

Valley Center Community Planning Group

Minutes for the January 23, 2012 Meeting

Chair: Oliver Smith; Vice Chair: Ann Quinley; Secretary: Steve Hutchison

7:00 pm at the Valley Center Community Hall; 28246 Lilac Road, Valley Center CA 92082

A=Absent/Abstain AI=Agenda Item BOS=Board of Supervisors DPLU=Department of Planning and Land Use IAW=In Accordance With
N=Nay P=Present R=Recuse SC=Subcommittee TBD=To Be Determined VCCPG=Valley Center Community Planning Group VC=Valley Center Y=Yea

Forwarded to Members: 9 February 2012

Approved: 13 February 2012

1. Call to Order and Roll Call by Seat #:											7:03 PM				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
A N D E R S O N	H U T C H I S O N	H O F L E R	G L A V I N I C	B R I T S C H	F R A N C K	Q U I N L E Y	V I C K	L E W I S	N J O O R H W N O S O O D N	S M I T H	J A C K S O N	R U D O L F	D A V I S	B A C H M A N	
A	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	

Notes: Glavinic, Britsch, Anderson, Norwood-Johnson excused

Quorum Established: 11 present

Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Minutes: January 9, 2011

Motion: Move to approve Minutes of January 9, 2011, as corrected

Maker/Second: Rudolf/Hofler

Carries/Fails (Y-N-A): 10-0-1 Voice; Bachman abstains

3. Open Forum:

None

4. Discussion Items:

None

5. Action Items:

5.a.

Discussion and vote on responses for letter from VCCPG to DPLU regarding Red Tape Reduction Task Force recommendations made at the San Diego County Board of Supervisors meeting on December 7, 2011, responses due to county by January 31, 2012. (Smith/Quinley)

Discussion: Oliver Smith presents a draft letter for consideration by VCCPG that outlines a proposed position for VCCPG on items in the Red Tape Reduction Task Force report submitted to the BOS on 7 December 2011. Vick asks for a word change in the Flawed Report Basis section. Davis asks to recognize Sandy Smith's unsuccessful attempt to be on the task force. O. Smith questions the veracity of the task force meeting noticing procedure. Rudolf responds that Supervisor Horn stated that the task force meetings and activities were posted according to the Brown Act. Rudolf observes that the notice was very obscure, even if it met the minimum legal requirements, and it was not in the spirit of the law. Smith voices concerns about the wording of this item. Davis suggests alternative wording. Amended by Ann Quinley. Rudolf expresses concern about proceeding with miniscule editing comments rather than substantive concerns and the time it will take to arrive at a final draft. Jackson corrects Appendix reference. Smith recounts past legal issues concerning all San Diego County planning groups [wins and losses], indicating that there has been

only one successful challenge of a planning group action [and this not concerning VCCPG]. Vick suggests another word change. Smith addresses the collection of attachments in Appendix A. Quinley questions direction of last sentence of paragraph 1 page 2. Smith defends the statement. Rudolf adds his support to Smith. An additional sentence is added by Rudolf/Davis to address the importance of community planning groups. Bill Lewis, audience, voices support for the Planning Group and its efforts in this action and others. Tom Baumgardner, audience, says VCCPG needs to challenge the law that allows BOS to eliminate planning groups. Smith responds that a steering committee meeting of all planning group chairs is to be held 2 Feb 2012 to discuss a collective response. Smith says he will also attempt a meeting with other planning group chairs in district 5. He notes that Supervisor Jacobs has met with her planning groups. Supervisor Horn has not. Smith rejects doubts expressed about legality of a meeting of district 5 chairs. Baumgardner adds that it is important to have meetings among all planning groups. Bridgid Brett, audience, asks about the costs of planning groups. Smith responds that half the costs noted are for elections. Other costs are mailing, posting meetings in papers, DPLU staff time, etc. Jackson clarifies that the entire budget item for planning groups is for a two-year period. Vick expresses a desire for some typographical changes and clarification of some references in the appendix. Susan Moore, Design Review Board, asks about the actions being taken by other planning groups separate from Steering Committee actions. Smith says every planning group is opposed to this report recommendation and they are taking various actions. Bachman asks about sending a copy of the letter being considered to the San Diego Union Tribune. Rudolf announces a suit by CalAware against BOS re Brown Act violations with regard to the Red Tape Reduction Task Force reports. If successful, it would require undoing actions taken on this matter in December 2011. Franck indicates his appreciation for public members who are in attendance.

