

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOULEVARD PLANNING GROUP  
\*\*\*FINAL MINUTES/SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER 6, 2014\*\*\***

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 7:00 PM, Thursday, November 6, 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) Vacant 4) Donna Tisdale; 5) Michele Strand; 6) Paula Byrd 7) Jeffrey McKernan**
- Kevin Keane submitted an application to fill vacant seat #3.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**C. APPROVE MINUTES FOR OCTOBER MEETING:**

- The minutes were not ready for review and/or approval in time for the meeting. Postponed until the December meeting.

**E. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION:**

- **TEAME Report:** The long-term goal is permanent trash removal service in the back country. Until that happens, the one-time FREE debris removal days we had in Boulevard, Jacumba, and Campo were a huge success! Removed: 714 tires, 31.89 tons of trash, 15,000 pounds of hazardous waste, appliances, etc. in Campo. This will become an annual event. A huge thank you to the volunteers who made this happen!
- Linda Shannon is concerned about 3 wells on Rough Acres Ranch that are reportedly pumping water into a holding tank then filling a pond. She submitted two 2014 Google aerial photos showing the pond location, what appears to be fresh earth movement, and location of wells in the Tule Creek floodplain near her home. She is having her well tested in December to start monitoring the water levels.
- The Chair asked the audience if anyone had experienced their well levels dropping. Laura McKernan said that their well had gone down 40 feet this year alone. The Chair commented on the number of trees dying within the last month or so, especially near Cedar Pines (by Hi Pass Camp in TDS) a whole row of pine trees are now dead. Live Oak Springs should be called Dead Oak Springs and along I-8 between Pine Valley and Japatul Road, the oaks and scrub oaks are dying. Jeff McKernan noticed more dead trees near Sacred Rocks on Shasta.
- The Chair said that property owners are allowed to pump water unless there is a Major Use Permit restriction or others can prove damages.
- The Chair also reported seeing lines of trucks (lights) going into Rough Acres after dark on several occasions. She asked if anyone else noticed the traffic, or if they were water trucks. Paula Byrd reported seeing trucks leaving early in the morning, but she could not see what type of trucks they were. Questions were raised over parking /storage of construction equipment for other projects at Rough Acres, and if it is a permitted use.
- Bob Maupin reported a "propaganda piece" bill insert from SDG&E regarding electromagnetic fields not being dangerous and stated that his wife suffers from cancer they believe was triggered when the Southwest Powerlink that runs through their ranch was energized. The World Health Organization completed a review of potential implications of extreme low frequency EMF that include power frequency field, etc. The report concluded that evidence for a link between magnetic fields and childhood leukemia is not strong enough to be considered casual, but sufficiently strong to remain a concern. The Chair said that SDG&E seems to repeats old information while ignoring new research.

## **F. ACTION ITEMS:**

### **1. ELECT NEW VICE-CHAIR:**

- It was concluded that there was no reason to wait until January.

**M/S: STRAND/MAUPIN: *To nominate and elect Paula Byrd as Vice Chair of the Boulevard Planning Group:***

**Approved 6-0-0**

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

### **1. REVITALIZATION REPORT:**

- Tammy Daubach reported that the Center for Community Solutions is located within the Mt. Empire Community Center. There are two attorneys working to help with domestic violence and sexual assault issues, restraining orders, etc.
- There is a Tumbleweed Contest being sponsored by the Boulevard/Jacumba Revitalization Committee. First place is \$300.
- Mt. Empire Health is putting on their annual Country Christmas Party including Santa's Gift Shop and breakfast in Jacumba Hot Springs. Same event will be held in Campo with a dinner on December 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Soitec is also sponsoring a Christmas Party for the Clover Flat School on December 5th.
- On December 6<sup>th</sup>, Jacumba Hot Springs is having a Feliz Navidad Centennial Year End Celebration from 2-5:00pm.
- The November/December hiking schedule is available. Call Tammy for details.
- There is a community meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 regarding the want/need of a Community Center for Boulevard. Mountain Health representative and long-time backcountry resident Judith Shaplin will speak.
- Backcountry revitalization meeting with Diane Jacob is December 11<sup>th</sup> at the Campo Community Center.

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

- The next Fire Safe Council meeting is November 29<sup>th</sup> at the Boulevard Fire Dept. Training Room. Election of Board Members is on the agenda. There are currently 4 openings.
- Campo Fire Auxiliary will be holding their spaghetti dinner this Sunday, November 11th from 4:00-7:00pm.

### **3. NOTICE OF VACANCY FOR SEAT #3:**

- Chair reported that Kevin Keane has turned in the only application for seat #3, to date.

### **4. CHAIR'S REPORT: DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN (DRECP) DRAFT DEIR/EIS MEETING IN EL CENTRO ON OCTOBER 20<sup>TH</sup>:**

- The Chair attended the DRECP hearing in El Centro and saw
- Folks came all the way from Lucerne Valley and echoed our calls for a longer comment period.
- The agenda package includes a letter from California Desert Real Energy Working Group that includes signatures from Iberdrola, Sierra Club, solar companies, other environmental groups; they are all saying they need more time.
- There are a half dozen other letters posted on the website, all asking for an extended comment period.

