

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOULEVARD PLANNING GROUP  
\*\*\*FINAL MINUTES/SUMMARY FOR JUNE 12, 2014\*\*\***

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 7:00 PM, Thursday, June 12, 2014** at Boulevard Community Center located east of the Boulevard Fire Station

**A. ROLL CALL (Determination of quorum):**

- Members present: **1) Robert Maupin 2) Earl Goodnight 3) Chris Noland; 4) Donna Tisdale; 5) Michele Strand; 6) Paula Byrd**
- **7) Jeffrey McKernan – absent/excused.**

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**C. APPROVE MINUTES FOR MAY 8TH MEETING:**

- The secretary did not complete draft minutes prior to meeting time, so review/approval was deferred until the next meeting.

**E. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION:**

- A Rural Leadership Academy presentation on the backcountry's trash situation was provided by Michelle and Kristy Daubach. They serve from Campo/Lake Morena to Jacumba.
- Identified trash dumping as a shared problem among the 5 communities.
- All commercial rates locally; no residential rates for waste /recycling collection program.
- Locals pay a monthly fee equal to what most people pay annually for trash collection.
- Looking at Riverside for examples of what to do: Yearly fee on property tax of \$116 per year.
- We already pay a state fee (SRA) that doesn't really do anything directly, so a fee that we see the benefit from might be acceptable to folks.
- Meeting with Diane Jacob is planned for a presentation.
- Community ideas are welcome.
- The Chair added that Boulevard used to have a County transfer facility, but the County sold their landfills and privatized waste collection. Allied ran the rural collections sites but closed them when deemed economically unsustainable.
- EDCO raised the rates the last two years. It now above \$150 per month for a dumpster.
- They will report back how the meeting with Diane Jacob went.
- (From end of meeting) Bob Maupin gave update on his 30-40 year road discussions with County; the DPW sent him a map that was filed in 1973 that shows the portion of the "T" is an easement granted to the County for access; Maupin is requesting the Group vote to add the project to the priority list for road improvements; Maupin will send Chair an email requesting addition to next agenda.

**F. ACTION ITEMS:**

- 1. AT&T SD0716 MANZANITA LTE OPTIMAL; PDS2014-STP-14-009 2424: 4G LTE UPGRADE OF EXISTING CELL SITE AT 2424 RIBBONWOOD ROAD AND I-8; APN 612-021-03-00:**

***ACTION: M/S: MAUPIN/NOLAND: Motion to accept the proposed upgrade to the cell site. Passed 5-0-1 (Tisdale abstained/McKernan absent)***

Summary of discussion:

- Joanne Stoddard gave the information about the upgrade.
- The Chair reported visiting the site with applicant and staff
- Discussion of existing site and equipment on commercial property.
- Questions were raised on area of increased coverage, 4G upgrade, and the need for backup generator for coverage during wildfires and other emergencies when power goes out. Lack of on-site well for landscaping. Other related projects.
- The Chair stated she could not support the project based on her research, including information from the USFWS, related to microwave radiation from cell facilities and adverse impacts on people and wildlife
- Only AT&T customers benefit.

**2. NEW VERIZON WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY: VZW I-8 BOULEVARD; PDS2014-STP-14-011 (STP14-011) STP 14-01:**

***ACTION: M/S: NOLAND/MAUPIN: Motion to support the new cell site on the condition that all water is brought in from non groundwater sources. Passed 5-0-1. (Tisdale abstained/McKernan absent).***

Summary of discussion:

- Project site is on commercial property at Ribbonwood Road and Four C's Ranch Road on APN 612-021-04, just north of I-8 and just south of the new Boulevard Border Patrol Station.
- Ms. Morgan Chee of M&M Telecom, Inc. presented the project information.
- The Chair reported visiting the site with applicant and County staff
- It was confirmed that co-location with existing sites, was not an option.
- The fairly low profile and camouflaged site on a commercial property, adjacent to the new Boulevard Border Patrol station with tall communication tower, was deemed less invasive than some sites.
- Specific concerns and objections were raised with cumulative impacts from a proliferation of large-scale energy, transmission and communications projects and use of local and regional groundwater sources for construction.
- Applicant agreed to seek out non-groundwater sources.
- Increased coverage map was shown.
- Planner Maupin reported that we are getting jammed by signals from Mexico (proven by Verizon engineer).
- The US is not allowed to aim antennas towards Mexico, so coverage is difficult to get in neighborhoods that are too close to the border.
- Mexico apparently does not follow the same rules.