Motion: Move to approve the letter presented, with the suggested changes, by Chair Oliver Smith [copy attached below]

Maker/Second: Rudolf/Jackson **Carries/Fails (Y-N-A):** 11-0-0 Voice

6.	Motion to Adjourn:	8.30 pm
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Maker/Second: Davis/Rudolf	Carries/Fails (Y-N-A): 11-0-0 Voice
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Note: Next regular meeting scheduled for 13 February 2012

Letter Approved Regarding the Red Tape Reduction Task Force:

Valley Center Community Planning Group

PO Box 127 Valley Center CA 92082

January 24, 2012



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Planning Chief Devon Muto
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RE: VCCPG Response to Red Tape Reduction Task Force Recommendations

Dear Chief Muto,

This letter is in response to your email requesting comments that was sent to planning and sponsor groups on December 16, 2011. The Valley Center Community Planning Group has reviewed and voted on the following responses to the Red Tape Reduction Task Force Recommendations presented at the Board of Supervisors hearing on December 7, 2012.

Flawed Report Basis

The Red Tape Reduction Task Force report recommended support of eliminating Planning and Sponsor Groups and thus public input as demonstrated by the following points:

- 1) All but one of the task force members were developers, with current staff, counsel, and qualified community members (such as Sandy Smith) specifically excluded.
- 2) Noticing was performed in a manner calculated to make it all but impossible to discover the existence of the task force and its activities.
- 3) Task force meeting agendas and minutes are totally uninformative as to what was discussed and by whom.
- 4) The large final report surfaced out of virtually nowhere, with no drafts being circulated, reviewed, and discussed by all stakeholders prior to the final report release.

Lack of Investigation of Actual Problems

Specifically focusing on Planning and Sponsor Groups, Supervisor Jacob's assertion at the December 7th BOS hearing is correct in that no investigation or analysis of actual problems with the 40 year old process has been performed. Such an investigation needs to have the Board of Supervisors start with an objective; based on an all-stakeholder determination of what, if anything, is wrong with the current Planning and Sponsor Group process.

For instance, are there any documented instances where Planning or Sponsor Group actions have created "red tape" problems for developers? If problems are found, then potential solutions can be explored.

There is no known factual basis for elimination or evisceration of the public input. The

report itself appears to contain unsubstantiated allegations by one or more developers

regarding Planning or Sponsor Group's treatment of their particular projects.

Only an

investigation of the facts related to the specific instances can determine whether the

allegations are or are not accurate.

The report notes allegations of cost and potential liability created by Planning and Sponsor Groups that are not factually supported. The cost numbers used are in significant error, being overstated by \$62,000 per year (see Appendix A). The

only

known liability from a Planning Group Brown Act violation in the last 40 years occurred

more than 10 years ago for an issue that was not related to a development project, but

rather a community's General Plan population target. Two other so called liability issues

publicized were, in fact, lawsuits against individual Planning or Sponsor Group members that were thrown out of court on the basis that the group members were doing

what they were chartered to do by the Board of Supervisors.

Public Input Is Beneficial

Good public input, via elected or otherwise official community input, has proven to be a

beneficial part of the land planning process for the developer, community, DPLU staff,

Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors. Anything that limits community input

in favor of efficiency and expediency is inconsistent with our democratic process.

In the

5th District, editorials and opinion pieces in the North County Times and the Valley

Roadrunner in Valley Center strongly support retention of Planning and Sponsor Groups

(see Appendix B). In addition, major north county developers and consultants to developers support the continued existence of robust Planning and Sponsor Groups as

extremely helpful and providing cost savings to their projects (see Appendix C).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Valley Center Community Planning Group finds that the report is seriously flawed by lack of supporting facts normally associated with a formal investigation of this sort. We recommend that the Board of Supervisors start the process over, assuring that all stakeholders have an opportunity to actively participate and recommendations are based on fact and not unsupported allegations. We are confident that a fair analysis by all stakeholders will conclude that robust public input by Planning and Sponsor Groups is a necessary and expedient part of the democratic process. These responses were approved by a vote of 11Yes/0No/0Abstain (4 absent) at the January 23, 2012 additional regular meeting of the Valley Center Community Planning Group.

Valley Center Community Planning Group

cc: San Diego Board of Supervisors and their Land Policy Advisors
San Diego County Planning and Sponsor Group Chairs
Chris Nichols, Reporter, North County Times
Dave Ross, Editor, Valley Center Roadrunner
VCCPG Response to RTRTF Report Page 2 of 25

APPENDIX A: Planning Group Costs Error

Assertion: Planning Groups “cost a lot of money – more than \$375,000 per year”

The June 2010 County analysis of expenditures had a \$62,000 overstatement of

expenses – the County spends approximately \$124,000 every two years for elections --- so annually \$62,000.

The County spent about \$311,000/per year in the 2008-9 fiscal year on Planning

Groups. Of this amount, only \$230,000 was out of pocket costs that will reduce if Planning Groups are eliminated. The other \$81,000 is County staff time that will be redeployed to other uses.

Staff time and staff costs will likely increase if the project review provided by Planning Groups is eliminated and staff must spend more time on review and in local communities to assess project impact – County total costs could INCREASE.

