

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

Meeting at 10:00 a.m. at Piedras Blancas Light Station

June 22, 2022

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

**Absent:** Jodie Nelson (BLM), John Hodge (BLM)

Ryan Cooper began the planning portion of the meeting at 10:02 a.m. See Old Business for a summary.

David Cooper called the board meeting to order at 11:22 a.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the May 25, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. The report shows a profit for the year to date.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. Sales for May were higher than any previous summer. Overall profit of 37%.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4. Tours are now five days per week. Katelyn Owings has started as summer help. We will also be getting occasional help from Ben, a BLM Bakersfield park ranger, and Jonathan, a BLM employee who has helped previously. The permanent park ranger position for the light station will be advertised in the next week or so. The parking lot plan has narrowed in scope; it will be cleaned up and the edges delineated, but there will be no parking lines. It will allow for parking for four rows of cars and the surface will be chip-sealed; the archeological survey disallowed asphalt or expanding the current footprint. Ryan and Harry are continuing to work on the lighting for the Fog Signal Building. Ryan has spoken to the BLM engineers on the progress of the tower restoration project. Funding from the Great America Outdoors Act for this year has not been announced; more progress on the approval process for the tower work will improve our chances to secure funding. Ryan will continue to communicate with the engineers and try to arrange a meeting with Bruce, the engineers, and the archaeologist. Hike-in events will be on July 27 and August 31 and will include kids' activities. Ryan asked for suggestions on special themed tours that could be offered once Jodie returns from her detail.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. Jim and Bruce had an on-site visit with a representative of Yeh and Associates, Inc., as a potential replacement for Earth Systems, who have not responded to requests for a proposal. Jim anticipates a proposal from Yeh within a couple of weeks. Dan and Bruce will submit an unsolicited proposal for the design of the top

three floors, consulting with ARG for design review. Jim distributed copies of a draft proposal from Bruce and Dan. Their draft proposal consists of three phases, which could be funded individually. The cost of work will be included in a revised proposal for the next meeting.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Progress is waiting on an agreement between California State Parks and BLM regarding the access road to the light station. The microgrid itself is not on the project priority list; Jim suggested considering it independent of the undergrounding aspect.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. The board discussed the best methods to take advantage of grant opportunities. Cressant will contact interested board members and schedule a time to meet and discuss Instrumental and potential grants.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report.

### **Old Business:**

1. Project Priorities Revisited (Harry Thorpe and Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 8. Ryan reported that the last project planning meeting took place in early 2020. Ryan has the results of that prior planning meeting, where the board was asked to rank a list of the top five priorities. Scoring was based on visual elements, public interest/benefit, cost, and economic benefit. Sharon suggested establishing criteria to determine priorities: significant risk of irreparable damage, historical significance, environmental impact, and respect for the land and its inhabitants.

The ranking from the previous meeting was as follows: native plants garden; painting the tower; moving the flagpole to its historic location; making changes to the trail; updating the interpretive materials; the lens; building restrooms; replicating the Victorian keepers' houses; reconstructing the blacksmith, fuel storage, and barn buildings; creating a replica of the top three floors of the tower; restoring the tower; undergrounding the power lines; adding water collection; and stabilizing the tower, which was at the bottom of the list due to its cost and complexity.

David commented that most of these projects are in progress in some way, though some are very complex and will take a long time. BLM engineers are reviewing the proposal to replace the windows on the tower; the lens is moving forward, though it is involving more people than anticipated; the restroom and parking lot projects are progressing; work has been done on the interpretive materials, including finalizing the film in the watch room, creating a new brochure, and reconfiguring the tour format due to the pandemic.

Harry suggested showing regular progress by completing a smaller project every six months; it would be good for public perception and for grant applications. The Fog Signal Building can be completed soon, and the perimeter fence would be a relatively easy project to complete.

There was additional discussion on the perimeter fence. A white vinyl fence could be installed with minimal impact by replacing the existing t-posts. It could be done by a contractor or as a group volunteer project. The board agreed that the fence is a good short-term priority. Gary agreed to be the lead board member.

The group continued to discuss other potential short-term projects, such as a native plant garden and adding a retaining wall and finishing the trail off-shoot started by the California Conservation Corps.

There was discussion on whether painting the tower should wait until the window restoration and other stabilization work is completed; it was agreed that it would be best to proceed and touch-up painting as necessary when the windows are completed.

The board agreed to prioritize the completion of the Fog Signal lighting and the replacement of the perimeter fencing for the next six months. Short-term projects that will be considered next include moving the flagpole, the completion of the parking lot, and building the restrooms. The board will hold another planning meeting in approximately six months to decide new priorities.