- The County generally does not like the cell companies to place towers on private property.
- No generator proposed for this site.
- A community member asked if the cell site would continue to operate during a wildfire.
- Ms. Chee responded that the plans are examined and signed off by the Fire Marshall to ensure safety.
- The entire project property was cleared (without a permit) several years ago, per the Chair.
- Planner Byrd wanted the construction water source identified.
- Doug Munson from M&M Telecom, Inc. , seemed confused over groundwater issues at first, but replied that they would bring the water via water truck from an urban area, to avoid using local groundwater.
- They are balancing brush clearing with sensitive biological resources.
- The Chair repeated concerns about the proliferation of cell sites in our area, the radiation caused by the electrical facilities and cumulative the effects on the residents and wild life.
- A community member asked how electric service will connect, by electrical wiring or wireless.
- Ms. Chee responded that electrical wiring will be extended from existing poles on the property.
- Doug Munson agreed to ask the Construction Manager to put it on the plans prior to approval that the no groundwater will be used and water will be brought from elsewhere.

### **3. PARKLAND DEDICATION ORDINANCE AND BOULEVARD PROJECT PRIORITY LIST (PLDO):**

- Sean O'Neill , Park Project Manager, County of San Diego Park and Recreation was present to answer questions on the PLDO assist with selection of priority projects:  
sean.o'neill@sdcounty.ca.gov ; 858 966-1355
- O'Niell came to support the process of determining Project priorities. They are visiting all Planning Groups to get their input, annually.
- Process begins again in July 2014. It is not necessary to make a new list for last year, since the fiscal year is almost over.
- Requirements are that PLDO funds be used for active recreation purposes, gently sloping land (max 10% grade), or in a planned development; open lawn, sports fields, court games, swimming pools, children's play areas, picnic areas and recreation buildings.
- PLDO funding does not include natural open space, nature study areas, open space for buffer areas, steep slopes, golf courses, riding and hiking trails, scenic overlooks, water courses, drainage areas, water boundaries, marinas, and boating and parking areas, or archeology.
- O'Neill offered to help find other grants for the maps and signs for Boulevard
- Community Garden Project would work.
- Additional projects can be developed, so long as they meet the criteria
- Chair commented that this is difficult in Boulevard since the only public property is the current Fire / Sheriff station located at the northeast corner of Ribbonwood and Old Hwy 80.
- It was agreed that we must find a way to secure this site in order to have any hope of a Community Center and Recreation Area.
- The Local Park Planning area for Boulevard includes Jacumba, Campo, Potrero, and Pine Valley – which have historically received a majority of the funds for these projects. Boulevard is always left in the dust with nothing.

- The Chair shared that in the past the school district was never agreeable to giving public access
- Tammy Daubach said that may have changed with new leadership at the district.
- If the school allowed public access for a pocket park, it would be from dawn to dusk, and no school activities could be taking place.
- We tried before, and now we will try again. It is a way to get some facilities up here for the public.
- Board member Noland brought up that this grant cannot be used to acquire land, but Mr. O'Neill thought it could. He will check into it.
- **No Action necessary**

#### **4. 2.9 MW "SEPV BOULEVARD" SOLAR PROJECT PRESENTATION:**

***ACTION: M/S: MAUPIN/NOLAND: Motion that the Boulevard Planning Group does not support Solar Electric Solutions, Inc's proposed SEPV Boulevard Solar project. Approved 6-0-0. (McKernan absent)***

Summary of discussion:

- Mike Stern and Freeman Hall of Solar Electric Solutions, Inc. were present for their 2.9MW solar project proposed for 24 acres of a 130 acre Chapman Ranch parcel.
- The Chapman Ranch property is located at 2220 McCain Valley Road, immediately north of I-8 on the west side of McCain Valley Road.
- Property owner, Bruce Chapman, was also present.
- Freeman Hall gave the presentation.
- There is a Power Purchase Agreement contract in place to sell energy to SDG&E under the REMAT (Renewable Market Adjusting Tariff) program (3Mws or smaller) that is similar to the RAM program.
- Both programs are sponsored by the CPUC.
- Chair reported she could not find any evidence of the Power Purchase Agreement
- Gen-tie interconnects to new Boulevard Substation will using existing 12kV distribution line on property and McCain Valley Road.
- One home is located northwest of Chapman's property and that owner supports the project.
- Chair reported that another property owner does not support the project.
- The line on the poles would be changed out to thicker lines to increase capacity
- Questions were raised on increasing carrying capacity that could be used by other projects.
- Freeman said the gauge of wire would not hold more than 3MW, and this project is 2.9
- They won't pay for anything bigger than that because it's at their cost.
- Applicants stated that energy generated from project would be used locally.
- Chair pointed out our whole community only uses about 2MW, as confirmed when we were taken off-grid for Kumeyaay Wind project reconductoring.
- We already have the 50 MW Kumeyaay Wind , and several hundred more MW proposed.
- Freeman said this project started as a larger project and has been cut down, to about 1/5 in size.

