



**CITY OF MONROVIA  
WILDERNESS PRESERVE FOUNDATION  
AGENDA REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT:** Community Services

**MEETING DATE:** September 10, 2019

**PREPARED BY:** Tina Cherry, Director

**AGENDA LOCATION:** WPF AR-1

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**TITLE:** Discussion Related to Potential Next Steps of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve Foundation

**BACKGROUND:** Over the last several years, the Wilderness Preserve Foundation Board (Board) has discussed and studied the need and purpose of the Foundation. The Foundation, established in 2000, has evolved over the past 19 years and has experienced very little activity related to fundraising or project support.

Recently, the Board has again began the discussion about the future of the Foundation. The Board has requested staff provide some history on the Foundation as well as updates related to the more recent Board discussions and actions.

***History of the Foundation***

Established in 2000, the specific intent of the Foundation was to be a fiscal agent for potential grant opportunities related to land acquisition for the Hillside Wilderness Preserve. Below is a summary of the founding documents and amendments related to the Foundations intent and Board membership. Several corresponding documents have also be included as attachments to the report.

*Articles of Incorporation November 2000*

*Attachment A*

November 2000 marks the establishment of the Wilderness Preserve Foundation as a separate standalone 501c3 non-profit for the purpose to promote social welfare by protecting and preserving precious natural resources, rare and endangered plant species, riparian woodland and other dwelling wildlife habitats in and near the City of Monrovia.

*Board Membership Discussion*

Between November 2000 and September 2006, the Board was comprised of volunteers in the community who had an interest in the preservation of the Monrovia hillside and habitat. Many of the members were supporters of the Measure A and B campaign which was overwhelming approved in 2000. Membership included, Chair Gloria Crudgington, Cleve Crudgington, Dorothy Dudley, Paul Larsen, Becky Shevlin, Steve Miller, Rob Hammond, and Joe Garcia.

During the September 2006, Regular meeting of the Foundation, Board Members discussed why the Foundation was being retained and for what purpose. Staff shared the desire by some of the Members to raise and use funds for Canyon Park.

Comments from the Board and the public included:

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*“...what is the point in keeping the Foundation with such a small amount of money and when the city is a non profit...”*

*“...the Foundation may be a good resource for receiving monies from organizations that want to give to a non-profit that is not the City...”*

*“...the existing corporation has been stagnant for a long time so the purpose needs to be broadened so the Foundation can do some good...”*

*“...if we are going to broaden the purpose of the Foundation then we should change the name...”*

Following the Board discussion and due to limited activity, the Foundation Directors recommended the Foundation move to be a function of the Community Services Commission.

*Bylaws Approved September 2006*

*Amended and Restated the Articles of Incorporation December 2006*

*Attachment B and C*

In September 2006, the Bylaws for the Foundation were finalized and approved by the Board. The Bylaws formalized the role of the Community Services Commissioners to serve in the role of the Foundation Directors [Section 5.02 (9) (b) (1)] as well as the two additional Directors to be a member of the City Council or an individual appointed by such members of the City Council. Historically, these roles have been filled by the appointed City Council Member serving as the Community Services Commission Liaison and the Director of Community Services.

In December 2006, the Articles of Incorporation were amended to expand the purpose of the Foundation to now include the, “...furthering educational and recreational programs.” The intent of this amendment was to allow for fundraising for programs at Canyon Park.

*Amendment #1 Bylaws July 2010*

*Attachment D*

In July 2010, Bylaws for the Foundation were amended to allow for the restricted and unrestricted donations for Canyon Park and the Wilderness Preserve. This expanded the Foundations ability to accept donations for Canyon Park to be used for the preservation of natural resources, habitat, etc. but also to support educational and recreational programs at Canyon Park. If donations are not restricted, the funds can be used for any stated lawful purpose of the Foundation with the consent of the Board.

This amendment also required the restricted funds be tracked and reported separately to the Board by the Chief Financial Officer. It is important to note that there have been no restricted funds specified to date.

### ***Background Related to Meetings and Community Outreach***

Between September 2014 and August 2019, the Board has participated in several discussions and meetings related to the future of the Foundation. The intent of the timeline and meeting summary is to provide the Board with some context as it relates to the discussion to date.

