

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, BORREGO SPRINGS COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP

*** MINUTES***

Wednesday, November 6, 2024, 4:30 p.m.

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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86511864588?pwd=bJUcCpHx2ZBwdnm3izobdNFjrqd8Sv.1>

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/ROLL CALL

John Peterson, President - Present

Judy Haldeman, Vice President - Absent

Bill Berkley - Present

Jim Dax - on Zoom (cannot vote)

Bruce Durbin - Present

Bill Haneline - Present

Rebecca Falk - Present

Nancy McRae, Secretary - Present

Seat #7 - VACANT

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING of June 5, 2024

MOTION: Bill Berkley

SECOND: Rebecca Falk

APPROVED: Unanimously

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.

Rich Parnell - Expressed thanks to John Petersen for getting the County's road/pedestrian crossing construction project at Christmas Circle moving along in time for Borrego Days, and big thanks to Supervisor Jim Desmond. It made a huge difference for enabling the Borrego Days parade and festival to take place.

D. ACTION ITEMS: (Note all items might be taken out of order considering interested individuals at the meeting.)

1. Vote for filling vacant seat #7 candidate Anne O'Connor

Motion: Nancy McRae - Recommend that County BOS appoint Anne Conner for Vacant Seat #7

Second: Bill Haneline

Motion: passed unanimously

McRae asked about timeline for BOS approval. Peterson will be packaging re-appointments with this vote/recommendation and will submit all together within the coming week. Hope to get on BOS agenda before January.

2. Review and comment letter regarding revisions to Board Policy I-1. This policy is up for review at the County and this is our opportunity to comment on potential changes to the Policy. The policy is attached to the agenda. Sponsor Group members please review Board Policy I-1 prior to our June 5 meeting. Peterson comments are included in the Sponsor Group Packet.

Discussion of Peterson's recommendations. Members support recommendations with following caveats:

-Falk recommended word change Section III, page 17 - *Facilitated* by county staff or stricken from the guidelines.

-Falk recommended that we invite County Counsel to a meeting to listen to our concerns about Section II, page 21, Disqualification. Peterson feels the wording needs to be more specific in policy.

-Durbin said the Policy should include guidelines on how to conduct hybrid meetings.

General Comments about Policy: Durbin - the Policy makes it clear about purpose of SG, land-use issues only. We should not write letters about things unrelated to that. Falk wants Peterson to keep bringing up Community Plan Update; we were promised some special things in lieu of not doing community plan. John gave Becky permission to be “squeaky wheel” on that. Falk - page 12, 2nd paragraph, minority opinions may be provided, accompanied by a statement as to how many of the members have the opinion, and should be written into 534. McRae to write letter with recommendations for submission to County.

E. NON-ACTION ITEMS:

1. Update regarding the progress regarding CEQA review for upgrades and expansion to power conveyance system through Borrego Valley. Presentation Bri Fordem and David Garmon. *Note: Technical discussion moved rapidly - these notes are not comprehensive.*

Fordem: Cal Independent System Operator (CSIO) approval of a line from Imperial County to north of San Onofre. Nextera, aka Horizon West out of Florida, awarded contract to build. Putting a formal application to PUC identifying exact path of line. Initial report plans to go through State Park using existing utility line. Minimize impacts going through existing rights of way. Total line is 140 miles; minimize miles through park. Will be expanding existing line, but we won't have specifics until they make the application.

Couple different things: ABF mission is to preserve the park. Want to make sure that agencies are totally aware of all impacts to the park, scenic highways, visitors to the park, community. All new bills are coming out in January. ABF will be looking for legislation that wants to fast track CEQA. They will support opposition to legislation which would make expansion of existing right of ways exempt from CEQA. Mission is to keep tabs and educate, inform agencies and legislators that their decisions may have adverse impacts on the Park.