- Jeff McKernan asked what type of stream-lining are they trying to accomplish.
- The Chair suggested that it would be sort of like what Jim Whalen has been trying to do here in Boulevard, with an Energy Overlay Zone for certain areas.
- Whalen said that it's not so much of an overlay zone, but an area where they've analyzed the impacts and decided it was more suitable there, than elsewhere. It doesn't approve anything, it's like MSCP.
- The Chair suggested it was like a "pre-certification". For instance, if you go to that area, you have a better chance of getting your project through.
- Whalen said the main outcome is an attempt to keep together the open space areas and prevent fragmented. He said it's basically just like what the East County Planning would be like when it's finished, because this is about 70% public land.
- Whalen and the Chair pondered the amount of public land in the proposal, and amount of Imperial Valley farm land.
- Whalen said he's hearing they are trying to pull away from the Imperial Valley farm land and put it in Niland, near the Salton Sea. There is no farming there, but there are migratory birds.
- The Chair surmised that the extension would be granted (albeit premeditated in her opinion).
- Whalen said the DRECP document is about 8,000 pages.
- The Chair reminded us that the Sunrise Powerlink documents were about 12,000 pages.
- Chair talked to representatives from the California Energy Commission, the Wildlife Agencies.
- Many questions posed to various staff by the Chair and others were not answered.
- The DRECP includes new 500kV transmission lines through San Diego County but you no acreage is included for those lines.
- Staff would respond by saying, send me an email, "I'll get back to you on that". A famous catch phrase.

5. **REPORT ON AXIO POWER HOLDINGS LLC'S 19 ACRE CAMERON SOLAR PROJECT & STAR RANCH DISCUSSIONS AT CAMPO BUILDING GROUP MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 27<sup>TH</sup>:**

- Both projects are proposed for the Campo Valley.
- Maps were provided in the agenda package; they will need to grade the edge of a hill for the proposed solar project.
- The Chair reported that Axio Power is part of Sun Edison, who just bought some solar projects down in Imperial Valley.
- This project will connect to the nearby transmission line that is part of San Diego's Master Special Use Permit; that line is being increased from a single phase to a double phase with some upgrade work at the Cameron Substation on Buckman Springs. This project will benefit from that, in the Chair's opinion
- The Chair commented that if Star Ranch master planned project fails, renewable energy projects will likely come next.

6. **UPDATE ON STATUS OF \$100 MILLION LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST THE COUNTY, SUPERVISOR JACOB, DONNA TISDALE, BOULEVARD PLANNING GROUP, AND OTHERS BY VARIOUS ENTITIES RELATED TO DEVELOPER GREGORY LANSING:**

- The County filed their Motion to Strike for themselves and Supervisor Jacob.
- The attorney the County hired for the Chair / Boulevard Planning Group also filed a Motion to Strike.
- The attorney for the non-profit group, BAD, also filed a Motion to Strike.

- The Chair stated that in her opinion the statute of limitations had expired for most of Lansing's allegations, he failed to exhaust his administrative remedies, and file appeals, etc.

7. **NEXTERA'S 20MW JACUMBA SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE:**

- Howard Cook had informed the Chair that there was some stoppage of work at the ECO substation due to some rare bats under the bridge on Historic Rt 80.
- Concerns had been raised over bighorn sheep, Golden Eagles, and other wildlife impacts.
- The Chair reported that her daughter had snapped a picture of some bighorn sheep in Mountain Springs standing by the I-8 Island, where they are known to cross.

8. **SDG&E'S ECO SUBSTATION:**

- Approximately 83 million gallons of water used as of the end of September.
- We don't know how much used through October yet.
- SDG&E originally projected 30 million gallons would be needed for construction. They project 90 million gallons or more at this point.
- There were reports that water trucks are rolling through the area mostly at night.
- On a related note, the Chair, Michele Strand, and Kevin Keane commented on witnessing the CHP escorting big rigs hauling wind turbine blades, usually in the evening hours. They were reportedly crossing at Otay Mesa. Who is paying for the CHP's time? Is the developer kicking in for these services? They have blocked traffic going near Mountain Springs, down to 25mph.

9. **TULE WIND'S LEASE APPLICATION HEARING WITH STATE LANDS COMMISSION TO ALLOW WIND TURBINES, ROADS, INFRASTRUCTURE:**

- Nothing new on this.