- They met with Dianne Jacob about a year ago and understand that the County is sensitive to the communities' interests.
- The permitting process is understandably rigorous.
- Board member Maupin questioned the 20-30 jobs and that no (or few) jobs are actually obtained by locals.
- Freeman said the unions have a lot to do with that and that this project does not necessarily have to be union. They would prefer non-union themselves.
- The Chair asked if they have been successful in evading Project Labor Agreements (PLAs)
- Freeman said that they have built projects with and without them.
- Freeman confirmed Chair's question about his previous employment with Ted Turner.
- 3-4 months, 20-30 jobs during construction, one full time job after construction; Mr. Chapman would likely have a job, plus an off-site worker.
- 2 acre feet of water during construction, from off-site sources; .1 acre foot of water per year for normal operations (washing panels),
- No night time lighting, traffic, no noise.
- Freeman thought only Mr. Chapman would be able to hear the inverter noise
- The Chair noted that Chapman's closest neighbors and the wild life would be impacted by the noise that includes low frequency noise and infrasound that carries long distances.
- Freeman said the project would not be visible from McCain Valley Road or I-8.
- Chair responded that Mr. Chapman's property is visible from both McCain Valley Road and I-8 westbound.
- Freeman said the 6 foot tall units will be located in the center of the property, down in a bowl.
- Board member Maupin asked about glare to aircraft.
- Freeman answered that FAA authorizes these systems. Tracking system chases the sun. Glare is possible, but they are not mirrors.
- Maupin shared the "lake effect" concern.
- The Chair shared a photo giving an example of a project near Joshua Tree where birds are mistaking the panels for a lake and killing or harming themselves.
- The Lake effect is still being studied.
- Chair said it is emerging as more and more information is coming in. Unexpected impact.
- Freeman said this is an important topic but in this case the gaps between the arrays are 2 to 3 times as other projects.
- Chair asked if this project is similar to their projects in San Bernardino County, other than size, and shared some photographs from company website.
- Freeman denied lake effect was a problem but admitted they are adjusting the tilt to mitigate it.
- The Chair asked him to confirm that must be some evidence since they admit they are now working to counter the lake effect.
- Freeman said that there is no evidence; there are just concerns that have been raised.
- Chair asked if the Forensic Report from the US Fish and Wildlife is wrong.
- Freeman responded "let's not go there", but that if there is concern, then they want to address concerns. That's what the permit process requires them to do.
- Run-off, drainage, and wash issues will be looked at.
- The cultural issues are a big concern but they have not yet done a study.

- The Quino Checkerspot Butterfly was not found during their study last year, but Chair noted we've been in a drought for a long time.
- Some native wildflowers were found on site too.
- The Biological consultant is Phoenix Biological out of Pinion Hills (near Apple Valley).
- Maupin asked if they plan to flip this project
- Since they are a small company, they do lose control of the project during construction, because they cannot finance it themselves.
- Freeman said most projects are \$2-3million per MW but smaller projects of this size are \$7-8 million dollars per MW to build.
- Freeman offered that one mitigation measure could be helping us get park land.
- Board member Maupin said his lawyer said "mitigation" is weasel word.
- Maupin reported that his wife was diagnosed with cancer and other health impacts after the Southwest Powerlink was constructed and energized through their property. His concerns are stray electricity and health effects.
- The Chair reported increased ground currents can come up through water pipes and electricity lines into people's homes. That is already being documented in some impacted homes, along with phone line interference, per the Chair.
- Freeman said he was not qualified to answer that
- Linda Shannon asked about cultural resources and oak trees being cut down.
- Freeman said they don't know yet; Chapman didn't think any trees would be removed.
- Kevin Keane commented that if the new jobs are not union, then they may be low paying.
- Freeman said the PV trackers, made by ATI, can handle 110-120mph winds.
- They track 45 degrees throughout course of day. They go flat during high wind over 65-70mph
- Keane raised safety concerns with tracker failure and heavy airborne debris.
- Stern said they have never had one tear apart, just bend in a high wind microburst. They will get back to us about questions on actual failure.
- Chair said some solar panels flew apart at the high school during recent high winds clocked around 90-100mph; a giant dust devil took off 60 feet of her ranch barn roof during an otherwise clear and sunny day.
- Board member Paula Byrd asked where the water was coming from.
- They answered Imperial County; which was challenged as feasible.
- Freeman and Sterns said they use very little water, but conditions can be placed on water sources.
- Local concerns include visual impacts and glare; McCain Valley is a tourism draw.
- Chair commented that while we understand Mr. Chapman's goals, and would like him to be able to earn a nice living, the project may serve as a "foot in the door" for other projects, as we've seen before.
- They put one project in, then call our area blighted and use that for an excuse to put more in, all while changing our community plan and land use plans in order to be able to do it, including the County, BLM and the Forest Service.
- Tule Lake is close and the Old Mistletoe Lodge property on Old 80 near the project has spring fed pond, both attract sensitive species, and worsen lake effect impacts.