#### *September 9, 2014 - Regular Meeting of the Foundation*

Staff provided an informational presentation for the Board on the history of the Wilderness Preserve Foundation including some background, clarification on the roles of the Members, and further reviewed the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws.

Staff suggested the Board explore the purpose of the Foundation as well as review next steps for the Foundation, specifically:

- Does the Foundation desire to become active in fundraising activities to support its purpose?
- Should we further study / clarify the mission of the Foundation?
- Should there be any amendments to the Foundation's purpose, the Articles of Incorporation, or the Bylaws?

In response to the discussion at the September 2014 meeting, the Board requested staff prepare a special Study Session for the Foundation to dive deeper into the topic.

#### November 15, 2014 - Special Study Session of the Foundation

Staff prepared a presentation for the Board to further inform them on the history of the Foundation as well as respond to the questions asked during the September 9, 2014 meeting. The agenda included:

- Brief overview of the information presented on September 9, 2014
- Respond to specific Board Member questions presented to staff
- Review a wish list provided by staff related to Hillside Wilderness Preserve and Canyon Park
- Review wish list provided by staff related to Urban Parks needs
- Discuss next steps
  - Do we want to expand the purpose of the Foundation?
  - Do we need to amend the member of the Foundation?

The Board discussed the various agenda items and shared the following comments.

*"...The Foundation needs to find people who may have connections to potential contributors..."*

*"...the Board of Directors should be people who can help facilitate donations and drive the purpose of the Foundation forward..."*

*"...The Foundation does not need to be under the umbrella of the City..."*

*"...The Foundations does not need to be a function of the Commission..."*

*"...Perhaps an ad hoc committee should be established to further study the issue..."*

*"...Consider reaching out to past Commissioners and Canyon Park volunteers to see if they have an interest in the Foundation..."*

*"...Allow the Board time to process the discussion and bring the item back to the Board at a future meeting..."*

#### February 10, 2015 - Regular Meeting of the Foundation

At the February 2015 meeting, the Board established an ad hoc committee to further study the item. Board Members Crudginton, Matthews, and Ulm expressed an interest in serving on the Ad Hoc Committee.

### Throughout 2015 - Wilderness Preserve Ad Hoc Committee Meetings

Wilderness Preserve Foundation Ad Hoc Committee met on a few occasions to discuss the purpose and Board membership. Staff reached out to various groups including the former Trails Committee and Canyon Park Volunteers to seek their involvement. Those contacted did not have the time or interest in participating in the Wilderness Preserve Foundation

### January 12, 2016 - Regular Meeting of the Foundation

Staff updated the Board on the lack of interest related to the Foundation and inquired what else staff could do to help move this initiative forward.

The Board suggested more solicitation for participation be developed such as press releases, a flyer, and notification through the MAP Leadership program.

### February 9, 2016 - Regular Meeting of the Foundation

Staff presented a report to the Board related to the Member Recruitment Plan. The program included:

- Partner with Nextdoor to promote the opportunity – *Completed by Board Member Ulm*
- Distribute a Press Release – *Completed February 24, 2016*
- Share at the monthly Community Coordinating Council Meeting – *Completed*
- Create a flyer and post it at Canyon Park – *Completed and attached (Attachment E)*
- Connect with Snails Pace Running store to see if they have an interest – *Completed*
- Promote at the annual MAP Conference - *Completed*

Staff started a list of individuals interested in the Wilderness Preserve Foundation. Eleven individuals were added to the list and kept up to speed on the Foundation activity and meetings.

### July 21, 2016 - Special Meeting of the Wilderness Preserve Foundation

On July 21, 2016, a special meeting of the Foundation was held to discuss the purpose and future of the Foundation with those community members who had expressed an interest in the Foundation. In addition to the Board Members, there were nine (9) individuals in attendance.

Staff provided an overview of the Foundation and presented the questions to the group as it relates to the future of the Foundation.

None of the attendees expressed an interest in becoming members of the Foundation or actively involved in fundraising. Those in attendance were more interested in discussing operational issues related to the Hillside Wilderness Preserve.

All attendees agreed the Foundation should no longer be a function of the Community Services Commission; however, no one stepped forward to either participate within the Foundation leadership or agreed to assist with fundraising.

