

## **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 1: Secretary's Report 5/25/22 – Cressant Swarts**

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

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

April 27, 2022

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

**Absent:** John Brass, John Hodge (BLM), Ryan Cooper (BLM)

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. There was a brief discussion about holding meetings in person again. Most board members favor continuing Zoom meetings.

Agenda approved by consensus.

#### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the March 23, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. There was a small profit recorded in March, as well as for the year-to-date. There continues to be an overall market downturn for investments.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. Cressant has included a new chart in the gift shop report showing the profit after factoring in cost of goods and taxes. This will help track how recent price increases affect the overall profit margin. March sales were the highest on record.
4. BLM Update (Jodie Nelson) – See Appendix 4. Mortar testing on the tower cannot proceed without a full review and BLM approval.

The CCCs have done a lot of work around the light station grounds, including expanding the trail for better elephant seal viewing. A brick has been purchased for the path to thank them for their service.

Projects to be funded in the next fiscal year, including repainting the lighthouse before the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025 and installing a Greenflush bathroom in the lower parking lot, have been submitted to the BLM field office for approval and will then be sent on to the state office.

Parking lot plans are being modified to protect an archaeological site in the area.

Interviews for a seasonal park ranger are ongoing.

Jodie completed the National Conservation Lands Manager's Report for 2021. She will email the report to the board and make sure it and prior reports are available in the library.

The State Leadership Team visited earlier today; they were given a partial tour, a NOAA presentation, and an overview of PBLSA by David. A field office team will also get a tour on Thursday.

Ryan will be back in the office on Monday, May 2. Jodie will be starting a temporary detail near the end of May that will be a good learning opportunity and a good chance to raise the profile of the light station.

Jodie reported that online reviews are generally very positive regarding the new tour format, which encourages more families with children to visit. Signage to fill information gaps left by the current tour format is included in next year's budget request.

David asked about the viewership of the video shown in the Watch Room. Gary reported that approximately 25-30% of visitors watch the video, but those who have watched have positive feedback. He also reported that 80% of visitors like the tour format and the opportunities it creates to spend their time where they are most interested, whether that is nature-viewing or asking more in-depth questions of volunteers.

Gary asked if there will be more volunteers recruited for summer. It is hoped that a new seasonal ranger can start at the end of May to help with tours; Jodie also has leads on potential volunteers. Jodie would like to improve volunteer training with the feedback of current volunteers. It is unlikely that interns will be hired in time for summer due to contract delays. Possible solutions to a volunteer shortage include introductions with larger groups and fewer volunteers, as well as adjusting the number of reservations if necessary. Jodie emphasized that she does not want to burn out the regular volunteers; BLM staff will manage any scheduling gaps. Sharon suggested contacting new Cambria homeowners and even long-term vacationers, since the new tour format has a less steep learning curve. Jodie has also explored online training, which the Friends of the Elephant Seals and the Discovery Center have adopted.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. Jim reported that Bruce has heard from Earth Systems, who have some concerns about the reviewing process. Jim suggested using the time until BLM approves the Shoreline window replacement proposal to begin design work for the top three floors of the tower. Discussion followed regarding the potential costs and how changes to the Shoreline proposal might impact the design work. Jim explained that the top three floors would be built on the ground, then installed; Bruce addressed how this would be impacted by different methods of stabilizing the tower in his report.

There was further discussion on the total costs of PBLSA projects proposed or in progress, as well as a lack of sufficient board members to manage all projects. Sharon observed that the top of the tower is a more compelling target for fundraising than some of the other components of the tower restoration.

Jim suggested the board contract with the Architectural Resources Group for preliminary design concepts to be provided within a specified time frame and with a budget not-to-exceed a predetermined amount. They would work alongside Shoreline. Jim will compose a draft RFP for the board to review and have more details for the next board meeting.

Jodie stated that if all proposed projects can be combined in one letter to SHPO from the BLM archaeologists, then it would shorten the overall timeframe on getting a response. The timeframe for that response is estimated at six months to a year.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Connected Energy would like to present a white paper at an in-person board meeting.

7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. Jim emphasized the importance of using Instrumentl to search for grants. Jodie reported that the light station did not receive funding from the Great American Outdoors Act application; the money was awarded to Punta Gorda Lighthouse and other projects.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – See Appendix 8. David reported that the committee is working on creating a rough draft of a case statement for the project.

**Old Business:**

1. Project Priorities Revisited (Harry Thorpe) – Harry emphasized the need to update project priorities. He would like to hold an in-person meeting at the light station. Board members not able to attend in person could attend via Zoom.
2. Fresnel Lens Update – The lens needs public attention and public meetings to move forward. Redistricting is complicating attempts to encourage Congressman Carbajal and Congressman Panetta to support a public meeting. David will continue working on the issue.

