

CREST-DEHESA-GRANITE HILLS-HARBISON CANYON SUBREGIONAL PLANNING GROUP. Minutes of the meeting on 9 May 2022, at Dehesa School, 4612 Dehesa Road, El Cajon.

A. CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Wally Riggs called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

B. ROLL CALL. Planning Group members Ulm, Nehring, Wessel, Becker, Riggs, Bretz, Lutz-Partain, Scholl, and Page were present, forming a quorum of 9. Members Rich, Manning, and Lucas were absent, but excused. Seat 4, Seat 13 and Seat 14 are vacant.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Member Robert Lutz-Partain moved that the Planning Group approves the minutes of its meeting on 11 April 2022 as submitted by Secretary Bretz. The motion passed (8 yes; 0 no; 1 abstain, Nehring).

E. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION. Mary Ann Vancio, consultant on public trails for Dehesa Valley Community Council, spoke about limitations on, and possibilities for, obtaining County funding to sustain and support public riding and hiking trails; she suggested that it would be instructive and useful to visit the Department of Parks and Recreation website, which is providing information and an online survey (available until 15 May) about the current San Diego River Trail project.

Planning Group member Eutha Scholl reported that the granddaughter of a Harbison Canyon resident was injured by collision with a vehicle, while riding her bicycle at the intersection of Noakes and Harbison Canyon Road on Saturday; and that she was taken to hospital, but her condition is unknown.

F. ACTION ITEMS.

F1. Discussion and action on closure of California Riding and Hiking Trail in Sloane Canyon / Beaver Hollow Road (Wessel). Planning Group member Darin Wessel reported that he sent a letter, dated 4 May 2022, to the property owner who closed the Riding and Hiking Trail segment on Beaver Hollow Road, (with copies to stakeholders including California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sycuan Band, Kumeyaay-Digueno Land Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, San Diego County Trails Association, San Diego County Mountain Biking Association, Chair of the Jamul Planning Group), inviting the property owner to attend the 13 June 2022 meeting of the Crest-Dehesa-Granite Hills-Harbison Canyon Subregional Planning Group for an informational and educational discussion concerning his closure and denial of access to the segment of the California Riding and Hiking Trail that crosses his property on a legal public easement.

Wessel also mentioned that California Department of Parks and Recreation holds the public easement for the closed segment of the trail, and that DPR wants this trail segment to be open and accessible for public use; that the County has a vested interest in this dedicated public trail; that the Sycuan Band and Kumeyaay-Digueno Land Trust is

researching their interests regarding the closure; that the Jamul Planning Group had not yet responded to his inquiries concerning the trail closure matter; and that any of these stakeholders, and other community groups or members of the public could threaten lawsuits to possibly persuade the property owner to allow public access and use of the public trail across his property.

Discussion among members of the Planning Group and the public included 1) that California DPR has hired a staff person, located in Sacramento, dedicated “to the California Riding and Hiking Trail,” and that there needs to be a similar staff person located in San Diego County dedicated for public trails here; 2) that the Planning Group could possibly request California DPR to take action to protect the public easement it holds, and assure public access for the trail segment on Beaver Hollow Road; 3) that the closure of a public trail could be regarded as the property owner attempting to increase the value of his property at the expense of the interests of the public, and other property owners; and 4) there is a need for informational and educational signage to clearly mark the public access to, the alignment of, and the regulated uses allowed for each and all of the dedicated public trails in the Subregion .

Chairman Riggs announced this item will be on the agenda of the next Planning Group meeting on 13 June 2022, (to which the property owner responsible for the trail closure has been invited).

F2. Signage of trail between Mountain View and Horsemill Road in Crest (Ulm).

Planning Group member Pat Ulm reported that despite her attempts, she had not yet spoken with staff from the County Department of Parks and Recreation, concerning 1) the need for adequate signage for the public trail between Mountain View and Horsemill Road established as part of the Cornelius Ranch Subdivision, or 2) information about the petition, by a property owner of a parcel impacted by the trail easement, to move the alignment of a segment of this trail to facilitate a lot split.

Discussion among members of the Planning Group and the public included 1) that County Department of Parks and Recreation assumes that owners of parcels with easements for public trails are responsible for taking care of impacts to trail markers, fencing problems, and trail maintenance for trails on those easements; 2) that County DPR has limited staff, with the San Diego River Trail being its top priority, and with our Subregional trail issue being a much lower priority, for its attention; and 3) there is a County DPR staff person assigned to the Sycuan Trail project who could possibly be helpful concerning the trail in Crest that can be contacted.

Chairman Riggs announced this item will be on the agenda of the next Planning Group meeting on 13 June 2022.

F3. Ad Hoc Committee update regarding evacuation in case of wildfire (Nehring).

Planning Group member and Ad Hoc Committee chair Ron Nehring reported that a meeting of stakeholders (including CalFire, San Miguel Fire District, Crest Fire Safe Council, and County Department of Public Works) regarding evacuation in case of wildfire occurred on 6 May 2022; that they discussed several unresolved problems concerning the Suncrest Trail potential route, including: 1) the need to obtain voluntary easements for public emergency use of the route from several property owners, 2) the need for appropriate signage through the Crest community to the route, and along the

Suncrest Trail route, 3) the difficulties of the existing three different locked gates, with three different locking systems, along the proposed route, 4) the challenge of managing the same route in different ways, depending on its use as an “evacuation route” for the community, or as an “equipment fire access route” for firefighting, and 5) the need for the Ad Hoc committee to plan for and facilitate a major Evacuation Education program in the local communities, as well as continuing to advise and inform the preparations of all relevant Wildfire Protection Plans affecting the Subregion.

Group discussion included consideration of the potential wildfire evacuation situation in Crest, the similarities to the recent wildfire destruction of Paradise, California, and the critical importance of community road signage that is not misleading, and that has been designed to be uncomplicated and visible in the dark.

Ad Hoc committee chair Nehring suggested that the Group could make a specific request to the appropriate County officials: that a particular knowledgeable County staff person be assigned, and allocated appropriate work time, to the designated project of obtaining the several voluntary easements needed for the Suncrest Trail route. Nehring also mentioned that the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee with stakeholders will be on 14 June 2022; and that CalFire and Sempre/SDG&E were considering possible sources of funding for resolving the unsafe culvert problem on the Suncrest Trail route.

Chairman Riggs informed the Group that the Ad Hoc Committee could communicate directly to Supervisor Anderson with its request for a designated County staff person to be allocated time for assignment to work on voluntary easements, without the need for a Group motion and approval. He directed Ad Hoc committee chair Ron Nehring to prepare and send an appropriate request letter.

G. GROUP BUSINESS.

G1. Report on South Lane Park and Nancy Jane Park pest control issues. Planning Group member Mary Manning was not present to provide her report on park pest control issues.

H. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

The next meeting of the Planning Group is scheduled on 13 June 2022 at Dehesa School, 4612 Dehesa Road, El Cajon, beginning at 6:30 PM.

I. ADJOURNMENT. Member Christina Becker moved adjournment at 7:35 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, William Bretz (Secretary)