



**22<sup>nd</sup> DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Del Mar Fairgrounds  
2260 Jimmy Durante Boulevard, Del Mar, CA 92014  
**April 14, 2026**

**MINUTES**

*The following minutes are a summary of the Board action and proceedings. For a full transcript please click on the link below or visit the [delmarfairgrounds.com](https://www.delmarfairgrounds.com) website:  
<https://www.delmarfairgrounds.com/p/public-information1>*

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Sam Nejabat, Chair  
Lisa Barkett, Vice Chair

**DIRECTORS PRESENT**

Mark Arabo  
Phil Blair (via Zoom)  
Donna DeBerry  
Kathlyn Mead  
Ted Miyahara  
Elsa Morales-Roth  
Frederick Schenk (via Zoom)

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Joshua Caplan, Deputy Attorney General (Counsel)  
Carlene Moore, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
Tristan Hallman, Chief Communications Officer (CCO)  
Katie Mueller, Chief Operations Officer (COO)  
Mike Seyle, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Nejabat called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and welcomed new Board members Elsa Morales-Roth and Ted Miyahara, who replace Michael Gelfand and Joyce Rowland on the 22nd DAA Board of Directors.

**ROLL CALL**

Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, Blair, DeBerry, Mead, Miyahara, Morales-Roth, and Schenk were all present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA** (see pages 7-23 of transcript)

Russ Penniman, Donna Ruhm, Lee Roschek, Rafael Delgadillo, Irene Martinez, Joyce Rowland, Jamie Rivera, Jane Cartmill, Allison Prater, Martha Sullivan

**RECESS TO CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board recessed Closed Executive Session at 10:00 a.m.

### **RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION**

The Board reconvened to Open Session at 2:08 p.m. Chair Nejabat stated that the District Board of Directors considered the advice of Counsel on the items listed on the Closed Session portion of the agenda and has nothing to report. The Board also evaluated the performance of its CEO consistent with government code, and voted 8-1 in favor of the termination of CEO Moore. Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, DeBerry, Mead, Miyahara, Morales-Roth, and Schenk voted in favor of termination, while Director Blair voted against termination. The Board voted 9-0 to name Chair Nejabat as interim CEO of the District for a 10-day period.

The Board recessed for a break at 2:10 p.m. and returned at 2:20 p.m. to resume the meeting. Director Blair, Director Schenk, and Ms. Moore did not return to the meeting following Closed Executive Session.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT CALENDAR (see page 25 of transcript)

None

Vice Chair Barkett moved to approve the Consent Calendar. Director Arabo seconded the motion. Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, DeBerry, Mead, Miyahara, and Morales-Roth all voted in favor. The motion carried 7-0.

### **EXECUTIVE REPORT**

- Don Diego Scholarship Foundation Executive Director Ashley McCaughan reported that 67 high school seniors applied for scholarships this year, and the foundation is awarding more than \$100,000 in scholarships. The Don Diego Gala will be held in the Turf Club at the Fairgrounds on June 10, the opening day of the San Diego County Fair.
- HITS Senior Vice President Pam Walther previewed the Del Mar National Horse Show, with Dressage events taking place April 16-19, and Hunter/Jumper shows scheduled April 29 through May 3.
- Chad Gregory and Chris McConnaughey of Legends Global presented an overview of their hospitality and guest experience initiatives.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON EXECUTIVE REPORT (see page 50-51 of transcript)

Laura DeMarco

Director Arabo left the Boardroom after the Executive Report and participated via Zoom for the remainder of the meeting.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### Item 8-A: Fair Operations Committee Report

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 135-137 of the meeting packet.

Item 8-A-1: Consideration and vote to approve dates and theme concepts for the 2027 and 2028 San Diego County Fairs

Committee Chair Mead and COO Mueller presented the proposed San Diego County Fair dates and theme concepts for 2027 and 2028. The 2027 Fair would be 21 days long with a theme concept of chocolate, and the 2028 Fair would be 22 days long with magic and illusions as the theme concept.

COO Mueller announced three new Grandstand concerts: Griz and Sippy, Bret Michaels and Night Ranger, and Gabriel “Fluffy” Iglesias.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 8-A-1 (see pages 61-62 of transcript)

Lynne Kaimuloa

Director Mead moved to approve the 2027 and 2028 San Diego County Fair dates and theme concepts. Vice Chair Barkett seconded the motion. Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, DeBerry, Mead, Miyahara, and Morales-Roth all voted in favor. The motion carried 7-0.

Item 8-B: Finance Committee Report

Committee Chair Arabo explained that the District has the option to exercise the final five-year option of the food and beverage services agreement with Legends Global, or begin a competitive bidding process for a new contract. The District must provide six months (180 days) of notice to Legends Global in either scenario.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 8-B (see pages 65-69 of transcript)

Shaun Beard, Arturo, Victoria Ward

Item 8-B-1: Consideration and vote on whether to (a) approve the District’s 2026-2027 insurance policies renewals, or (b) delegate authority to Director Arabo to work with staff to review, select, and procure insurance policies for 2026-27 and report back on those selections to the District’s Board of Directors at the May 2026 Board meeting

Director Mead moved to delegate authority to Director Arabo to work with staff to review, select, and procure insurance policies for 2026-2027 and report back on those selections to the District’s Board of Directors at the May 2026 Board meeting. Director DeBerry seconded the motion. Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, DeBerry, Mead, Miyahara, and Morales-Roth all voted in favor. The motion carried 7-0.

Item 8-C: People & Culture Committee Report

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 143-149 of the meeting packet, and announced that the Board governance education and organizational culture workshop scheduled for April 27 would be postponed. Committee Chair Mead had nothing further to report.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 8-C (see page 77 of transcript)

None

**Item 8-D: Provide feedback on draft amendments to Policy 3.11 Board Advocacy and Community Relations (formerly Communications Policy)**

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 150-157 of the meeting packet, and explained that the amended policy would be brought back to the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 8-D (see page 78 of transcript)**

None

**Item 8-E: Consideration of Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration of the City of Del Mar's San Dieguito Lagoon Levee, Habitat Enhancement, and Trail Project**

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 158-164 of the meeting packet.

District Supervising Environmental Planner Dustin Fuller explained that the proposed project to address sea level rise would involve a large area of the Fairgrounds' Red Lot parking area, and the District will submit a comment letter to the City of Del Mar by May 17. City of Del Mar Principal Planner Amanda Lee reported that the timing of construction has not been determined, and introduced coastal scientist Brian Leslie and coastal engineer James Evans of GHD. Leslie and Evans presented an overview of the project, which would entail creating a vegetated berm doubling as a public trail, and making space for more marshland to improve flood protection in the area. After gathering stakeholder input, the City of Del Mar will develop a final project design before entering the permitting and funding stages.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 8-E (see pages 103-106 of transcript)**

Carol Kerridge, Laura DeMarco

**MATTERS OF INFORMATION**

Correspondence can be found on pages 165-167 of the meeting packet. Contracts executed per the CEO's delegated authority can be found on pages 168-226 of the meeting packet.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, Chair Nejabat adjourned the meeting at 3:46 p.m.

*Sam Nejabat*

[Sam Nejabat \(May 12, 2026 16:50:31 PDT\)](#)

Sam Nejabat

Interim Chief Executive Officer