

County of San Diego
Valle De Oro Community Planning Group
P. O. Box 936
La Mesa, CA 91944-0936

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES: August 6, 2013

LOCATION: Otay Water District Headquarters
Training Room, Lower Terrace
2554 Sweetwater Springs Blvd
Spring Valley, CA 91978-2004

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** 7:05 PM Jack L. Phillips, Presiding Chair
Verified Members Present: Chapman, Feathers, Fitchett, Henderson, Hyatt, Manning,
Mitrovich, Myers, Perry, Phillips, Reith, Schuppert, Tierney, Wollitz
(Manning arrived 7:20pm)

Members Not Present: Brownlee

- 2. FINALIZE AGENDA:** As shown
- 3. OPEN FORUM:** No discussion or comment.
- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** June 4, 2013. **VOTE: 9-0-4 to approve**

5. LAND USE

a. L-15371 and Mitigated Negative Declaration: Proposed Grading Permit to create a rock catchment area consisting of a 1,450-foot long by up to 72-foot high escarpment cut up to 55 feet into the face of the natural hillside along the north side of Willow Glen Drive starting 1400 feet west of Hester's Granite Company's entrance. Earthwork will consist of 85,000 cubic yards (CY) of excavation, 25,000 CY of fill and 65,000 CY of export.

The applicants, Jon & Joel Cloud, presented their plan to construct a rock catchment basin that parallels Willow Glen Drive for more than a quarter of a mile. The sole purpose of this basin is to act as a supplemental safety measure; to help prevent the creation of rockfall hazards during their excavation and mining activities. Mr Jon Cloud indicated that he had the support of 2 members of the community, neither of these individuals or representatives attended/spoke at this meeting.

A total of six people from the immediate neighborhood presented their opinions and concerns to the Planning Group. One of the six has taken a neutral stance on the project, but wanted to inform the Planning Group that they have experienced property damage as a result of the blasting that takes place during excavation.

Five of the six neighbors are against the project being permitted to proceed. They are

concerned of “floaters” impacting their homes throughout the duration of the additional excavation/mining of the hill as well as during the construction of the rock catchment basin. Cracks in ceilings, drywall separating at joints, items damaged from falling off mantles are some of the consequences these neighbors have experienced as a result of the blasting.

Other concerns expressed dealt with the loud noise, road safety, additional truck traffic, and more mining debris on the roads being tossed to adjoining properties. One individual was of the opinion that the applicant had misrepresented their candidate projects in the past and was concerned that perhaps this was happening again. He questioned why a Major Use Permit was not being required for such a substantial project.

The general consensus of the attending community members was should this enhanced mining project proceed, it would be at the expense of each of the neighbor’s property and quality of life.

FITCHETT briefly discussed four photos of the subject area that depicts the road, hillside and rocks as well as the aerial photo of the mitigation area and shooting range. He then presented the findings of the Sub-Committee. Below are their findings.

1. Creation of the 1,450-foot long by up to 72-foot high escarpment along Willow Glen Drive will result in irreversible degradation of the existing rural visual character and the scenic quality of Willow Glen Drive.
2. Landslides of boulders may be induced during the severe grading, which may include blasting, required to create the large escarpment. Such dislodgement of boulders could occur before any “catchment” capability is established, thereby placing Willow Glen Drive at increased risk of dislodged boulder impacts due to this project.
3. Inadequate evaluation of the site’s biological resources and the proposed location of the 6.8-acre biological mitigation site close to and down range of a shooting range are deficiencies in the environmental analysis of the site.
4. Diverting the existing dispersed hillside drainage pattern into two discharge points may create storm run-off problems for properties on the south side of Willow Glen Drive.
5. The project is in direct conflict with Conservation Policy #22 and the Scenic Highway Policy of the Valle de Oro Community Plan.
6. Noise impacts from severe grading and possible blasting created in an amphitheater-like setting would be directed toward residents across Willow Glen Drive.
7. Disagree with the use of a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project and the inadequate evaluations for Aesthetics, Geology and Soils, Biological Resources, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, and Noise that have led to that determination.
8. The project appears to be an expansion of the existing, grandfathered Hester’s aggregate mining operation onto adjacent off-site property to accommodate continued mining into the reverse slope of the affected natural hillside without dislodging boulders on Willow Glen Drive.

Such expansion should require complete review and environmental analysis of the aggregate mining use and approval of a Major Use Permit for continuation of this use in its current location.

After review of all the public input, information, photos and applicant maps, Planning Group members discussed their concerns, such as:

The additional grading is working outside the limits of disturbance. The fact that so much data is missing is disturbing; it minimizes the amount of data available for review and evaluation. A full EIR, rather than a Negative Declaration could address this shortcoming.

How is it that this project has gotten to this stage without any prior public input?

The simulation software (Colorado Rockfall Simulation Program) used by the applicants to determine the rockfall catchment's dimensions tends to under-predict rockfall roll-out distance for 80-foot slopes.

The fact that Willow Glen Drive is a designated Scenic Byway has been ignored by the applicant and county staff.

One member's assessment of the discussion was that it's the expansion of the quarry that is troublesome, not the existing quarry.

FITCHETT moved to recommend that the L-15371 project be denied and that the environmental determination be rejected. [Phillips seconds] **VOTE: 13-0-1 to approve the motion.**

b. Pedestrian crosswalks with in-pavement lighting systems to be located: on Fury Lane, 310 feet east of Avocado School Rd.; on Calle Verde Drive, immediately east of entry to Avocado Village Shopping Center; and on Conrad Drive, 625 feet and 940 feet north of Campo Road (both ends of middle school frontage.)

Mr Matt Widelski and Mr Carl Hickman provided details for each of the proposed pedestrian crosswalk to be altered. The lights are solar-powered, the thermoplastic product for the crosswalks is more durable than paint and is more visible in low light. Associated with each crosswalk will be signage that includes a flashing LED bar.

Mr Hickman stressed that the crosswalk lights and the signage LED bar are activated by a pedestrian pushing a button, they are not tied in to the school-specific flashing lights that occur only during periods immediately before and after the school session.

PHILLIPS moved to recommend approval of the pedestrian crosswalks with in-pavement lighting. [REITH seconds] **VOTE: 14-0-0 to approve motion**

c. W13-004: Site Plan exemption for new Starbucks signage at 9809 Campo Road. (2 wall signs and 9 directional signs.)

PHILLIPS presented the project. He indicated that all the signs are needed and properly scaled given their location and purpose.

PHILLIPS moved to approve W13-004 Site Plan exemption for new Starbuck's signage. [Henderson seconds] **VOTE: 14-0-0 to approve motion**

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. County Zoning and Code Amendments to allow placement of certain special-purpose, off-premise signs within County maintained road right-of-way. For more information, contact county DPW: Gail Jurgella, 858-694-3911 or e-mail Gail.Jurgella@sdcounty.ca.gov

Discussed briefly and group agreed no action was required.

b. Expenditure of Park Lands Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) Fees: In order of their priority, the currently recommended projects are: Estrella Park improvement; Fury Lane Children's Park restroom facilities; and Damon Lane Nature Park—removal of non-native vegetation. For additional information, contact County Parks: Mr. Bill Saumier, 858-966-1344.

PHILLIPS moved to continue with our previously declared project priorities [Chapman seconds] **VOTE: 14-0-0 to approve the motion.**

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS **None**

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The effort by the La Mesa City Staff to update their Community Plan (within the General Plan Update) to modify the Land Use designator of the northwest corner of Lemon Avenue & Bancroft to 'Commercial' has been rejected.

9. ADJOURNMENT at 9:03 PM

Submitted, Lori Myers