

**Ramona Community Planning Group  
15873 Hwy 67 – Ramona, CA 92065  
Meeting Minutes for Special Meeting May 24, 2012  
Ramona Community Center, 434 Aqua Lane  
7:00 – 9:00 P.M.**

***NOTE: Design Review Board will be meeting with the RCPG on Item 7***

A special meeting of the Ramona Community Planning Group (RCPG) was held with the Ramona Design Review Board on May 24, 2012, at the Ramona Community Center.

RCPG Members Present:

Scotty Ensign	Bob Hailey (7:20)	Eb Hogervorst
Kristi Mansolf	Jim Piva	Dennis Sprong
Paul Stykel	Kevin Wallace	

RCPG Members Absent:

Chad Anderson, Chris Anderson, Torry Brean, Matt Deskovick, Carl Hickman, Angus Tobiason, Richard Tomlinson

Design Review Board Members Present:

Carol Close (7:20)	Jim Cooper	Michiyo Kirkpatrick
Debi Klingner	Greg Roberson	Dan Vengler

Design Review Board Members Absent:

Chris Anderson, Rob Lewallen, Evelyn McCormick

Jim Piva, RCPG Chair, acted as the Chair of the meeting, Debi Klingner, Design Review Board Chair, acted as the Vice-Chair of the meeting, and Kristi Mansolf, RCPG Secretary, acted as the Secretary of the meeting.

- Item 1: CALL TO ORDER (Chair) – 7:10
- Item 2: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- Item 3: DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM (Secretary) (*Ramona Design Review Board had a Quorum at 7:10; the RCPG had a Quorum At 7:20*)
- Item 4: LIST OF ABSENTEES FOR THIS MEETING. Determination of Excused And Unexcused Absences by the RCPG – Secretary Will Read Record Separately from the Minutes – *Please see list of absentees above.*
- Item 5: NON-AGENDA ITEMS (No Presentation on Ongoing Projects – These Must be Agendized) Presentation from Public on Land Issues not on Current Agenda

Speaker: Donna Tisdale, Boulevard CPG Chair

Ms. Tisdale said she wanted to speak about the County Wind Energy Ordinance. There are mapped Wind Resource areas for the County. She distributed copies of the maps. Ms. Tisdale asked the RCPG to join Boulevard in opposition to these types of facilities. There are many industrial wind projects proposed for

Boulevard. There are 25 turbines there now. Nine solar projects are proposed in Boulevard – 4 by Soitec and 5 by SolOrchard. She asked the RCPG to put the Wind Energy Ordinance & Plan Amendment item on the agenda for the next meeting. The Planning Commission will be hearing this again July 20.

Item 6: ANNOUNCEMENTS & Correspondence Received (Chair) – None

Item 7: P11-029, Major Use Permit for Wholesale Distributed Generation Solar Project at 1650 Warnock Dr. Photo Voltaic Solar Farm. Site is 110 Acres. Proposal is for 45 Acres to be Developed with Solar Panels that will Be 8 feet to 11.5 feet off the Ground. Production Capacity will be 7.5 MW of Alternating Current. Sol Orchard, Applicant. Review of Mitigated Negative Declaration. Public Review ends 6-1-12. Available online at: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/ceqa/3300-11-029.html> (Action)

Chris Brown introduced Will Pritchard and Steve Wragg. Mr. Brown gave a summary of the project review so far. The RCPG saw the project in December, and asked for a presentation to be given to the Design Review Board. The Design Review Board reviewed the project and made recommendations. They asked the project perimeter be moved back from 30 feet to 60 feet. The height of the fences have been increased. Other changes were incorporated into the project, and the RCPG denied the project in January. Now they are at the environmental phase of the project. Public review of the environmental document ends Friday, June 1. They want to work with us to incorporate suggestions into the plan.

Mr. Pritchard said the main difference is the landscaping. They plan to put sycamores on the north side of the project. Tall trees will not shade the panels in this location. Landscaping improvements will go along the road frontage. They moved the line to the panels back to 60 feet as suggested by the Design Review Board. They have added a new entrance on Ramona Street to reduce impacts to the drainage. They are staying away from the migrating geese. Shrubs will be placed on the western side of the project, where shading is an issue. The fence will be vinyl coated with vines.

Speaker: Donna Tisdale, Boulevard Resident

Ms. Tisdale said she found the power purchase agreement with a limit on upgrades to \$13 million for all 21 Sol Orchard projects. Electromagnetic radiation may be present with energy producing facilities such as a solar farm. The increased voltages can go into the ground, the air and electric distribution lines creating dirty electricity. This is especially true with wind turbines. Ms. Tisdale asked the applicants about the noise and electromagnetic emissions that are involved with their proposed solar projects?