2. Fresnel Lens Update (David Cooper) – David gave an update on the efforts by the stakeholders interested in preserving the lens. Bruce and Dan are working on determining whether the existing enclosure can be repaired. The Coast Guard is working with lampist Jim Woodward to see what needs to be done to preserve the lens in the short-term. The intention is to have a temporary solution in place by September. With board approval, the association would pay for Bruce and Dan's assessment and plan for the enclosure; there will be public fundraising to pay for the work to repair the enclosure. Once these immediate concerns are addressed, the stakeholders' group will continue to plan for creating a museum-quality structure to house the lens.

#### **New Business:**

1. Proposed addition of new board members (David Cooper) – In April 2019, the board established a standing nominating committee, which developed a standard practice for recruiting new board members. David distributed a procedure to the group. (See Appendix 9). The board currently has six members, but the ideal number would be nine. David charged all current board members with identifying one or two possible candidates, considering a need for diversity. David asked Sharon and Gary to reconvene the nominating committee and review submissions from possible candidates. Sharon and Gary will discuss reconvening the nominating committee and contact David with their results and thoughts on the process to officially reconvene the committee. Once the committee is reconvened, board members can submit candidates to the nominating committee.

#### **Discussion Items:**

The board briefly discussed continuing to use Zoom for meetings unless it is necessary to meet face to face.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on July 26, 2022.

## **Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 6/22/22 – Cressant Swarts**

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

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

May 25, 2022

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

**Absent:** David Cooper (Chair), John Hodge (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM)

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

#### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the April 27, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. There have been good gift shop sales recently, and a small overall profit year-to-date. Investments continue in a downward turn due to general market trends.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. Sales for April were the highest ever. The gift shop has been reorganized and new displays added. Cressant is continuing to raise prices to improve the profit margin. The cost of goods for the March report has been updated to include sales tax collected; a revised report is attached.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4. Community discussion about the lens has increased, resulting in the addition of a fence surrounding the deteriorating lens enclosure out of concerns for public safety. County Supervisor Bruce Gibson is setting up a public meeting to discuss the lens, with a tentative date of June 15. BLM staff will attend, as well as a representative from the Coast Guard. Ideas that may be discussed at the meeting are rebuilding the current enclosure, moving the lens near the historical center, and moving it to the light station.

Jim asked if the PBLSA could offer to pack and store the lens as a means of safeguarding it until a solution is found. Discussion followed, and it was decided to wait until David returns and attends the planning meeting for the public meeting before discussing further. Harry will talk to David and update the board.

Ryan reported that the parking lot will only be re-sealed and have barriers installed, due to rising costs. The restroom project is waiting for approval by the state office. Harry and Ryan have been working on a statement of work to get bids to finish the lighting in the Fog Signal Building. There have been no updates from state engineers regarding the Shoreline proposal; Ryan will continue to pursue information.

The board discussed holding a project planning meeting in conjunction with the next board meeting on June 22. The meeting will take place on June 22 at 10 a.m. at the light station. Any board member who cannot attend in person can attend via Zoom. Ryan will send the board information on current projects and notes from the last project planning meeting before June 22.

BLM will not be getting a permanent park ranger position until the end of summer. No candidates were still available for hire for the seasonal park ranger position when offered. Ryan asked the board to pass on suggestions for a summer intern/helper position. Housing can be provided at the light station. Suggestions for volunteers are also welcome. Hike-in events will be held on the last Wednesday of July and August. Hike-in tours are free with attendees encouraged to donate. Ryan and Jodie have discussed adding special monthly or bimonthly guided tours with specific themes after the summer schedule ends. Potential themes include botany/wildflowers, coastal birds, and sunset tours; pass on any other ideas to Ryan.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. As there has been no response from Earth Systems Pacific regarding the geotechnical aspect of the tower project, a new proposal bid will be requested from YEH, a firm with which Bruce is familiar. Bruce and YEH representatives will visit the light station on Wednesday, June 8; a bid should be available by the June board meeting.

Jim advocated for continuing the momentum on the tower project by pursuing preliminary architectural work for the tower top design; he included a draft RFP in his report. Jim proposes first meeting with the Architectural Resources Group to discuss potential costs of the project outlined in the RFP in order to get more information for the board to make a decision. Motion made by Sharon for Jim to discuss a potential cost on the work required to get a cost estimate for the top of the tower. John seconded. Motion passed.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Connected Energy has revised their white paper and would like to present it to the board and BLM. It would be an estimated \$500,000 investment for the proposed microgrid project. There will be further discussion at the June 22 project priority meeting on whether to pursue the project.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. The expenditure of the previous anonymous donation of approximately \$100,000 will be discussed at the project planning meeting. Donor approval of the proposed project is not required, but Harry will discuss proposed projects with them.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Project Priorities Revisited (Harry Thorpe) – A project priorities meeting will be held on June 22 at 10 a.m. at the light station. See discussion in BLM report.
2. Fresnel Lens Update – See discussion in BLM report.