PUC in last phase of reviewing administrative adjustment of 3 state agencies CSIO, PUC, Cal Energy Commission determine capacity needs. address capacity, approve line. Agencies need to speed up approval to meet renewable energy goals. The issue is that they are not taking into consideration environmental impacts that actually benefit the climate and the state of California. We want to have a voice at the table. New process will be finalized in January. Has been in communication with Nextera. They have agreed to meet, so that is good. Once they apply to PUC, they have to go through stakeholder engagement. They were open and transparent in recent Palomar meeting.

Timeline, early 2026 application will be submitted. It then opens up another opportunity to present an alternate route. “Intervener funding” - protecting ratepayers (not about environmental protections) by funding alternative routes. ABF will soon have a page up on website about all this. Fordem cited example of Sunrise Highway project - it was found that the energy to be transmitted was not actually needed, but instead of discontinuing project PUC had promised the utility company so they went ahead with moving line outside Park even though it cost the ratepayers substantially more.

Q Falk: When you post page, will you have ways for public to participate? A: Yes, if there is a way. As a 5013c, we have parameters on what we can ask constituents to do. California has committed to 30 x 30 initiative to preserve 30% of Calif waterfront and open areas. There is conflict between the agencies in meeting this goal.

Q Haneline: Towers are same size as Sunrise? A: Assume yes. Come in different looks and designs, but most likely the “praying mantis” design with four legs that offer stability in rugged terrain.

Fordem: Complexity of this line because it's starting outside SD County, and the amount of different property owners, BLM, Cal Fish and Wildlife, etc. etc. This is why it takes so long to do environmental review. Some land is federal, some state. Also, this line is not even going to be serving the needs of San Diegans - it is for other parts of California.

Q Shannon Smith, MOP (Member of Public): Will this line be under Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) jurisdiction? (FERC regulates interstate transmission) A: Not sure, but will look into that.

Q: What is a win for the park? A: Having no line in the park is best option. Next best would be a line that is minimized and goes around some of the most visited, resource dense or protected areas. A real win would be in the process of application, re-route the line to serve energy needs and ratepayers. Would love to see it go through other corridors. For example, SW Power line is 40 years old - let's use that line. Other lines could be

available for use - using corridors already in use. Can add up to 50% more power on a line. Priority appears to be going as fast as the POU (Privately owned utilities like SDGE) can - not in our best interest. Systems are skewed to line pockets of utility businesses and not Californians.

2. Update regarding Public Works project at Christmas Circle, James Bleacher/Ryan Lan presenting from the Public Works Department County of San Diego.

Bleacher, Project Manager: Glad to hear that Borrego Days went well. Overall view - pouring concrete everyday but can't pour if wind is over 20 mph. Plan is to have everything poured on Palm Canyon and Sunset by end of next week. Will drill footings for shade structures on Tuesday, pouring concrete Thursday and Friday. Week before Thanksgiving is clean-up and paving. Should be substantially complete by 11/22. At that point, project is on suspension until New Year. Still waiting for shade structures - on second delay that they have no control over. Expect receipt of structures 12/17, so will wait until after holidays. Will mobilize on 1/6/2025 to install - will take 2 weeks max. Shade structures are going on Sunset where sidewalk is being widened 4 1/2 feet. Shade structures have a bench, two poles and a roof - a way to get out of the sun. Provides a link between Christmas Circle and library.

Q Falk: Flashing lights at crosswalk? A: Flashing beacons are expected end of next week, install the following week 11/18. Only needs 2 - 3 days.

Q MOP: Will parking next to BAI be gone? A: No parking is going to be affected. Not eliminating any parking on Palm Canyon or Sunset. Shade structures will be 10 1/2 feet from the street. Installation and touch up of striping is last phase.

3. Update on the landscaping surrounding the La Casa Del Zorro solar array. Vivian Wilkie, GM presenting for La Casa Del Zorro. Matt Weil, with LLC that owns resort.