APPENDIX B: Local Media Articles

EDITORIAL: Keep county planning groups

By North County Times opinion staff North County Times | Posted: Thursday, January 12, 2012

12:00 am | No Comments Posted

The bureaucratic morass that must be navigated before building any kind of project in California is a proven deterrent to economic growth.

Thus, the willingness of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to try to streamline

the local
portion of the bureaucracy is to be admired. However, it appears to us that the board may
be
throwing out the baby with the bath water with its proposal to eliminate community-
based rural
planning groups.
A predictable, easy-to-understand process is essential to fostering a healthy building
industry. But so
is having community support for new projects.
For new development proposed in unincorporated areas of the county, the Board of
Supervisors has
the last word.
But this county is so vast that it is simply impossible for the five elected supervisors to
have a feel for
what's going on in their entire jurisdiction.
Local community planning groups serve an essential role in providing local community
feedback on
projects brought to the county.
In this, these planning groups serve a role analogous to that of a planning commission in
most North
County cities. The Fallbrook Planning Group or the Ramona Planning Group is where the
community gets to see details of any and all proposed projects for those communities.
And as with city Planning Commissions, the planning groups' decisions are not final ----
the Board of
Supervisors can always overrule them.
But with a distant, centralized county government having final say over what happens in
Fallbrook,
Bonsall, Rainbow, Warner Springs, Palomar Mountain, Ramona and every other
unincorporated
community in San Diego County, it behooves the Board of Supervisors to keep as much
of a
connection to residents as possible.
Eliminating the planning groups would have the opposite effect.
It was largely the refusal of the county to take into account local sentiment that led the
formerly
unincorporated communities of Olivenhain, Cardiff, Leucadia, New Encinitas and Old
Encinitas to
band together and form the city of Encinitas.
Should the county repeat that mistake today, it would be not at all surprising to see
cityhood
campaigns spring up across the county.
Far better for the county to find more effective means to reduce bureaucracy than
eliminating local
input.

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FORUM: Keep our sponsor and planning groups

By: Michael W. Berns North County Times | Posted: Wednesday, January 18, 2012 9:00 pm |

The San Diego Board of Supervisors is considering either eliminating or drastically curtailing the

role of the 26 Community Sponsor and Planning Groups.

These 26 boards serve a vital and important role in San Diego County because they provide a

major link between unincorporated communities and the Department of Planning and Land Use,

and ultimately, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

They hold regular monthly meetings where proposed development projects are reviewed by a

panel of community lay experts who volunteer their time. But equally as important as the panel

itself is the involvement of the community (residents) that may be directly affected by the project.

The meeting provides a grass-roots forum for the applicant and community members to interact

directly with each other, and often reach compromises that improve the project, which ultimately

makes it easier for the project to win approval by the Planning Commission and the Board of

Supervisors.

Because of the nature of the Department of Planning and Land Use process (and the backlog of

projects) as well as the limit of three minutes for community members to speak at the Planning

Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings, the Planning/Sponsor Group meeting is the

only way for extended in-person dialogue and participation of community members on any

project that will go through the county approval process.

I have attended several of the Bonsall Community Sponsor Group meetings and have been

highly impressed with the knowledge and expertise of the Community Sponsor and Planning

Group members, all of whom are appointed (without remuneration) by the Board of Supervisors

after careful credential checking.

Their expertise varies from legal, to planning, to engineering. The amount of hours that

they devote to studying each project and having candid and constructive dialogue with the applicant as well as concerned residents is well beyond the call of duty. These are people who believe in their communities and are willing to spend an enormous amount of time to work with all three key entities (the applicant, the local residents, and the county) to achieve projects that everyone can support. These panels/boards play a vital and important role in the development process of the county. Community-based expertise that can help resolve many of the issues and misunderstandings between developer and resident, should be encouraged rather than eliminated, especially when county planners are already overloaded with a backlog of projects. Eliminating or curtailing the vital function of these community boards is not in the best interest of San Diego County.

Michael W. Berns is a Bonsall resident.

FORUM: Don't let supervisors gut planning group role

By: Lael Montgomery North County Times | Posted: Saturday, January 14, 2012 9:00 pm

On Pearl Harbor Day, when most citizens were honoring democratic principles, San Diego County Supervisors Bill Horn and Ron Roberts were pushing Supervisors Cox, Jacob and Slater-Price for one more vote to silence the voices of backcountry constituents. Breathtaking was their advocacy of a developer-led scheme to eliminate community planning groups AND a cluster of laws and policies that protect San Diego County's environment and the character of rural communities ---- without public notice, review or input. This attack on the public trust comes in the name of "efficiency" and as "recommendations" from a developer-packed "Red Tape Reduction Task Force" which the board appointed last

April. All would agree that cutting bureaucratic caca is a good thing; what stinks about this caper is the overreach to forever muzzle local input and the scheme to adopt a bundle of these one-sided propositions straightaway on Dec. 7 instead of to "accept the report and ask staff to review it," as the Board of Supervisors agenda advertised.