#### **New Business:**

**Discussion Items:**

Ryan asked about the possibility of new board members being added. The issue will be addressed at the next meeting in New Business.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-Chair/Treasurer) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on June 17, 2022.

## Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 6/22/22 – Harry Thorpe

### TREASURER'S REPORT for May 2022

<b>1. OPERATIONS INCOME:</b>	Last Month: \$9,598.80*	YTD: \$30,076.54
<b>PROFIT:</b>	Last Month: \$2,970.78	YTD: \$4,160.42
<b>MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS:</b>	\$11,532.70	
<b>TARGETED DONATION FUND BALANCE:</b>	\$13,660.03	
<b>BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:</b>	Last Month: none	YTD: \$1,440.68
<b>BALANCES:</b>	P.P. Bank: \$999.00	ASAP: \$18,465.00

\* Gift Shop: \$6,788, Donations: \$2,235

### 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>May 2022</b>	652,743.78	7,151.18	876.99	--	--	660,771.95
<b>Apr 2022</b>	681,678.56	<29,825.79>	891.01	--	--	652,743.78
<b>Mar 2022</b>	677,296.03	3,731.70	650.83	--	--	681,678.56

### 3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for April/May. No adjustments.
- Compiled 2021 tax information/documents for submission to CPA.

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

### Attachment 3: Gift Shop Report 6/22/22 – Cressant Swarts

It looks like it will be a busy summer; sales in June are averaging \$500 gross per day so far. Some items are backordered until the end of summer, but we should still have a well-stocked gift shop for the busy season.

#### May Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$6,195.63
Website sales	\$188.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,384.42</b>

#### May Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$3,998.69
Profit	\$2,385.73
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>37%</b>

*\*includes cost, scrap, inventory shortages, taxes, and shipping for website sales*

### 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, memberships, and engraved bricks.*

	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	2,265
2022	2,636	3,290	4,410	4,404	6,384							

*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	\$48,376
2022		



#### **Appendix 4: BLM Update 6/22/22 – Ryan Cooper**

Ryan delivered a verbal BLM report at the meeting. See minutes above.

#### **Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 6/22/22 – Jim Harris**

An effort was initiated to request a new proposal bid for the geotechnical task for the tower foundation from Yeh and Associates, Inc. in Grover Beach, a firm that Bruce has worked with before. To pursue this goal, Bruce Elster, Judd King of Yeh, and Jim Harris held a site visit to the tower on June 15, 2022, a Wednesday afternoon, from around 2:00 p.m. to around 3:30 p.m.; we met at Shoreline Engineering in Morro Bay before proceeding to the Piedras Blancas Light Station. We walked around the tower base and within the interior to familiarize Judd with the proposed project. Judd proposed using ground penetrating radar as part of the investigation, and Bruce requested that at least two exploratory sites around the foundation be excavated to determine the nature of the existing foundation structure. Judd was made aware that due to BLM requirements the actual work on the project would not begin until six months from now. Judd gratuitously drove us in his company car. On the next day, we received the following email from Judd, copied here for reference:

June 15, 2022

Hi Jim and Bruce,

Thank you for the great tour yesterday to the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse. What an amazing place and structure. We would be happy to team up with Bruce and the Piedras Blancas Light Station Organization on this retrofit/restoration project. Our services will include providing geotechnical engineering support for the structural design of the retrofit. I will coordinate with Bruce on our scope development that we spoke about yesterday. Feel free to reach out with questions.

Be Well,  
Judd

Judd J. King, PE\*, GE  
Senior Project Manager

Subsequently, Judd and Bruce are in discussion over the details of the task, and the expectation is that Bruce and the PBLSA will have a proposal response from Judd in a couple of weeks.

We have yet to talk with David Wessel of ARG about the architectural issues involved with the restoration of the top three levels of the tower. We have been in email contact, but events have been moving in a new direction. A discussion was held by Bruce Elster, Dan Murphy, and Jim Harris at Shoreline Engineering on Friday June 3, 2022, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. on the subject of the construction of the top three levels of the lighthouse tower at Point Piedras Blancas. Bruce and Dan advocated pursuing the restoration of the top three levels of the tower with their combined effort as an intermediate step before directly involving David Wessel of the Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco. Dan felt comfortable constructing the top three levels with modern materials given his background in using primarily fiberglass in the past for construction. We went over the architectural drawings of the tower and discussed such issues as the attachment of the top three levels, the modular approach to its construction (potentially each of the three levels treated as a separate component), size of work crew (probably three or four), use of subcontractors, and possibility of the availability of original castings in a warehouse in Bay Area. The concept was discussed that David Wessel of ARG could be used as a consultant for the effort as the work progressed. To be clear, the

structural restoration of the tower would have to be completed before the construction of the top three levels could be accomplished. However, the design and construction planning for the top can be accomplished prior to the completion of the structural reinforcement of the tower. Bruce and Dan will develop a proposal for the effort that the PBLSA Board and the BLM can review and evaluate at the June board meeting; they hope to have a copy available for Jim to reproduce and to distribute at the Wednesday Board meeting.

