

# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, BORREGO SPRINGS COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP

## \*\*\* MINUTES\*\*\*

Thursday, January 4, 2023, 5:00 p.m.

In-person at the Borrego Library, 2850 Country Club Rd, Borrego Springs & also via Zoom  
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88917912158?pwd=Z3RVcmRWdHVQUkZ0S3FCYzNkcjBkZz09>

Meeting ID: 889 1791 2158

Passcode: 732725

THE PUBLIC IS ALWAYS WELCOME TO OUR MEETINGS

WE REPRESENT YOU WHEN ADVISING THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO ON LAND USE ISSUES

### A. CALL TO ORDER @ 5:00/ROLL CALL

John Peterson - present

Judy Haldeman - present

Bill Berkley - present

Jim Dax - not present in person or via Zoom

Bruce Durbin - present

Julie Gerson - present

Bill Haneline - present

Rebecca Falk - present

Nancy McRae - present

### B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING of December 7, 2023

Minutes not approved because they were attached to the un-revised December agenda. Will be reviewed and approved at February meeting.

### C. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION (may be limited to 3 min): Opportunity for members of the public to speak to the Group on any subject matter within the Group's jurisdiction that is not on the posted agenda.

No members of the public spoke.

### D. ACTION ITEMS:

1. BSCSG consideration and recommendation to the County for the Dollar General Alcohol and Beverage Control liquor (beer and wine) license. We are asked to comment on the license with respect to neighborhood compatibility under criterion #2 of Board Policy I-121. (This is dependent on the County getting a complete application in from the applicant.)

Per John Peterson: Application not complete - missing a signature, but BSCSG received permission from County to hear the agenda item and make a recommendation.

Email from County received Jan 4 said that Sheriff Department does not have an issue with application and does not oppose it.

Peterson distributed County BOS Policy # I-121 on the Procedure for Determining Public Convenience or Necessity for Alcoholic Beverage License Application.

**Steve Rawlings, DG, Presentation via Zoom:** Of the 250 DG stores in California, soon to be 300 stores, all but four carry beer/wine. B/W is in a small display that is less than 1% of square footage of entire store, consisting of 8 ft of shelving (warm storage) and 4 cooler doors - all to the right of store entrance. Beer is sold only in 12, 24, 36 pack, not individually. Diagrams of shelving and coolers storage were presented. 4 ft of the warm storage is reserved for wine by the bottle.

Per Rawlings, DG prides itself on being a one-stop shop and b/w sales are a convenience for the customer. B/W sales have not been a public safety issue in any of the areas they serve, primarily due to larger packaging.

No sensitive issues such as schools or playgrounds near sites.

Meets criteria of BOS policy.

1 - 2% of gross sales is from b/w.

Not sure when they are opening.

#### **Comments from the Public and the BSCSG:**

Elizabeth Rodriguez read letter from BS Revitalization Committee stating that the license application is not compatible with neighborhood character and would be of no benefit to the town. Reasoning is: 1) Five locations in town already sell b/w; the DG license would exceed what is allowed by policy and be detrimental to existing businesses, 2) DG is located near sensitive areas (schools, etc.), 3) DG is not adding anything unique or desirable in b/w sales.

Betsy Knaack spoke in support of BS Revitalization Committee.

Rebecca Falk spoke with ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Commission) person who is handling the application about the issue of there being too many liquor licenses for our population. The liquor store, gas station, Center and Desert Pantry markets, and Borrego Outfitters have licenses (5 total). The license being applied for is type 20 — b/w only and only for off-site consumption. The ABC only compares like-type licenses in their determinations. Per ABC, there is only one other type 20 license. An additional license (DG's license), would exceed the limit (1 license:2000 residents) but the County and ABC think it's okay.

Steve Rawlings/DG - ABC process is about public convenience or necessity. Per State law, ABC cannot issue more than X# of licenses in any given census tract. "X" is a mathematical formula. In the case of Borrego Springs, we have exceeded "X" and the ABC cannot issue another license unless the local municipality says its okay. Although we have exceeded "X" in this census tract, some of the other census tracts don't have any licenses, so they will come to this census tract to purchase b/w. It's a matter of convenience.

Steve Rawlings/DG - In terms of other businesses being impacted, "we have not ever found a situation where other businesses are shutting down because DG opened."

Steve Rawlings/DG, in response to a question about DG's ability to buy in bigger quantities giving it an unfair advantage over smaller competition, said there are laws that prohibit discounts. All b/w is sold through distributors who have to sell at the same wholesale price.

Elizabeth Rodriguez - other businesses cannot compete on DG discounted prices.

Bruce Durbin - we should also be concerned about consumers; we are in a competitive market so Bruce rejects the "adverse economic impact on local businesses" argument. He maintains that any sensitive areas are over 1 mile away from DG.

Julie Gerson asked if DG sells lottery tickets. Steve Rawlings/DG does not recall ever seeing lottery sales at DG stores, but maybe some do.

**MOTION** by Rebecca Falk: Recommend for approval of license, and on Form 534, under "comments made by group," include points raised in letter and comments made during meeting both against and in favor of license.

**SECOND:** Bill Haneline

**DISCUSSION:** Bill Berkley concerned with survivability of existing businesses and effect on community if local merchants were to close down. Judy Haldeman agrees with BB.

Bill Haneline says Jim Wermers questioned shop owners who they said have no problem with DG being around.

John Petersen - not within our jurisdiction to vote regarding impact on business viability.