For two supervisors to soft-pedal this as a low-profile agenda item crammed between holidays should tell voters that adopting the development lobby's wish list as public policy is the wave of

the present. Supervisors Cox, Jacob and Slater-Price were able to postpone a vote to eliminate

planning groups. But the halls of county government are crawling right now with pressure

peddlers whose mission is to turn just one vote.

A third vote at the board meeting Feb. 29 will successfully gut the local land use advisory system

that has been in place for 40 years (since the first community plans were adopted for unincorporated communities).

Just one more vote will:

- eliminate community planning groups
- eliminate the process that informs residents of development projects being proposed for our neighborhoods
- eliminate the public forum for project review and discussion
- eliminate the County Resource Protection Ordinance
- eliminate the new community character guidelines for clustered subdivisions
- allow developer-paid consultants to certify the validity of their own studies
- allow developers to decide what to include in Environmental Impact Reports

In short, just one more vote will deliver San Diego County to the ambitions of the new breed of

real estate developers who aim to enrich themselves as they litter rural communities with their

overbuilt General Plan Amendments.

The virulent new strain of developer-speculators who have seized prominence in San Diego

County are all cut from the same cloth: all represented by the same slew of lobbyists, "technical

consultants" and propaganda spinners who flood the media, community meetings, Department of

Planning and Land Use staff offices and the halls of county government, yapping about a faux

kind of "sustainability" and stroking the deciders for land use favors that yield mind-boggling

profits. Right now, this herd is thundering to crush whatever might temper their plans ----

including community input.

Call or write Supervisors Cox, Jacob, and Slater-Price today to oppose this undemocratic action.

Lael Montgomery is a former member of the Valley Center Planning Group.



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By DAVID ROSS

On the front page you'll see the second in our series on the attempt by Supervisor Bill Horn and Ron Roberts to abolish planning groups.

Remember that the Board of Supervisors will vote on this matter on Feb. 29. Needless to say, those who have strong opinions on the wisdom of this action should send letters to the supervisors. I'm not sure how valuable it is to send a letter to Horn, unless you happen to have made a big contribution to his campaign sometime in the recent past. I suspect that just being a concerned voter won't actually cut it. On the other hand it may be valuable to let Horn see the volume of opposition to his plan.

But the other supervisors, particularly Greg Cox, who is the straddle vote, are fair game.

Oh, and by the way, don't forget to let the supervisors know how you feel about the defacement and desecration of our Valley Center Library.

Let your voices be heard!

Community members can write letters, emails, or telephone to express their opinions on planning groups in advance of the Feb. 29 hearing:

Supervisor Bill Horn
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Supervisor Greg Cox
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Answer our Planning Group Survey Click Here!

Special "web-only" columns from your local representatives

From the Desk of Bill Horn (6/29/11)
By Supervisor Bill Horn

Kevin's Corner (8/29/11)
By Assemblyman Kevin Jeffries

COMMENT ON ARTICLE

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OPINION

Opinion.com

EDITORIALS

Bill Horn's bad idea

By DAVID ROSS

I suppose your first thought upon reading the headline above is, "which one?" If that was your reaction, behave yourself, for this is a serious subject!

Our supervisor wants to abolish planning groups, which the Board of Supervisors created about four decades ago.

I recall when planning groups were first created because I was personally involved with the one of the first ones, perhaps the first one, in Ramona, in the early 1970s. A group of Ramonans had tired of trying to get the County to update their community plan. They banded together to form a group to start working on the plan, and then demanded that the Board of Supervisors recognize us.

They did so, and eventually Ramona's planning group became enshrined in the county system, including the public elections of members.

Now Horn, who thinks the approval process for developments too onerous and time consuming, wants to remove the organizations closest to the communities, the planning groups. This proposal reminds me of Franklin Roosevelt's attempt to "pack" the U.S. Supreme Court with extra judges when the high court voted against several of his big schemes.

"No one is suggesting 'eliminating planning groups'—we are talking about liability and whether or not the county will continue to be on the hook for indemnifying these community groups," Horn said in a statement circulated by his spokesman recently. "My concern is the cost to the taxpayers of having these groups under the county umbrella." It is disingenuous at best for Horn to say that "no one is suggesting eliminating planning groups," when that is precisely what has been recommended by the task force he created.



Bill Horn's bad idea (Cont.)

By DAVID ROSS

The proposal was actually made by the Red Tape Reduction Task Force that Horn and Ron Roberts sponsored in April. Naturally when a "red tape" commission is populated mainly by developer groups, it is not surprising that it suggests cutting red tape by eliminating the only public agencies whereby local residents can communicate with their elected representatives about development matters—and in practice the only way that many people have of bringing their concerns to the county government.