#### **Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 6/22/22 – Jim Harris**

The status of this project remains the same as last time: the under-grounding of the PG&E electrical supply lines project remains on hold until the BLM and California State Parks come to a formal understanding of the access road to the light station along with other considerations. Connected Energy has prepared a revised version of their white paper and is willing to give a presentation to the Board as soon as the Board is meeting in person again, hopefully in the next few months. Their white paper is a proposed 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 6/22/22 – Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe**

With the planned tower work in the near future and initiation of the effort for restoration of the two Victorian structures, it is recommended that the PBLSA continue to use Instrumentl to identify potential grant opportunities to support the work for the tower and the restoration of the Victorians (including their possible use as the future home for the Fresnel Lens). It should be noted that Cressant Swarts identified a \$10K grant opportunity from the Lighthouse Society, specifically a letter of intent for the grant that was due June 15, 2022. There is a planned (initiated by Ryan Cooper) project priority meeting that will review the effort in 2020 and discuss plans for the future. Hopefully as part of this discussion, we will strategize the funding mechanisms to support this effort, and the opportunities such as the Lighthouse Society can be pursued.

## **Project Planning 2022**

### **Short term**

#### **Paint Tower**

Put a coat of paint on the Lighthouse. It would include pressure washing and painting the tower.

#### **Lens**

This could include many different phases. Everything from repairing the enclosure in Cambria to moving the Lens back to the Light Station. This is all contingent on the Coast Guard loaning the Lens to BLM.

#### **Flagpole**

Moving the flagpole from its current location to its historic location to the south of the Lighthouse.

#### **Update Interpretive Material**

Another very broad category. This could include but not be limited to updating trail signs, adding new signs, flyer updated, updating museum in gift shop, and anything that is related to the interpretive information we distribute

#### **Restrooms**

Replacing porta potties with “real” restrooms.

#### **Parking Lot**

Reconfigure the parking lot so it is as efficient as possible.

#### **Trail**

Rerouting the trail to get a better look at the small cove and the wharf area. This could enhance the tour experience for visitors

#### **Boundary Fence**

Install replica boundary fence. Likely out of a durable fencing material with low maintenance.

### **On-Going**

#### **Stabilize Tower**

Reinforce the tower itself so it will be stable for years to come.

#### **Windows and Openings**

Repair window openings to eliminate rust jacking and to stop damage that may be happening to the tower.

#### **Replicate Top**

Replicate the top 3 levels of the tower. This project would be the last of the tower projects and would bring the tower back to what it looked like the early 1900's.

### **Victorian / Keepers Cottages**

Replicate the Victorian Duplex along with the Head Keepers Cottage. The exteriors of these buildings will be exact replicas of the historic buildings, but the insides will be reconfigured to best fit our needs. The interiors will include museum space, possible space for the lens, office space, meeting space and much more.

### **Native Garden**

A garden that would focus on rare native plants and plants used by Native Americans.

## **Long Term**

### **Barn**

Reconstructing the Barn that was located on the North end of the property. This building could be used for storage and interpretation.

### **Power Lines**

Bury the power lines from Highway 1 to the Light Station. This would improve the visual landscape as well as eliminate the interaction between birds and the power lines.

### **Fuel Storage Building**

Replicating the Fuel Storage building that used to sit south of the light house. This could be used for storage or could be used as a shell for a restroom.

### **Blacksmith Shop**

This would be a replica of the blacksmith shop that was on the south side of the property outlined by rope. This building could be used for storage or interpretation.

## **Appendix 9: Procedure for Appointing a New PBLSA Board Member 6/22/22 – David Cooper**

Any board member may present an applicant to the Nominating Committee (NC). The NC will request that the candidate present a letter of intent for becoming a Board member along with a short biography that emphasizes skills and experience related to the duties of a board member. Following receipt of these materials, the NC will interview the candidate and prepare a summary profile for presentation to the Board. At a regularly scheduled meeting, the chair will call for a motion to consider the candidate for Board membership, followed by a discussion and vote on the nominee within thirty days of the presentation of these materials. The Board Chair will notify the nominee of the results of the vote.

From our By-laws:

14. **Filling Vacancies on Board:** Vacancies on the board may be filled by approval of the board or, if the number of directors then in office is less than a quorum, by (1) the unanimous written consent of the directors then in office, (2) the affirmative vote of a majority of the directors then in office at a meeting held according to notice or waivers of notice complying with Corporations Code section 5211, or (3) a sole remaining director.