Mr. Pritchard said there will be a single action tracking device – similar to one that is on a house.

Ms. Tisdale asked where the largest facility like this is located? And is it 1 megawatt (MW)?

Mr. Pritchard said there are a few. There is a 1 MW project in Arizona and there is also one at Lake Turner.

Ms. Tisdale said 2 MW equals over 2,000 kilowatts. Doctors have found a connection between diseases and dirty electricity generated by wind turbines. Fifty and under is considered a safe level and levels have been measured at 5 digits in adjacent homes and farms. Do we know if this solar electricity will migrate off site? She doesn't believe this is known yet. This is an experimental commercial/industrial facility.

Speaker: Kathy DaSilva, Ramona Resident

Ms DaSilva is against this project in the neighborhood. She said it does not fit into the community as is listed in Section 7358 of the Zoning Ordinance, and exceeds the bulk, scale and coverage of the area. She does not feel the project is in keeping with the neighborhood.

Ms. DaSilva said that plants will die in the summer if not irrigated. In the Negative Declaration, page 7, it says they will only be irrigating plants until they take hold. If that is the case, the plants will die. They will need continued irrigation.

Speaker: Donna Myers, Ramona Resident

Ms. Myers said she supports livable communities. This solar project will put a blight on the community. The project is in the flood plain of the San Diego Watershed. Ramona Design Guidelines say additions such as this should be compatible with the neighborhood. She wants to save the land for the next generation. This is the last working agricultural preserve in Ramona. She has seen blight elsewhere. This is a commercial/industrial project in a rural residential neighborhood.

Speaker: Rob Wilder, Encinitas Resident

Mr. Wilder lives in Encinitas. He has great respect for Ms. Tisdale. His son drives an electric car. They haven't had any problems. It gets powered by the sun on the roof. It uses no oil. Both his home and car are powered by solar.

Ms. Mansolf said the following:

- In the Initial Study, Visual Resources discussion (pages 6 and 8) there is no mention of Ramona and Warnock being moved closer to the site, where the distance will be about 30 feet and not 400 or 600 feet. The plans for this road configuration change are in process, so it seems logical to include the changes in road alignment and the resulting impacts to visual resources in the Visual Resources discussion. The future road re-alignment is not mentioned in the Visual Resources Analysis (page 40) either.
- The Prime Farmland onsite is identified as being onsite in the Initial Study under Agriculture and Forestry Resources, but not identified in the MND.
- If a permeable, non-binding agent will be sprayed on soil, the name of the product to be used should be disclosed in the project environmental document.

Long term planning to integrate solar facilities into Ramona needs to be done. A forum to gather community input should be included in this process. When cell towers were first installed, there were no visual standards for how they looked in rural areas, but these were developed into the cell site ordinance and now the facilities have to blend into the environment.

In the solar ordinance now, there are no screening requirements and no limitation on scale allowed. The only limitation is a subjective determination by the County that there will or there will not be a harmful effect on neighborhood character for bulk, scale, and harmony as is stated in the Zoning Ordinance. The people looking at this project from above are quite close, across Warnock. They will be looking at large areas of solar panels with no visual relief.

This project is not allowed by right in this area. The magnitude of the project exceeds the scale, bulk and coverage to integrate well into this neighborhood.

Mr. Pritchard said they will be watering the vines. Plants will be drought tolerant and will be maintained.

Mr. Wragg said there is a condition in the permit that the landscaping has to grow.

Mr. Ensign said sycamores are deciduous. There will be no screening for 4 months out of the year. There are no native California vines. All vines are brought in. Mr. Ensign recommends eucalyptus trees instead of sycamores.

The Chair asked about the existing driveway being moved?

Mr. Pritchard said the Fire Department wants a substantial access, so access needs to be off Ramona Street. If it were off Warnock, they would have to go through a drainage. The farm will still use the existing driveway for access.

The Chair asked if there would be a 60 foot buffer from the road, with the 3 corners (as shown on the map) being the closest to the part of the project to the road?

Mr. Pritchard said the Design Review Board wanted 60 feet. There will be a fence separation and 10 to 24 feet before the panels start.

Mr. Roberson asked if the installation had to be reduced to get the 60 foot buffer, or were panels relocated?

Mr. Pritchard said panels were deleted to accomplish the setback.

Mr. Roberson asked if the trees will be staggered? Will there be gravel under the panels?

Mr. Wragg said they will be 20 feet apart. There will be a 3 foot fence on the inside made with 3 strands of wire. The County incorporated the Design Review Board comments into the current plan. They have to do a complete landscape plan. The landscape plan on display is only conceptual.