**New Business:** None

**Discussion Items:**

Sharon investigated the San Luis Obispo Library presentations as a possible opportunity to raise the visibility of the light station and determined it would not be a good venue.

Jodie suggested that contracting with a professional to post on social media would be a good way to increase visibility. The Board would like to revisit the communication plan developed by Jesse Pluim.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on May 10, 2022.

## Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 5/25/22 – Harry Thorpe

### TREASURER'S REPORT for April 2022

**1. OPERATIONS INCOME:** Last Month: \$5,801.34 YTD: \$20,558.10  
**PROFIT:** Last Month: \$726.84 YTD: \$1,270.00

**MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS:** \$13,447.91

**TARGETED DONATION FUND BALANCE:** \$13,660.03

**BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:** Last Month: none YTD: \$1,440.68  
**BALANCES:** P.P. Bank: \$999.00 ASAP: \$18,465.18

### 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>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
<b>Feb 2022</b>	686,777.31	<10,158.60>	677.32	--	--	677,296.03

### 3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for March/April. Posted adjustments.
- Filed/paid sales tax for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.
- Accessed/reviewed federal grant solutions system.

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

### Attachment 3: Gift Shop Report 5/25/22 – Cressant Swarts

The gift shop has been reorganized to showcase some products better. A large display and some smaller pieces have been added. New products in May are two different types of animal puzzles/models and stuffed animals for kids. Also, thank you to Gary for donating 29 of his photos to be sold in the gift shop!

So far in May there have been two days with record sales; one with \$1,200 in sales excluding donations, and another with \$800 in sales excluding donations.

#### April Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$4,357.11
Website sales	\$47.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,404.33</b>

#### April Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$2,846.27
Profit	\$1,558.06
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>35%</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								

*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		



### Attachment 3: Updated Gift Shop Report 4/27/22 – Cressant Swarts

Prices have been increased on some items, with more to follow, due to increasing vendor costs. It is too soon to tell if these price increases will negatively impact overall sales.

**Cost of Goods corrected to include taxes and shipping. Profit percentage down from 41%.**

#### March Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$4,401.34
Website sales	\$9
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,410.34</b>

#### March Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold	\$2,876.18
Profit	\$1,525.16
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>35%</b>

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

### NET SALES COMPARISONS

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	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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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
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2022		

## Appendix 4: BLM Update 5/25/22 – Ryan Cooper

### Ongoing Projects

#### **Lens**

There has been lots of movement in the community on the lens. As I am sure most of you know, a chain link fence has been erected around the enclosure to protect the public. The county has taken an active role in having a public meeting. I have only heard second-hand, but I am hearing June 15<sup>th</sup> as a date for a public meeting.

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

Things have changed with the parking lot. Due to material cost we are only going to be able to clean up the parking lot we have. We will install barriers and re-chip seal it. The bathroom is still in the works, but the price is also going up as well. The cost has nearly doubled since we started looking at them a few years ago.

#### **FSB Lighting**

Harry has a statement of work to reach out to contractors to get bids.

#### **Tower**

No Updates on funding or Shorelines reports. Emailed the District Engineer and said he does not get much info from the State Office, and he has not seen any reviews of the Shoreline report. I will start working up the ladder to see if we can get some info.

#### **Priority Project Meeting**

How does June 22 look like on everyone's calendar? It will be after the lens public meeting so hopefully we will have some more direction.

### Special Events:

5 day a week tours start June 15th

Hike-in Tours on July 27<sup>th</sup> and August 31st

### **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	208
January	661	731	623	266	608	0	715	0	348
February	573	570	572	284	780	318	578	108	404
March	696	754	560	502	662	784	185	160	466
April	663	616	581	666	684	790	0	399	525
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	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8110</b>	<b>8068</b>	<b>6610</b>	<b>6605</b>	<b>8447</b>	<b>6548</b>	<b>2865</b>	<b>4166</b>	<b>927</b>

\*partial

## **Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 5/25/22 – Jim Harris**

Bruce Elster has continued to inquire on the status of a proposal response from Earth Systems Pacific, Geotechnical Engineers, to Shoreline Engineering for the geotechnical task; they are in communication but still no date for proposal response has been established. Because of the lack of responsiveness from Earth Systems and after a discussion with Bruce on the matter, it was decided to request a new proposal bid from YEH in Grover Beach, a firm that Bruce has worked with before. This change in vendors will delay a response for the task proposal, but hopefully we will have a response by the June Board meeting. Therefore, the status of the Shoreline proposal for the three tasks in preparation of the tower restoration continues to remain open. Assuming it will be at least five months before the status is resolved, it is proposed that the PBLSA initiate a project to begin the design for restoring the top three levels of the tower.