Bill Horn has often said that county government is best because it is closest to the residents that it serves. How then can he justify abolishing groups that are even closer to their constituents than he is? I guess the answer is that since he was unable to deliver the Merriam Mountain developer to his big donors that he conceived of this as a consolation prize. And what a consolation prize it is!

A case can be made that planning groups brought this upon themselves by their obstructionist attitudes over the years, where they have done everything in their power to delay some projects being brought forward.

John Belanich's case is instructive. The planning group—or rather several "generations" of it—did everything over 25 years to delay Orchard Run. Then they had the brass to say that his project was out-of-date and needed to be current because it had been delayed for so long!

I can understand the frustration of those who feel that for too long the process took the position that developers are guilty until proven innocent. Or to put it another way, that those who are against developments should have more say than those who want to develop; that the default position is that development is bad.

On the other hand, Monday night's planning group meeting showed why such groups are needed (see our front page story).

If Horn is going to abolish planning groups, he can't hide behind the task force and add whine, "they made me do it." Let him take the heat and justify it to his constituents.

The Roadrunner will be exploring this issue on this editorial page and on the front page for the next several weeks, until the Board of Supervisors bring this to a vote on Feb. 29. We'd like to hear your views. Let us know what you think about this by visiting our Web site: www.valley-center.com and vote on the survey about planning groups.



JANUARY 11, 2012

Red Tape commission recommends abolishing or curtailing planning groups

By DAVID ROSS

First in a series of articles about a proposal to end planning groups as we know them in San Diego County.

PART I

At a recent Valley Center planning group meeting, at which several dozen local residents showed up to protest a solar farm being placed in their neighborhood, planner Bob Davis reminded residents that if they liked being able to express their views on such things that they might want to stay for a later agenda item where the group would be discussing a proposal that will go before the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 29 to abolish or severely curtail the activity of these volunteer groups, of which there are 26 in the county.

"The ,red tape" that they are talking about getting rid of is actually planning groups," said Davis.

To say that the move to get rid of planning groups, which were created nearly 40 years ago by the Board of Supervisors, is somewhat "stealthy" is an understatement.

A spokesman for Fifth District Supervisor Bill Horn's office told The Roadrunner on Monday that "There is no proposal on the table to eliminate planning groups by Supervisor Horn, or any of the other Board members."

Strictly speaking, that is true, nevertheless, the recommendation of the Red Tape Task Force, which was created in April at the urging of Supervisors Horn and Ron Roberts and which was tasked with reducing the time and cost required to process discretionary land permits Dec. 7, 2011 recommended the following:

A: To rescind Board Policy I-1, which created the planning groups.

To require that discretionary permit applicants prepare a public participation plan (PPP) to inform residents of the community of the proposed project through ONE publicly noticed community meeting.

B. Leave the community planning groups under the county's "umbrella" with the following changes:

Limit the scope of their review to the preparation and amendment of the general plan, the community plan and the PPP. Each of these groups would have staff in attendance.

Planning group members would be limited to two two year terms within a ten year period.

Planning groups would be limited to seven members.

Planning groups would no longer receive free appeals to the Board of Supervisors.

Horn has been quoted elsewhere as saying he would like to remove planning groups from the "county umbrella" in order to cut costs to the County.

According to Dept. of Planning & Land Use (DPLU), it spends about \$375,000 for community planning group support, including about a third of that amount for elections, since 18 planning groups are elected.

Note: The Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG) and DPLU staff wasn't part of the Red Tape Task Force process and made no recommendations at the December hearing.

Interestingly, the Task Force held meetings that were, to put it mildly, below the radar compared to normal county task forces that meet very much in the limelight.

Horn and Roberts are on record as supporting those recommendations, among many others that are not controversial in the nine page document.

The task force report laid much of the blame for delays in projects on several rogue (our term, not the task force's) planning groups that evolved from having an advisory role into "direct negotiation with the project applicants, direct requests for technical studies from project applicants or even requests for project amenities that may be beyond the required nexus for a particular project."

Some planning groups made requests for changes to a project over several meetings. "The result of this can be significant delays to the project processing schedule," said the report.

End of Part I

Community members can write letters, emails, or telephone to express their opinions on planning groups in advance of the Feb. 29 hearing:

Supervisor Bill Horn
County Administration Center
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 92101
tel: 619-531-5555
fax: 619-685-2662
bill.horn@sdcounty.ca.gov

Supervisor Greg Cox
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greg.cox@sdcounty.ca.gov

Supervisor Ron Roberts
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1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
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fax: 619-531-6262
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Supervisor Dianne Jacob
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dianne.jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov

Supervisor Pam Slater-Price
County Administration Center
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TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

JANUARY 18, 2012

Part II **Supers may abolish planning groups**

By DAVID ROSS

Second in a series of articles about a proposal to end planning groups as we know them in San Diego County. [Click here to read Part I](#)

Note: Fifth District Supervisor Bill Horn and Ivan Holler, who chaired the Red Tape Reduction Task Force, have so far declined to be interviewed for this series.

