusive examination of the ironwork, where it extends into the masonry, should be made to develop an understanding of what will be involved going forward
3. The Order-Of-Magnitude Preliminary Cost Estimate could have been discussed further. In preparing the estimate, it was the Engineer's view that the estimate should be viewed from two different viewpoints. One that would be fairly close to a negotiated cost, and another that would represent a cost that could be expected if the project is put out to public bidding. It has been the experience of the Engineer that a low bid does not necessarily lead to least cost. This topic should be carefully evaluated further before deciding on a course of action.

Any questions or comments are welcome.

## **Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 12/1/21 – Jim Harris**

The status of this project remains the same as last time: the undergrounding of the PG&E electrical supply lines project remains on hold. Connected Energy would still like to present the white paper proposal, but not until they have a person who can address the battery storage technology. So it is proposed that the Board review the white paper presentation at the beginning of next year; hopefully sufficient information should be available in January to plan that presentation. They will present their work on the design of a sustainable option to allow electric power for the light station to be provided with or without grid input using a microgrid system with solar and motor generator input and battery storage.

## **Appendix 7: Capital Campaign/Grants Report 12/1/21 – Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe**

Effort continues on the project to meet with the chambers of commerce in the San Luis Obispo County to introduce them to the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association and to inform their members of the restoration progress at the light station. After three months of effort for a meeting with the chair of the Coalition of Central Coast Chambers, Jim Dantona (who also is president of the San Luis Chamber of Commerce), and after discussion about the coalition with Gina Fitzpatrick, President/CEO of the Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce, Jim Harris made arrangements to submit the informational material on November 23 to Jim Dantona's office at the SLO Chamber of Commerce. In his email correspondence with him, Jim offered to answer any questions that he might have. In a conversation with Gena Fitzpatrick, she suggested that if we meet with the chamber of commerce of Cambria, then we will have covered essentially all the chambers in the county. So with that information, I rely on Harry to perform that function, and I plan to prepare a summary of the next steps for the January board meeting.