- Chair received complaints from San Bernardino residents of similar projects built near them by same company with no community notice, increased dust and bad air quality, increased haboobs (sand storms), use of 10 times as much water as estimated, and loss of property tax, among other things.
- Community Groups and the Boulevard Planning Group have supported solar installations at the Border Patrol facility and the schools, and has even asked local casinos if they would consider on-site solar projects, rather than putting in wind turbines and converting undeveloped lands.
- If the Group approves this project, it can be used as leverage against us the in the future on other projects.
- The community spent 14 years on a community plan and thought we had succeeded, we are in designated wildfire corridor, and this project makes it more difficult to fight fires in the area.
- Retired fire fighters aren't afraid to tell the truth about how the method of fire fighting would change if these projects were built.
- We already have two 500kv lines running through, two 130kv lines going in now when they only clearly disclosed one line; we are already paying the price.
- Stern sitting in the audience, said that he knows the truth and that we are insulting the bird's intelligence if we think that Lake Affect is real. He said that birds are not dive bombing into solar panels.
- Stern implied that his opinion was educated and others were not.
- Chair argued that yes, birds are dive bombing solar projects mistaking them for water; their dead bodies are being hauled off from the sites.
- The Chair reported talking to biologists who said they could lose their jobs if they speak publicly about this due to pressure from the solar industry to suppress emerging information.
- Stern commented that Chair may be biased.
- The Chair said she is biased toward protecting the community and suggested that Stern may also be biased since he earns his living from solar.
- Stern admitted that, yes, he may be biased in favor of his own project.
- Chair read her one page list of project concerns (copies were included in agenda package)

**F. GROUP BUSINESS:** Announcements; correspondence; discussion items; project updates

**1. REVITALIZATION REPORT:**

- Tammy Daubach gave the report.
- Only 2 kids attended the last free program at school (drugs and alcohol). If there is no attendance, we will lose the free programs.
- Start smart for driving was cancelled because one 1 kid signed up.
- We need bulletin boards to get the info to the parents.
- Trash Presentation by the Michelle and Kristy Daubach was added to the Matrix at the Diane Jacob Revitalization meeting.
- Paving of Hwy 94 and Old Hwy 80 costs \$ 1 million per mile. We have to prove the damaged roads are caused by the construction.

- The EIRs should prove that because they estimate how many vehicle trips per day, etc.
- A new sheriff's station has been confirmed to be going in across the street; now in the Matrix.
- Jacumba Centennial had over 400 attendees and they raised \$10k for corporate funding. Local restaurants and businesses did well with the extra tourism.
- Mountain Empire Health Clinic is having ground breaking July 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Mountain Empire Children's Summer Camp is free 7/7-7/11.

## **2. FIRE SAFE COUNCIL REPORT:**

- Fire fees are still in effect this year with a cost living increase.
- The council met with Diane Jacob on May 27<sup>th</sup> about the fire service in the back country.
- Fire Warden said the ISO rating has not changed in 13 years.
- A review will happen soon and the rating number should go down.
- The County is considering an ambulance for our area.
- The word "volunteer" should be removed from Boulevard Fire, since now the station is technically a paid station through stipends to Cal Fire firefighters.
- Developers need to fund staff, not equipment for fire fighting.
- Fire Safe Council voted to approve those recommendations.
- New invasive species in El Cajon now.
- The Shot Hole Borer came from Vietnam and Taiwan.
- Eats 1500 species of plants, not just one like the Golden Spotted Oak Borer.
- BLM has new fire restrictions due to the drought.
- No fireworks, no firearms, no burning, off road vehicles must have spark arresters, campfires, BBQ's and gas stoves must have permit.
- First recorded state-wide drought.
- All Cal Fire stations with 1 engine must have 4 fire fighters.
- Boulevard Fire Department should be completed by December 2014.
- We will get a new division and Chief in July.
- July 17<sup>th</sup> preparations being made for a "Meet your Officials" dinner with possibly Border Patrol, Sheriffs and Fire Fighters in Boulevard.
- Cleveland Fire Station is at full staff.