### September 13, 2016 - Regular Meeting of the Foundation

Staff provided an update to the Board on the public meeting held in July 2016. The meeting resulted in a lot of questions about the operations of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve, and not

much discussion as to the purpose of the Foundation or interest in raising money for the Foundation.

### *Focus Shifts to the Park Master Plan*

In late 2016 as staff was finalizing the opening of the access points to the Hillside Wilderness Preserve, the Board recommended they take a break from the discussion related to the future of the Foundation. The hope was to allow time after the access points had been open to see if there was any impact on the discussion related to the future of the Foundation.

In addition, in 2017, the Community Services Commission began work on the very first comprehensive Citywide Park Master Plan. The Commission determined it would be best to hold off on discussing the purpose of the Foundation and move their attention to the Park Master Plan development.

### *September 28, 2018 - Commission / Wilderness Preserve Foundation Study Session*

Staff update the Foundation and its new Board Members on the ongoing discussion related to the purpose of the Foundation. No action was taken.

### *July 9, 2019 and August 13, 2019 - Regular Meetings of the Foundation*

Staff update the Foundation and its new Board Members on the ongoing discussion related to the purpose of the Foundation. The Foundation Board Members provided specific questions for staff to respond to at the September meeting.

- If we dissolved the Foundation, what grant opportunities would we miss?
- Is there a gap in our needs that the Foundation fills?
- What is the budget for Hillside Wilderness Preserve?
- Why is the space not programmed more?
- Who will raise the money for the Foundation?
- What are the futures needs of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve?
- Would the Foundation serve a purpose during a difficult fiscal crisis / economic downturn?
- How do other communities manage Foundations? (Santa Monica, Claremont, Sierra Madre, etc.)
- Does the Foundation serve as a political buffer?
- Do those who live near the access points know about the Foundation? Would they want to be involved?

**DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS:** In an effort to provide the Board with a complete response to the proposed questions, staff has outlined the analysis below.

#### *If we dissolved the Foundation, what grant opportunities would we miss?*

Over the years, the Hillside Wilderness Preserve and Canyon Park has benefited from many grants, mostly from Los Angeles County and the State of California.

There may be grant opportunities in the future where only 501c3 will be eligible; however, our experience has been that the City is competitive for many of the same grants as non-profits.

Some of the grants and projects are listed below:

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Canyon Park Development	LA Country Regional Park and Open Space	\$1,380,000
Ben Overturff Trail Restoration	LA Country Regional Park and Open Space	\$48,000
CP Entrance Trail Project	LA Country Regional Park and Open Space	\$149, 904
HWP Property Acquisition	State Wildlife Conservation Board Governor's Challenge Grant	\$8,605,000
HWP Property Acquisition	State Habitat Conservation Fund	\$720,792
HWP Property Acquisition	State Resources Agency – Riparian Habitat	\$3,600,000
HWP Property Acquisition	RMC – Riparian Habitat	\$810,000
HWP Property Acquisition	RMC – Foothill	\$1,280,00
HWP Property Acquisition	Local Measure B	\$10,000,000

*What is the budget for Hillside Wilderness Preserve and Canyon Park?*

The maintenance and operations of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve and Canyon Park are budgeted separately. In addition, the part time staff budget is included in the overall Community Services Administrative budget. Having these budgets separate allows for better tracking and oversight of the program areas. Staff has provided a summary of the program budgets below. It should be noted, that the City does receive approximately \$80,000 per year through Measure B to offset the cost of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve operations. In addition, facility maintenance, fleet management, fuel, and utilities are included in the Public Works operating budget.

**CANYON PARK BUDGET SUMMARY**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Part Time Staffing	\$120,000
Clothing	\$6,200
Training / Professional Services	\$6,500
Office Supplies / Printing	\$5,000
Maintenance Supplies	\$27,000
Misc.	\$2,300
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$167,000</b>

<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Programs and Events	\$8,000
Rentals	\$36,000
Outdoor Education	\$11,000
Admission	\$135,500
Misc.	\$2,500
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$193,000</b>

## HILLSIDE WILDERNESS PRESERVE BUDGET SUMMARY

Description	Amount
Part Time Staffing	\$140,000
Clothing	\$8,500
Training / Professional Services	\$6,000
Office Supplies	\$2,000
Maintenance Supplies	\$7,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$163,500</b>

Description	Amount
Measure B	\$80,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>

*Why is the space not programmed more?*

In 2000 as a part of Measure A, Monrovia's voters voted to protect the open space through the adoption of the Hillside Wilderness Preservation designation. This classification was designed to preserve open space left in the natural state including preservation of endangered habitat and species, wildlife habitats, and wildlife corridors; open space for passive recreation use such as hiking and nature studies. For these reasons, offering active recreation or educational programs in the Preserve is not aligned with the intent of the designation.