This project would fund work performed by Shoreline Engineering and the San Francisco firm Architectural Resources Group for initiating the restoration design of the top three levels. The concept is to fix the amount of money for this preliminary work and define the time period for the contract. Existing historical plans of the top three levels will be provided, Shoreline would work with ARG on the attachment of the top three levels as a separate component, and preliminary design concepts for the top three levels using composite materials by ARG would be the components of this project. Along with the design effort, the requirements would be defined for the construction of the top three levels. The period of effort would be less than six months and the not-to-exceed cost determined by the PBLSA Board. A draft RFP is presented below to define the effort, and it is suggested that the PBLSA Board discuss this concept and provide direction.

### ***DRAFT PBLSA Request for Proposal for Tower Top Architectural Project*** May 23, 2022

Background/Summary: This document is a request for a proposal from Shoreline Engineering/ Architectural Resources Group to initiate the architectural planning for replacing the top three levels of the tower at the Piedras Blancas Light Station based upon the October 2021 Shoreline design document. The scope of the effort consists of defining the design for the replacement of the top three levels of the light station tower.

Shoreline Engineering in the reference document identified below has presented a design for the stabilization of the tower and its restoration except for the replacement of the top three levels that were removed by the Coast Guard in 1950. The concept is that the restored top three levels of the tower are to be considered a module that will be constructed separately and placed on top of the of the restored tower using a suitable attachment interface to the tower. After the completion of the effort for replacing the top three levels, the design effort for the restoration of the tower will be completed; this project initiates that final design effort.

This project would fund work performed by Shoreline Engineering and the San Francisco firm Architectural Resources Group for the architectural effort for initiating the restoration design of the top three levels. The concept is to fix the amount of money for this preliminary work and define the time period for the contract. Existing historical plans of the top three levels will be provided, Shoreline would work with ARG on the attachment of the top three levels as a separate component, and preliminary design concepts for the top three levels using composite materials would be the components of this project.

Along with the design effort the requirements would be defined for the design and construction of the top three levels. The period of effort would be six months and the not-to-exceed cost TBD is

determined by the PBLSA Board. The project would be awarded by the PBLSA to both ARG and Shoreline as separate contracts, with the PBLSA providing the liaison between the two contractors. The proposal shall detail the work to be performed for the five tasks identified, provide a schedule of the work to be performed, and give a not-to-exceed cost estimate of the proposed project.

Reference: "Preliminary Retrofit Evaluation Lighthouse Tower, Piedras Blancas Lightstation, San Simeon, California" 14 October 2021, prepared by Bruce Elster, PE, Shoreline Engineering, Inc.

The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association requests that Bruce Elster of Shoreline Engineering and David Wessel of ARG prepare a proposal to continue the work for restoring the Tower at the Piedras Blancas Light Station. The scope of the work shall address the five tasks listed below:

1. Requirements will be developed for the operational and functional use of the top three levels of the towers; the requirements will include convenient access by the public to the lantern room, a facsimile first-order Fresnel lens, and inclusion of any navigational and safety equipment necessary for the light station.
2. Using provided architectural drawings of the historical tower as a foundation, preliminary architectural drawings will be developed for the top three levels of the tower using modern materials and construction technology and retaining the historical architectural external detail.
3. Detailed design will be provided for the attachment of the three levels as a separate component to the restored and stabilized lower tower, as well as estimates for the structural properties (e.g., total mass, center of gravity, materials proposed) of the restored top three levels.
4. Resources will be provided to work with and respond to the oversight of the BLM, SHPO, and other appropriate bodies determined by BLM for the restoration of the tower.
5. Recognizing that this project will initiate but not complete the architectural effort for the restoration of the top three levels of the tower, the documentation at the completion of this project will define the tasks necessary to complete the architectural design and to provide construction drawings and then begin construction of the top three levels as well as to provide a preliminary construction cost estimate of the restoration of top three levels.

It is expected that the architectural work will be performed with the services of ARG and the consultation of Shoreline Engineering and Bruce Elster. In addition to defining the work to be performed, the proposal shall identify the principals to be used to perform the work. A schedule for the work performed shall be provided, recognizing that there shall be coordination with the BLM; the PBLSA will assist in facilitating this coordination. In addition, the proposal shall include a not-to-exceed cost estimate for the work, which will identify the estimated costs of any services outside of those of ARG and Shoreline Engineering. At the completion of the project, there shall be a report that includes the results of this preliminary architectural design effort as outlined above. It is expected that the report will be presented to the PBLSA board and BLM representatives at the conclusion of the project and submitted to the BLM for their review and action.

While it is assumed that treating the top three levels of the tower as a separate component is the best design in terms of minimizing construction cost and maximizing structural integrity, the PBLSA encourages the proposer to consider other options for its construction, and if submitted, requests that these considerations include comparison construction cost estimates to a separate component design and include structural integrity comparisons.

The PBLSA would like the proposal by 15 June 2022 / TBD so that it can be considered at the PBLSA Board Meeting on Wednesday 22 June 2022 / TBD.

#### **Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 5/25/22 – 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 5/25/22 – 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 Instrument I 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).