[See related story, this issue.](#)

On Feb. 29 the Board of Supervisors will decide the fate of the County's planning groups, more than two dozen of them.

When the county's Red Tape Reduction Task Force was being formed, Sandy Smith, a former chairman of the Valley Center Planning Group, requested to be a member.

Dustin Steiner, the county official charged with putting the task force together, sent her this reply:

"Thank you for your interest and willingness to serve. We will certainly add your name to the mix; however, I do want to caution we are looking for experts - engineers, architects, etc - who have experience taking projects through DPLU (Dept. of Planning & Land Use). This is about the business operations side, not the land use side of DPLU. If you have experience in these areas beyond your service to the planning group, please let me know."

In other words, those whose projects are processed by DPLU—and only them— would make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on cutting red tape.

Although the task force issued nine pages of recommendations, as reported in last week's paper, among the most far-reaching was a choice among two options:

A: To rescind Board Policy I-1, which created the planning groups.

To require that discretionary permit applicants prepare a public participation plan (PPP) to inform residents of the community of the proposed project through ONE publically noticed community meeting.

B. Leave the community planning groups under the county's "umbrella" with the following changes:

- Limit the scope of their review to the preparation and amendment of the general plan, the community plan and the PPP. Each of these groups would have staff in attendance.

Planning group members would be limited to two two year terms within a ten year period and limited to seven members. They would no longer receive free appeals to the Board of Supervisors.

Either option, if adopted, would drastically alter how land use plans make their way through the County.

Supervisors Ron Roberts and Bill Horn (whose Fifth District includes VC) are both pushing to adopt the option to eliminate planning groups. Two supervisors, Dianne Jacob and Pam Slater-Price, oppose this option. The issue will be decided by the so-far undecided Greg Cox.

Local planning group members, and many former members, are up in arms over the proposal.

Craig Adams, a former chairman of the VC group, told The Roadrunner: "Having served for eleven years on the VCCPG, five as chairman, I can say looking back that whatever people think, positive or negative, the planning groups are our only voice when it comes to development. Should the County alone have a say? I think not. The community must have a say, and the planning groups are all we have. Take it away, and we lose our voice. I think Bill Horn is overreaching, and this is very undemocratic. More like autocratic."

Lael Montgomery, who was on the group for several years before leaving to become chairman of the VC Design Review Board, is equally scathing: "I think the „Red Tape Caper" shows that Bill Horn represents not the citizens of the 5th District but a cadre of bully-developers who are determined to chew up San Diego hopefully at the taxpayer's expense.

"Horn and Roberts pushed hard and failed to get a third vote to eliminate CPGs on Dec. 7.

Eliminating the planning groups will not only wipe out the system and the process that supports the forum for residents to review and comment on development projects that are being proposed for VC neighborhoods.

"...it will also shred the organizational structure that supports a bundle of pro-active planning activities."

Without the planning group, Dr. Montgomery says there will be no organization that looks at Valley Center as a whole. No one to initiate, for example, another Heritage Trail. "Or an award-winning design for the North Village, or a winning design for the South Village, or to help organize support for the South Village sewer project, or to write new J-36 right-of-way development standards for road edges in VC that will retain a rural flavor as the community develops, and so forth."

Patsy Fritz, a former member of the Planning Commission and frequent Horn critic, offered a colorful observation: "In 1981, the Brooke Shields TV spot memorably proclaimed, „You wanna know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing." Flash forward 20 years, and you get Bill Horn's message to developers:

"„Wanna know what comes between me and my campaign contributors? Nothing." Killing off Planning Groups—and any community input—is Horn's „thank you" to developers. He thinks that every developer who writes a check to his campaign should get approved without discussion. Quid pro quo," she said.

Not everyone agrees that the groups serve a vital purpose. The Roadrunner is conducting an online survey, and one who supports abolishing planning groups is Bill Layne. "Agendas. Very few who are on these groups to do what the community wants, rather are there for their own little special interest agendas," he commented. But a public officials who work with the groups say they will be missed. Gary Arant, general manager of the Valley Center Municipal Water District, told The Roadrunner: "VCMWD has had a very positive relationship the VC Planning Group. We are only the plumbers; the water and wastewater guys. The VCPG is made up of local elected citizens of the community who have a hand on the pulse of those who live here and have an idea about what the community should look like and be like. We respect that relationship and do our planning, specifically wastewater and reclamation planning, within the context of what the local planning group and then the county have determined are areas appropriate for wastewater service. More recently, with the VCPG participating with Valley Center Coordinating Council, VC- 3, all the other service agencies have felt the information provided by Oliver Smith, the current representative from the VCPG, has been very valuable. You are only going to get that kind of detailed information about what is going on development-wise in the community if you have something like the VCPG. Perhaps the process can be streamlined, but I think, at least from our perspective, having a local look at perspective on projects is important."