In addition, to minimize the disruption for the neighboring communities at the access points, the Council has agreed to minimize the development of parking, restrooms, and other park amenities adjacent to the Hillside Wilderness Preserve. Expanding any programming in the Preserve would require the development of these types of features. Furthermore, Canyon Park has been designated as an 80-acre interpretive and educational space for the community.

*Who will raise the money for the Foundation?*

Over the last several years, the Board Members and staff have attempted to identify the individuals who may be interested in serving on the Foundation Board. To date, there has been no interest from the community to join the Foundation, neither through Board leadership nor fundraising efforts.

*What are the future needs of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve? Is there a gap in our needs that the Foundation fills?*

Each year, staff work with the Finance Department to identify the program and facility needs. Over the last several years, the City has been able to fund most of the requests from staff to better support the operations of both the Hillside Wilderness Preserve and Canyon Park. Some of these projects include: purchasing two all-terrain utility vehicles to better access and patrol trails; capital projects such as the Cabin Deck Renovations, trail improvements, and facility upgrades to Station 103; expanded staffing from 6 Park Naturalist to 12 Park Naturalist; and installation of interpretive and wayfinding signs throughout the Hillside Wilderness Preserve.

There are no known future needs of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve other than more of the same. The trails will continually need maintenance and upkeep. The current operational budget as well as the use of volunteers should be sufficient to maintain the ongoing needs.

*Would the Foundation serve a purpose during a difficult fiscal crisis / economic downturn?*

In an economic downturn, every community faces difficult decisions. Having alternative funding sources to relieve the general fund could certainly be helpful. The challenge is during such a down

turn, finding donors to support the operation will too be difficult. Certainly, starting today and raising money now, would be great. The question continues to be who is willing to be a Member and participate in Board leadership and fundraising activities?

*How do other communities manage Foundations? (Santa Monica, Claremont, Sierra Madre, etc.)*

The Board requested staff research other similar organizations to get a picture of how those communities manage their Foundations, and what can be learned from their structure and mission. Specifically staff researched Friends of the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park, Sierra Madre Mountain Conservancy, and Santa Monica Mountains Fund. Each of these organizations had different goals which determined their structure.

Organizations that focus primarily on volunteer opportunities typically rely on a leadership team of volunteers verses a Board of Directors. While donations may be accepted, there typically is not a formal fundraising program. Activities in these Foundations included volunteer activities such as park greeters and trail maintenance.

Conversely, organizations with the goal of educational programming, improved facilities, and wildlife preservation had a Board of Directors with active fundraising campaigns. In some instances, this included Foundation staff and / or a volunteer designated specifically to fundraising.

*Does the Foundation serve as a political buffer?*

Political buffering by the Hillside Wilderness Preserve may be a role misalignment and could create confusion. The City Council serves and the policy maker for the City. The Council evaluates, sets, and amends the policy for all City activities. The Foundation is a fundraising body and not in program or policy development. Having a separate body involved in policy discussion outside of the Council may create confusion for the community and stakeholders.

*Do those who live near the access points know about the Foundation? Would they want to be involved?*

As a part of the opening of the Hillside Wilderness Preserve access points, staff was in regular contact with the residents living near the Preserve. It is unclear if these residents know about the Foundation; however, if the Board was interested in reaching out to these neighborhoods, staff is in position to assist with this effort.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** The following options are provided for the Commissions consideration:

1. Direct staff to begin the process to dissolve the Hillside Wilderness Preserve Foundation.
2. Maintain the Hillside Wilderness Preserve Foundation as a function of the Commission and begin plans to re-invigorate the Foundation.
3. Maintain the Hillside Wilderness Preserve Foundation and seek Foundation leadership outside the Commission.
4. Request additional information from staff prior to making a recommendation.

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUIRED:** Provide staff with the preferred direction as it relates to the next steps for the Foundation.