**3. SOITEC SOLAR PROJECTS (PDS2012-3910-120005): DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT (DPEIR) REPORT FOR FOUR BOULEVARD PROJECTS WITH 7,409-8,415 CPV SOLAR TRACKERS @ 1,200 SQ FT EACH:**

- Chair reported being pleasantly surprised when Project Manager Robert Hingtgen responded this week that the consultant had not provided all responses to comments yet.
- If the responses are provided in the next few weeks then Planning Commission and Board hearings may be held in February 2015.
- Chair also reported that, through a somewhat convoluted response and memo, the County now considers Rough Acres Ranch Water Company a Mutual Water Company.
- Consultant Jim Whalen reported the foundation had been fully set up with the Mountain Empire School District to receive mitigation funds of \$1,000 per MW for projects.
- Whalen said they are responding to the massive number of comments and expect the DEIR out this fall
- Chair asked Whalen about another comment in the Administrative Record from a land bank asking about Miller Valley being included in mitigation for Soitec.
- Whelan said Miller Valley does not work for Soitec.
- Mitigation must be in the right place, near certain areas, etc.
- In response to Chair's request for update on Lansing's potential loss of Empire Ranch, Whalen responded that Lansing had reportedly sold Big Country Ranch and had made a deal to with the Haagen's to keep Empire Ranch.

**4. NOTICE OF PREPARATION, INITIAL STUDY & REQUEST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR ROUGH ACRES RANCH CAMPGROUND/CONFERENCE CENTER MUP: PDS2012-3300-12-021 (MUP):**

- Whelan said most lake effect studies are anecdotal, but that clearly something is happening out there.
- Whalen reported he approached John Gibson about an Oak Nursery as an idea for mitigation, it would need to be included as cumulative project in the EIR
- Whalen also mentioned the County's Comprehensive Renewable Energy Plan and consultants (M Power?) hired to try to help rationalize the project; He asked if the Chair had been contacted as he had recommended.
- Chair confirmed she had been contacted but no meeting had been set yet.

**5. ROUGH ACRES RANCH ROAD MAJOR GRADING PERMIT: PDS2011-2700-15622: APPLICANT GREGG HAMANN:**

- Whalen reported the grading permit is moving along

**6. ECO SUBSTATION: A COMPLAINT & SDG&E'S RESPONSE HAVE BEEN FILED WITH THE CPUC ON SDG&E'S WATER SUPPLY PLAN:**

**7. APPEAL PENDING FOR MARCH 25 COURT RULING SUPPORTING BLM'S APPROVAL OF IBERDROLA'S 200 MW TULE WIND:**

- Chair confirmed that Tule Wind has no Power Purchase Agreement and no Eagle Take Permit and an appeal challenging the court's upholding of BLM approval is pending.

**8. TULE WIND PHASE II:**

- Nothing new to report; Tule Wind lease with State Lands Commission is still pending.

**9. WIND ENERGY ORDINANCE AND PLAN AMENDMENT:**

- Chair confirmed that a Notice of Appeal had been filed on the April 25<sup>th</sup> Superior Court ruling upholding the County's ordinance and Boulevard Community Plan Amendment.

**10. SEMPRA'S CROSS-BORDER HIGH VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE, WITH IMPORT CAPACITY OF 1,250 MW TO CONNECT THEIR ENERGIA SIERRA JUAREZ WIND IN BAJA CALIFORNIA WITH SDG&E'S NEW ECO-SUBSTATION:**

- Nothing new to report.

**H. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:00 PM/NEXT REGULAR MEETING SET FOR JULY 3RD, 2014:**

Minutes approved as written by Group on 7-3-14

Michele Strand, Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

For More information contact Donna Tisdale, Chair at 619-766-4170; [tisdale.donna@gmail.com](mailto:tisdale.donna@gmail.com)