Mr. Pritchard said that under the panels, the ground will be weed whipped. There will be dust control by the applicant. Some weeds will grow. There won't be gravel under the panels.

Mr. Roberson said that he supports large clean energy systems. Location is always an issue. The Design Review Board's purview is screening. Was the County landfill site considered?

Mr. Pritchard said other properties were considered. He looked at the area by the landfill. It is rocky and sloped and so will be visible to many residents. The closest resident to the Warnock project is 500 feet away. He feels the large setback will be good.

Mr. Roberson said he wants the site to be an asset to the community. He likes the way the applicant created a forest of trees on site. This type of design is on the right track for screening. It is critical to get the species to reach their height quickly. It will take at least 5 to 6 years to cover the facility. As the project starts, the neighbors will need the landscaping to benefit from the project.

Mr. Wallace asked if the Major Use Permit covered 45 acres?

Mr. Brown said the Major Use Permit covers 45 acres.

Mr. Pritchard said the 12 KV distribution lines limit the size of the project. If they were hooking into transmission wires, the project would be bumped up.

Ms. Klingner asked if the applicant looked at properties in addition to the site chosen? Ms. Klingner asked the applicant to reach out again to the other people with suitable properties.

Mr. Pritchard said the project is too far along.

Mr. Vengler asked what the use would be if not solar?

Mr. Wragg said the property was A72. It would be a pig farm with grazing. Specialty animals could be raised and there could be kennels. They could do packing and processing.

Mr. Vengler asked if the project would be feasible with methane there? How far apart will the trees be?

Mr. Wragg said there was no methane gas on site. The trees would be 20 feet apart, per the Ramona Design Guidelines. He doesn't know the total number of trees to be planted.

Mr. Stykel asked if they will be able to sufficiently mitigate the view? He doesn't believe they can mitigate the view for the surrounding hillsides. People bought their properties for the view over an agricultural valley. Their properties will be devalued due to the location chosen for the project.

The Chair said he can't buy that this is the only lot for the project. He thinks east Creelman would be good. Warnock and Ramona Streets are 2 of the most active roads in the community due to the San Diego Country Estates community going through here.

Mr. Hailey said a project should have a compelling community benefit when a major use permit is issued. Mr. Hailey made Ms. Mansolf's comments into the form of a motion:

**MOTION:**

- **In the Initial Study, Visual Resources discussion (pages 6 and 8) there is no mention of Ramona and Warnock being moved closer to the site, where the distance will be about 30 feet and not 400 or 600 feet. The plans for this road configuration change are in process, so it seems logical to include the changes in road alignment and the resulting impacts to visual resources in the Visual Resources discussion. The future road re-alignment is not mentioned in the Visual Resources Analysis (page 40) either.**

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**developed into the cell site ordinance and now the facilities have to blend into the environment.**

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**This project is not allowed by right in this area. The magnitude of the project exceeds the scale, bulk and coverage to integrate well into this neighborhood.**

(RCPG Motion) Upon motion made by Bob Hailey and seconded by Kristi Mansolf, the **motion passed 8-0-0-0-7**, with Chad Anderson, Chris Anderson, Torry Brean, Matt Deskovick, Carl Hickman, Angus Tobiason and Richard Tomlinson absent.

*(The Design Review Board Members left the meeting at 8:20.)*

Item 8: County Bicycle Transportation Plan – Consideration of the RCPG Supporting a Bicycle Transportation Plan Update (Action)

Ms. Mansolf said the County is looking for letters of support to send in with a grant to update the County Bicycle Transportation Plan.

**MOTION: TO SUPPORT WRITING A LETTER TO THE COUNTY SUPPORTING A BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE.**

Upon motion made by Bob Hailey and seconded by Kristi Mansolf, the **motion passed 8-0-0-0-7**, with Chad Anderson, Chris Anderson, Torry Brean, Matt Deskovick, Carl Hickman, Angus Tobiason and Richard Tomlinson absent.

Item 9: Determination of Date of July RCPG Meeting due to 4<sup>th</sup> of July Holiday (Action)

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July falls on a Wednesday this year. If the RCPG were to meet on the first Thursday of the month, the meeting would be July 5. The Chair and Secretary will check on dates for room availability between the Library and the Community Center starting with July 12.

Mr. Stykel announced the Ramona Village Design committee will be meeting on June 4 at 6:30 at the Chamber of Commerce offices to go over the latest revision of the plan. All RCPG members and Design Review Board members are invited to attend.

The Chair announced there would be a forum in San Diego on June 21 to look at the issues that surround creating smaller energy companies. SDG&E will be participating in the forum.

Ms. Mansolf expressed interest in attending and bringing information back to the RCPG.

Item 10: ADJOURNMENT – 8:30

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Mansolf