TO BE CONTINUED

APPENDIX C: Letters from Valley Center Developer

LAW OFFICES
MILCH & WOLFSHEIMER
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January 5, 2012

Oliver Smith, Chairman
Valley Center Community Planning Group

As a land owner who has spent almost 30 years on and off working with the Valley Center Community Planning Group on my Rancho Lilac ever changing SPA, I wanted to add my two cents to County Staff suggestion about diminishment of Planning Groups participation in the "red tape" reduction task force report.

While planning our project we were encouraged to participate as audience members in two County appointed boards (one, of Chairman of all Community Planning Groups which I believe met on Saturdays, and another group made up of builders and environmentalists). My long time career in government and as a private land use attorney told me to forgo these 2 groups and to work with the Valley Center Community Planners who were much closer to and more knowledgeable of the issues we needed to address than some planners 40 miles way in downtown San Diego.

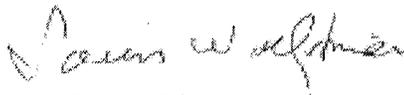
The give and take of meeting with the Valley Center Community Group was invaluable and though there were points of contention, they were solved by mutual civil discussion.

We were always treated with respect by the Community Group and likewise treated with respect those members who found parts of our plan not to their liking.

The interest and interaction of the group was invaluable to moving our project forward. They are going to live with the result of a project approval long after the developers are gone.

Strong input from Planning Groups are essential in the process. I cannot speak to the quality of all the Planning Groups in the County, but the 30 years I dealt with the Valley Center Group, whose membership changed every few years, worked hard and even handed with the Rancho Lilac project.

Sincerely,



Louis Wolfsheimer

BUTTERFIELD TRAILS LLC

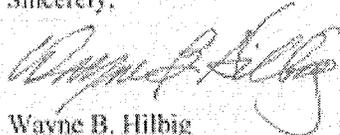
December 29, 2011

Subject: My Experience With The Valley Center Community Planning Group

I have been processing a tentative map for ten years at considerable cost. The VCCPG has not contributed to the delay in the map process. Because the VCCPG has Community Guidelines, we designed our project within those guidelines. As a result, the VCCPG was helpful, promptly approved my project with a unanimous vote, and offered enthusiastic support.

The delays encountered primarily have been at DPLU seemingly due to the County, State, and Federal regulations the staff applies. It also appears some staff members are overly zealous in interpreting regulations and also choose to not consider the big picture. Hence, departments following their agendas conflict with each other causing delays and added costs. Our Project Manager at DPLU has done a good job in reconciling competing interests. The best staff members are those who are results oriented and seek solutions rather than objections.

Sincerely,



Wayne B. Hilbig
President
Butterfield Trails LLC
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January 9, 2012

Oliver Smith, Chairman
Valley Center Community Planning Group

Dear Oliver,

I would like to provide you with my input regarding the County's Red Tape Reduction Task Force's study of the Community Planning Groups as part of the land use permitting process.

As you know, our family (the Bell family) has owned multiple properties, both commercial and residential, in Valley Center for the last 30 years and I have personally worked with the VCCPG for the last 15 years or so. Most of our interactions have been in relation to the General Plan Update and how it affected our property and the community as a whole.

The obstacles to development for us have come mainly from County departments DPLU and DPW. One extreme example is the TIF (Traffic Impact Fee) issue. We fought for 5 years with the County on a reasonable solution to the TIF. The Valley Center Community Planning group actually assisted us in trying to obtain a reasonable solution that made sense for us and for Valley Center.

The Community Planning Group structure is not without flaws, but I would say on balance the ability to have input from community members at the local level is a vital concept to preserve.

There are, however, a couple of refinements I would suggest the Red Tape Task Force examine.

First, the "one bite of the apple" concept should be followed at the Community Planning Group level. It seems as though every two years the make-up of the Planning Group changes and new members want to have their stamp of approval on, and make changes to, projects that have been in the process for years and sometimes decades. I believe this is inefficient and unfair for land owners to have to endure such a moving target.

Second, there should be more of an effort made to encourage property owners, business owners and other residents with "skin in the game" to join the planning group. Many times it seems planning groups can be disproportionately represented by activists with agendas (environmentalists, etc.) that don't really reflect the community as a whole.

I believe both of these changes can be made while preserving the Community Planning Group system we currently have.

In summary, I believe the Community Planning Group system is a very important part of the development process and should, with proper refinements, be preserved.

Sincerely,



Steve Flynn, CEO
Bell Enterprises & Bell Holdings

January 10, 2012

Oliver Smith, Chairman
Valley Center Community Planning Group

RE: Red Tape Reduction Task Force

The undersigned, Herbert Schaffer, (manager of Weston-Valley Center, LLC), has been a landowner and developer in Valley Center for almost twenty-five years and the undersigned Valley Center View Properties has been developing a project adjacent to and integrated with Weston's project for the last seven (7) years.