10. **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:**

- The Chair reported that the County expects to soon be done with their review of the Response to Public Comments that the applicant put forward.
- Today, Soitec made a presentation for the Regional Chamber of Commerce Water & Energy Committee.
- The Chair was invited to do an opposing presentation.
- Jim Whalen, Paula Byrd and Bob Maupin were also present.
- The Chair circulated some handouts that included an article from the Union Tribune.
- When Soitec did their press release they made it sound like they had a brand new contract for a 150 MW which was very misleading.
- The Chair provided information to several reporters and the Union Tribune picked up on it.
- In August a peer review of the Energy Department grant of Soitec raised concerns about the company's ability to compete with less expensive conventional solar panels.
- They talk about moving the projects' Power Purchase Agreement.
- Now the Boulevard projects do not have Power Purchase Agreements and Mr. Crawford confirmed that today.

- Jim Whalen confirmed that the PPAs were moved to Imperial County. It was approved by the PUC last February, per the Chair.
- Jeff McKernan summarized that the PPA's are being amended for different project sites.
- Jim Whalen added that they need to do that in order to keep the factory keeps running.
- Now they have to find someone to buy new ones for Boulevard. The names of the projects stayed the same, even though they moved physically from Boulevard to the Imperial County.
- Even though there are no current PPA's in effect in Boulevard, the developers are still pursuing the Major Use Permits in the hopes that PPA's will be available when the time comes.
- The Chair summarized it as getting an entitlement. You get the land approved for that use and then you sell that deal to whoever feels they can get it done.
- Soitec lost another 150 MW deal last year and that project is now being built on I-8 at Dunaway Road.
- It was supposed to use Soitec CPV, but they amended their contract to eliminate CPV and put in regular photovoltaic solar.
- Soitec's projects are expensive compared to the regular photovoltaic that keeps going down in price.
- CPVs dual tracking are more expensive to build, operate, and maintain.
- Whalen suggested the efficiency makes up for the higher cost.
- The Chair replied only if the trackers are working.
- On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Chair took a drive up to Borrego to take a hike, buy the new Bighorn Sheep book and check out Soitec's new Desert Green CPV project that Invenergy bought.
- The ground at their project is scraped completely bare.
- Fonts Point, a famous viewpoint, will now have a clear view of Soitec's 30' tall CPV project that will glare in the morning sun.
- After all of the pro-con Soitec presentations at the Chamber meeting, everyone left the room so the vote could happen.
- They approved the letter of support for Soitec, not surprisingly.
- Whalen said that the Chamber members did hear what the Chair said, and that there was a spirited discussion. And they are going to bring it back to the policy committee.
- Bottom line is the Energy Committee already supported it.
- Whalen said they thought the Chair was courageous to show up, they surmised that there are good things and bad things with everything, and not everything is perfect all the time, and we hear often, "it's for the greater good".
- Whalen thought they were sympathetic to local impacts.
- All the more reason for everyone to try to attend these meetings. Several people volunteered to attend the next meeting to represent the locals and our impacts.
- Paula Byrd commented that it's shocking how much the advisors don't know, yet they are voting on our life and our future.

11. **NOTICE OF PREPARATION, INITIAL STUDY & REQUEST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR ROUGH ACRES RANCH CAMPGROUND/CONFERENCE CENTER MUP: PDS2012-3300-12-021 (MUP): Public comment closed on May 19<sup>th</sup>:**

- Nothing new.

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

- Nothing new.

13. **IBERDROLA'S 200 MW TULE WIND: OPENING BRIEF WAS FILED OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup> IN NON-PROFIT GROUP'S 9<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT APPEAL OF DISTRICT COURT RULING THAT SUPPORTED BLM APPROVALS FOR THE TULE WIND PROJECT:**

- The Major Use Permit with the County has expired but Tule Wind is negotiating with them to implement their conditions.
- Jim Whalen doesn't know exactly what the conditions are, but that there are a lot of them, over 100. He couldn't guess how many of them they have met so far. Once they are met, then they will become "vested", which means it renews the Major Use Permit.

14. **TULE WIND PHASE II:**

- Nothing new.

15. **NOTICE OF APPEAL FILED FOR WIND ENERGY ORDINANCE AND PLAN AMENDMENT:**

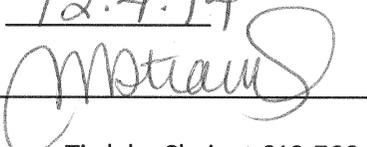
- Nothing new.

16. **SEMPRA'S CROSS-BORDER HIGH VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE, WITH IMPORT CAPACITY OF 1,250 MW, WILL CONNECT THEIR \$300 MILLION ENERGIA SIERRA JAUREZ WIND (ESJ) IN BAJA CALIFORNIA WITH SDG&E'S NEW \$435 MILLION ECO SUBSTATION:**

- Laura McKiernan reported hearing that Mexican property owners were paid \$60k.
- The Chair stated that the property owners are an agricultural cooperative known as Ejido Jacume.
- Ejidos have similarities to tribal governments with the potential for controversy and allegations.

**H. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:45 PM/NEXT REGULAR MEETING SET FOR DECEMBER 4TH, 2014:**

Minutes approved by Group on: 12.4.14

Michele Strand, Secretary: 

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