Weil: Thanked community for their patience. Asked SG what was initial expectation for that area? Falk: Community was not happy with look of fence and wanted make it more pleasing. There was talk of landscaping, fence art, etc. Landscaper was brought in. Mcrae mentioned new community welcome sign that will go on the site and suggested best to wait until design is finalized so that there can be a coherent look.

Wilkie: Contact with a muralist. Paint on the fence - a desert scape/cacti/mountains. No irrigation in area. Could implement a few plants. Dax: Some creosote already establishing itself there. Creating a mural calls attention to the fencing. Native plants once established don't require much irrigation.

Q Weil: Are all sides of the fence equally important? Durbin: Fence materials chosen to be hardy, but gives them an industrial look. Falk: Getting agreement on the mural and maintaining it - doesn't sound like a great idea. Berkley: didn't they bring water right under the road to wash the solar panels? A: They filled two abandoned wells. McRae: All sides of fence are important and there is a road visibility issue with the corner of the 4 way intersection. MOP: Sandra Bodie - Use boulders for landscaping. Peterson: Suggested field trip to site. Peterson, Burbin, McRae to visit.

5. Update regarding the Borrego Springs welcome sign design. Nancy McRae and Bruce Durbin presenting.

First phase of survey was completed in January with statistically significant results. Borrego Valley Endowment Fund (BVEF) and Borrego Village Association (BVA) provided funding to hire 3 professional community identification designers who came back with 14 incredible designs. Committee narrowed down to 3. These are available to comment and vote on in the current survey. Already have over 200 responses. Can vote via QR code online. Drop hard-copy surveys at ABDNHA and BAI shops. Survey available in English and Spanish. Encouraging public input through year-end, then will finalize results, present to public and seek funding to build one to three new signs.

F. GROUP BUSINESS:

1. Expiration date of January 6, 2025 for BSCSG seats 1,3, 5, and 9, Durbin, Haneline, Haldeman, and Berkley. Recommend to re-appoint all.

2. Reconsideration of time and date of future BSCSG meetings.

Dax is in SD on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, but as current time works for everyone else, he will manage to be in BS first Wednesday of each month. Was agreed to keep current time. Peterson requested that everyone let him know well in advance of meeting whether they will be there in person or not to establish a quorum.

3. Subcommittee Reports: None

4. Meeting Updates: None

5. Correspondence received:

1) email from Dalin Young SDG&E on status of microgrid updates and battery storage

2) Scoping letter issued on the Rams Hill Specific Plan Amendment

G. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: McRae

Second: Berkley

Approved: Meeting adjourned at 6:45.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2024 at 4:30 at the Borrego Springs Library Community Room, 2850 Country Club Rd, Borrego Springs, California and via Zoom.

The Chair has appointed the following BSCSG Members to serve as points of contact for the following areas:

- a) Road Maintenance, Bill Haneline
- b) Dark Sky Ordinance and issues, Rebecca Falk
- c) Association of Planning Groups, Jim Dax
- d) Review of the Sponsor Groups rules of order, Rebecca Falk

Emails sent to the Chair at petersonenv@hotmail.com will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

Also potential topics for the December agenda include: 1) Scoping letter regarding the Rams Hill Project, 2) Update from SDG&E regarding enhancements to the Borrego micro grid, 3) County of San Diego Park Land Dedication Ordinance Priority List, and 4) review of the Sponsor Groups rules of order.

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For further information and to be added to the Sponsor Group email list to receive agendas and agenda packets, contact the Chair at petersonenv@hotmail.com . Address U.S. mail to: Community Sponsor Group, P.O. Box 1371, Borrego Springs, CA 92004-1371. For agendas, minutes and Community Plan, visit: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/gpupdate/comm/borrego.html> .

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Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group Members:

Chairperson: John Peterson Vice-Chairperson: Judy Haldeman, Secretary: Nancy McRae

Members: Bill Berkley, Jim Dax, Bruce Durbin, Bill Haneline, Rebecca Falk, Seat #7 open.

Standing Committees (with both Sponsor Group members and members of the public): None