**MOTION FAILED TO PASS - TIE VOTE**

**AYES - John Peterson, Bruce Durbin, Bill Haneline, Rebecca Falk**

**NAYS - Judy Haldeman, Bill Berkley, Julie Gerson, Nancy McRae**

**Not present/unable to vote - Jim Dax**

**2. Disbanding of the Water and Land Use Subcommittee of the Sponsor Group. John Peterson presenting.** Committee has accomplished what it was set up to do which was to work with Water Master Board to achieve a higher level of communication and cooperation. They are not working at odds anymore.

**MOTION** by Rebecca Falk: Disband Water and land Use subcommittee

**SECOND:** Bill Berkley

**DISCUSSION:** None

**MOTION PASSED** by unanimous vote

#### **E. NON-ACTION ITEMS:**

**1. Discussion by Bruce Kelley and his team regarding the status (and potential upgrading) of health services in Borrego. This will include initiative to make primary care available in Borrego 24/7/365, and related topics.**

Bruce Kelley distributed informational handout and map of proposed site.

Betsy Knaack - provided background on combined work force from Revitalization Committee and Public Health groups. Process began with Covid Task Force in 4/20, in 22/23 worked with fire department to make transition to CalFire. In 8/22, Borrego Health filed for bankruptcy;. Since then the group's mission is to increase availability, accessibility and quality of primary care; help current medical clinic to rebuild patient volume; promote a campus (fire house clinic, senior housing) around the library. Working on ways to expand care beyond physical limits of clinic.

Dr. Fausel - DAP acquired the Borrego Health clinics, including ours. No lapse in care since then. DAP took over Borrego pharmacy. Staff was all retained, including physician services. Dr. Ramos M- Th, another doctor on Friday, one pediatrician per month on-site. DAP is dedicated to improving services. Has instituted HIPA and other training. Has begun a national search for a dedicated full time primary care physician for clinic. Community needs to recognize that we have a good opportunity with DAP and we need to support it, because by supporting it we will improve the healthcare in Borrego.

Bruce Kelley - addressed what's going on with fire house. Existing firehouse is temporary per Cal-fire until new FH constructed - could take 3-4 yrs. Plan was to improve living quarters by bringing in large trailer, but having difficulty getting that done. Trying to fix up existing building (asbestos mitigation). Will make it as useful and safe as possible.

County Fire Chief Meachem is supportive. Assigned Senior Chief Salazone, who oversees our district. Nick Clemens is our own Battalion Chief for BS, SV and OW. Committee meets periodically with these individuals to discuss new firehouse and clinic. Cal-fire has been "incredibly supportive of our thinking of how to leverage this into better care for BS."

Terry Paulus - discussed how firehouse and new clinic can help community - Looking at alternatives to brick and mortar clinic. Researched Hayward, CA approach - built primary care clinic on grounds of firehouse. Only one that exists in California (maybe nationally?). Provides full service, primary, preventative care through a local community clinic. Both Hayward and BS are underserved communities with a shortage of healthcare professionals, characterized as a "healthcare desert."

It could be transformative to integrate healthcare into a trusted public site. Objective is to revitalize, stabilize, improve delivery of primary care. Clinic would attract new residents and support current residents' ability to stay. Better access means greater patient volume, remain financially viable. New more modern clinic will attract and retain professionals, can offer extended hours on evenings and weekends.

Community paramedicine program allows trained paramedics to function outside normal emergency response/transport to fill gaps between primary and emergency care. Keep paramedics in town where they're needed. Pair paramedic with nurse to provide post-hospitalization care for 30 days. Local paramedics very supportive.

Might be complementary with current clinic. Maybe offer different services at different times. Placement of clinic in town is enticing to DAP. These are unknowns. The firehouse clinic could support paramedics and community paramedicine. Helipoint location is still in discussion.

Dan Wright - affordable senior housing. Land is being donated - 5.5 ac. for fire station; 2 ac. for clinic; approx. 14.5 ac. remain for other community uses. Excellent location for senior housing because it is walking distance to library, stores and other key facilities. Working with Desmond's office, consultants, etc. to move project forward.

John Peterson expressed the Sponsor Group's thanks for this informative presentation.

**2. Update regarding the Community Signage project: Nancy McRae and Bruce Durbin presenting.**

Bruce Durbin - Survey closing on Friday Jan 5, have received "in the hundreds" of responses. Vast majority in favor of new welcome signage. Complete results of survey and next steps will be presented at next meeting.

Nancy stated that respondents represented a wide cross-section of the community from high school students to Spanish-speaking residents to residents who use the CRC and many others. The committee is proud of the outreach undertaken.

**F. GROUP BUSINESS:**

**1. Chair Report, Update from the Quarter Chairs meeting**

Rebecca Falk requested that group be sent agenda for meetings and documents that are sent out relative to meeting.

**2. Discussion Items: Should our group have training sessions in the future? As an example, the discussion regarding health services and potential discussions regarding the Stewardship council. What other topics should we schedule for future meetings?**

The consensus is Yes. Suggested name change to "Information Sessions."

**3. Subcommittee Reports: Bill Haneline to check into and report on the improvements scheduled for pedestrian crosswalks at Christmas Circle.**

Per Bill, plans complete for crosswalks from PCD into Circle. Competitive bids are going out in early February. Takes a few months to review and then issue Notice to Proceed. Request was made to Invite lead engineer to describe project at a future BSCSG meeting.

**4. Meeting Updates: None**

Rebecca Falk — EngageSandiego.com - SD Housing Blueprint on affordable housing

**5. Correspondence received: Tiered Winery Expansion Report from the County of San Diego.** Does not affect us, so not discussed.

**G. ADJOURNMENT 7:03**

**MOTION** by Bill Berkley

**SECOND** by Julie Gersen

**MOTION PASSED** by unanimous vote.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2023, 5 pm at the Borrego Springs Library Community Room, 2850 Country Club Rd, Borrego Springs, California and via Zoom.