

City of Brisbane Agenda Report

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Clayton Holstine, City Manager
DATE: City Council Meeting of January 18, 2011
SUBJECT: Brisbane Nursery

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the use the Beautification Funds for the calendar year 2011 to provide a partial offset to the water billing for the Brisbane Nursery.

BACKGROUND

San Bruno Mountain Watch operates the Brisbane Nursery as a non-profit. The proposal is to lower the bill they pay for water by charging only the direct cost of water purchases which is approximately 30% of a water bill.


The savings that SBMW receives for this will be invested in improving their irrigation system and thereby lowering their demand.

Staff recommends that the lower rate be in effect for the calendar year of 2011 and be paid for out of the Beautification fund which has approximately \$6,000. The subsidy will reduce the Nursery water bill around \$1,000 for the year. This is less than reported in the past staff report as we calculated the usage based on summer demand. Offseason demand is of course lower.

Attached is a letter from San Bruno Mountain Watch outlining the various collaborative programs between the City and SBMW and the proposal to allocate funds that are saved to improving the irrigation system.

FISCAL IMPACT

Under this arrangement there will be no impact on the water and sewer fund. The Beautification fund will be reduced by approximately \$1,000.



Clayton L. Holstine, City Manager

RE:The City of Brisbane temporary support for the Mission Blue Nursery

Dear Brisbane City Counsel,

San Bruno Mountain Watch and the city of Brisbane have a rich history that dates back long before my time as Executive Director. I can only speak vaguely about how we participated and partnered with the city prior to 2000 or so, but since then, here is how we have worked synergistically with the city:

Education:

- We have run a spring student volunteer program for the 6th grade class at Lipmann Jr. High for several years. This year we have planned a series of 4 - 6 hikes with the jr. high, along with classroom slide shows and follow-up.
- Volunteer Peter Stiehler began and still runs an environmental education program at BES. Peter really did this on his own, but always credits Mountain Watch for getting him started in the environmental education field.

Stewardship:

We regard our stewardship activities in the nearby open space as a plus for Brisbane, whether or not we are working on city owned land. The people of Brisbane use the trails and the canyons, and many of our volunteers live in Brisbane and view the stewardship outings as an important part of their lives.

- Since late summer 2008, we have sponsored and supported Jim McKissock's volunteer crew which has done a lot of great work along the Crocker Trail east of Cypress Lane. Jim's crew has, with assistance from Public Works, has removed invasive species and planted of hundreds of native plants back into the area. *These plants were grown at the Mission Blue Nursery.*
- We have participated for several years with the city and OSEC on the city's Spring Habitat Restoration Day. For the last two years, at least, all of the volunteer stewardship leaders at this event have been SBMW volunteers. We provide many of the tools as well.
- For the past several years we have offered regular stewardship outings in the Acres and other open space west of the town. While most of our work has focused on both sides of Army Rd. since the fire in Buckeye and Owl Canyon, our stewardship, we try to maintain the work we did the previous years in the Acres. In addition, we conducted a rare plant survey in the Acres last year. This weekend, west of Trinity Rd., we will begin planting native grasses and forbes back into the grassland -- *the plants were grown at the Mission Blue Nursery.*

Advocacy

Democracy depends on an informed citizenry participating in the decisions of the community. San Bruno Mountain Watch encourages citizen participation with the various Brisbane government committees and city council. Though we sometimes have had an adversarial role, we feel that our advocacy is healthy for democracy in Brisbane. Members of MW, some of whom gained early inspiration from our stewardship outings and advocacy work, have gone on to become OSEC and planning commission members.

The Future of the Mission Blue Nursery

The nursery is the heart of our stewardship program. It draws volunteers, and allows people the satisfaction of going from pulling weeds to planting seeds to putting natives back in the ground. Its primary purpose is to supply plants for habitat restoration projects on and around the mountain. It is a project of both SBMW and Friends of San Bruno Mountain, the volunteer group represented by Doug Allshouse. Doug negotiated the lease with UPC. SBMW has largely assumed both the financial

responsibility for the continuing construction and operation of the nursery. Joe Cannon, our stewardship director, runs the nursery.

It has cost and will cost a lot more to get the nursery fully functional than we expected. We have not been able to afford finishing it quickly. We are reluctant to seek a loan, preferring to raise money through donations and foundation grants. Now that we are a year into the project, we will have 1200 plants designated for sale to the public, along with the 6000 plants destined for our habitat restoration projects. Plant sales could gross up to \$15000 this year, offsetting some of our continuing construction and operating costs. In order to make this happen, however, we will need to hire a part-time nursery assistant, so we expect that for 2011, the nursery will be a net drain on our budget. By the end of 2012, however, we expect the nursery to come close to pay for itself, including a part time manager's salary.

Here is our budget estimate:	2011	2012
Nursery Income	15000	40,000

Nursery Expenses

Construction:

Partial roof:	\$5500	
Hot house:	\$1100	
Watering system:	\$3300	
Electricity:		6000
Move tables :	<u>\$500</u>	
TOTAL	10400	6000

2011 Operating Expenses:

Soil:	1250	1800
Pots:	1000	1500
Tools:	500	500
Water:	2000	2500
Truck	3500	
Truck operating	2400	2800
Wages:	<u>20000</u>	<u>30000</u>
TOTAL OPERATING	30650	39100
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u>	41050	45100

Net income/expenses	(26,500)	(5,100)
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The city's help with the water bill would pay immediate benefits by freeing some money to invest in the watering system and infrastructure. By mid July, 2011, we should have the system in place, watering more plants much more efficiently. By 2012, plant sales should increase to \$40,000, coming close to projected expenses. By this time, we expect to no longer need a water subsidy from Brisbane.