We commend the County's much needed attempt to reduce the time and costs that developers must endure to obtain discretionary land use permits.

Weston's most recent development in Valley Center started over ten years ago in 2001, and is still continuing. As you know, this is a mixed-use development and presently consists of approximately 530 single family detached homes and approximately a 128,000 SF commercial "town center". Valley Center View Properties is processing a project that consists of approximately 175,000 SF of commercial buildings and approximately 138 multi-family housing units (59 multi-family and 79 senior multi-family units). Both projects require the joint development of an approximate \$18 million sewer plant that will service the equivalent sewer needs for approximately 1,450 homes, which satisfies the long term sewer needs of the northern area of Valley Center. We anticipate that the total build-out of the project will be over a 25 year term.

We have had a long-standing mostly positive experience in working with the Valley Center Planning Group and its subcommittees. We note that on page 8 of the "Task Force Report" of 12/7/11, there is a recommendation to consider eliminating Community Planning Groups or substantially diminishing their role in the planning and approval process. In our opinion, eliminating the local Planning Groups would be a serious mistake. Notwithstanding the extra costs and delays of seeking approvals from the Valley Center Planning Group and its subcommittees, we have found that local knowledge and input of important development issues like density, type of product, conceptual exterior architecture, design of buildings and roads and satisfying the community character of Valley Center, were most helpful in exposing us to what the community liked and the final product that the community would use. We know this will be important to our development's success. After all, it is mostly the Valley Center Community residents that will be buying and/or renting our residential homes and shop and spend time in their desired commercial community town center. Yes, there are ways to shorten the process and reduce the cost and red tape of Community Planning; it should be explored by the Task Force and input from developers should be sought, however, we have found that local Community Planning Groups input has value that definitely exceeds the costs and time delay of the process.

It should be noted that by far most of the costs and time delays of processing is due to the County, but of course the County has to contend with a myriad of issues beyond their control, like environmental laws, legal issues, precedent, building code requirements etc.

One of the mainstays that supported the economic health of San Diego County for decades, had been real estate development. Unfortunately due to the long term economic and real estate collapse plus the accumulation of a host of laws, rules and procedures that a developer must confront during processing, it has made most development projects in the County presently economically unfeasible. Therefore, the goal of the Task Force is essential, including reducing the cost and red tape of Community Planning, but eliminating local Planning Groups, in our experience and opinion will not be at all productive.

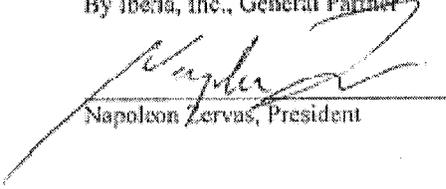
Very Truly Yours,

Weston Valley Center, LLC


Heibert Schaffer, Manager

Valley Center View Properties, LP

By Iberia, Inc., General Partner


Napoleon Zervas, President

JAMES CHAGALA & ASSOCIATES
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January 16, 2012

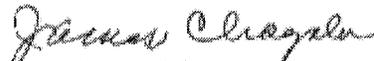
Mr. Jon Vick,

I have dealt with the Valley Center Community Planning Group for the last 12 years as a Planning Consultant on many projects ranging in size from very small to very large and from controversial to non-controversial. I have found this Planning Group to be reasonable, and one that makes a real effort to consider all sides of an issue before making a recommendation.

At the subcommittee level it can provide valuable insight as to what the community desires are at an early point in the process. It also serves as a forum where public input can be obtained, suggestions made, and compromises worked out. Once an agreement has been worked out, I have found that the Group can be depended upon to be supportive at the staff and public hearing levels.

If you have any further questions, please call me at (760) 751-2691.

Sincerely,


James Chagala, Ph.D.

John and VCCPG Members,

You have asked us to comment on our interaction with the VCCPG with regards to Red Tape Reduction Initiative proposed by the County. As you all know we have an important piece of the South Village being the largest single parcel with 3 separate planning zones on the same property, Village Core, RL20, and VR 7.3. We have heard from several people prior to submitting our project for review to get ready to spend many years and lot of money. Putting a major project before both the local planning group and the county is a daunting task. Bill Lewis as our projects planner had proposed we try a new approach to the process by proactively meeting with the VCCPG and their sub comities, soliciting community input and buy in for our project prior to officially submitting our proposed plan to work through potential road blocks and sticking points there by lessoning the time Bill spends in redesigning our plan. At this point in our project this seems to have been a wise and prudent decision as we have obtained a conceptual approval from you the VCCPG and your subcommittees to take to the County were the process will continue with them.

Thank you for your input and participation with our project.

The Konyn Family