

CREST-DEHESA-GRANITE HILLS-HARBISON CANYON SUBREGIONAL PLANNING GROUP. Minutes of the meeting on 12 February 2024, at Crest Community Clubhouse, 113 N. Park Drive, El Cajon, CA 92021.

**A. ROLL CALL.** Chair Darin Wessel called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM. Planning Group members Rich, Nehring, Wessel, Becker, Bretz, Manning, Lutz-Partain, Geiger and Lucas were present, forming a quorum of 9. Member Pat Ulm was absent, but excused. Seat 4, Seat 7, Seat 11, Seat 13 and Seat 14 are vacant.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** Planning Group member Cristina Becker moved that the Group approves the minutes of the 8 January 2024 meeting, with Item E5 as corrected, and provided by email for review, by Chair Wessel. The motion passed (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

**D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION.** Planning Group Chair Darin Wessel reminded the Group members that the annual Form 700 financial statement is due, and requested that they complete and submit it.

Group member Tim Lucas spoke to urge everyone to review and consider State Senate Bill 9 (2021), which essentially eliminates the designation of Single Family Residential Zones in "Urban Clusters" as designated in the most recent US Census. Granite Hills is now defined as an "urban cluster" (Crest, Dehesa and Harbison Canyon are still considered rural and not affected). He pointed out that this would allow the addition of a House along with two Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on properties in Granite Hills, resulting in up to 4 units total, without requiring upgrades of infrastructure such as additional parking. Lot splits will be ministerial actions and not subject to community review. The resulting lot split allows one house and one ADU on each property, resulting in a total of 4 units. He recommended that Group members review Senate Bill 9 and come prepared for the presentation of the new Objective Design Standards, by the Planning & Development Services staff at the March meeting of the Planning Group.

Member Ron Nehring commented that SB9 is intended to increase housing density to address the current housing crisis, but that this will only compound the existing infrastructure problems, as there are no plans or commitments for improving infrastructure to accompany the proposed 400% increase in dwelling units.

Member Mary Manning reported that the San Diego County Fire Safe Council has established a webpage; that she will attend its monthly meetings and report on them to the Planning Group; that efforts are underway to create a Fire Safe Council that will serve addresses in Dehesa and Harbison Canyon as well as Carve Acres and Japatul; that a fuel chipping event is scheduled for 16 March 2024 at 21807 Lyons Valley Road; and that a more convenient suitable location for a chipping event is being sought for the Harbison Canyon and Dehesa area.

A member of the public reported that the San Diego County Fire Safe Council is providing a no-cost Home Assessment Program that includes visiting and evaluating your home, to be followed up, if needed, with fuel chipping and disposal; and that the Sunrise Powerlink Program provided by San Diego Gas and Electric offers a fuel chipping and

disposal program, as well a program to provide useful fire safety and control signage for properties.

Planning Group member David Geiger spoke about neighborhood problems associated with the operation of short-term rental properties, including disruptive parties, property damage, and unresponsive property owners allowing problems to occur. He urged the local communities to identify and make use of their local government resources and regulations, especially those relevant to unincorporated areas of the County. (Chair Wessel stated that he will research County code enforcement and other resources that address this issue.)

A member of the public spoke to confirm that short-term rental places used for group parties create parking, and other serious problems besides noise, for the community; and that he supports the establishment of appropriate limits and controls for short-term rental properties.

## **E. ACTION ITEMS.**

**E1. Discretionary Permit for Site Plan PDS2023-STP-23-009, proposed mixed use 2 retail spaces on first floor and single family dwelling on second floor at 534 Harbison Canyon Road, El Cajon, CA.** This agenda item was postponed to the March meeting of the Planning Group, at the request of the applicant.

**E2. Objective Design Standards (ODS) – Planning & Development Services staff will present on recent state housing laws, projects that may or may not be eligible, and how they relate to design review in the unincorporated areas.** This agenda item was postponed to the March meeting of the Planning Group.

**E3. Crest Association insurance issues presentation by Sharon Smith.** Chair Wessel announced that this item is postponed until the April meeting of the Planning Group; and that there are reports that California Fair Insurance Plans may soon be offering full umbrella policy plans including wildfire coverage, although commercial insurance companies do not support this competition to their businesses.

**E4. Discussion and action regarding AT&T letter to Public Utilities Commission proposing elimination of obligation to provide landline phone service in rural communities.** Chair Wessel initiated Group discussion about the AT&T letter to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) proposing elimination of its regulatory obligation to provide landline phone service in rural communities. Members' comments included that some rural communities still need landlines, because wireless cell phone and satellite communications are not available or reliable; that there is currently not available the data to map accurately where there are coverage gaps in wireless communications services; that if electrical power fails in an area, wireless communications services can also fail when backup battery power for its equipment is used up; that 911 emergency communication by landline provides location of the originating call, but that wireless 911 emergency communication may not do this reliably; and that if the Group decides to provide a letter of comment to the PUC regarding AT&Ts proposal, it should be narrowly

focused on the issue that all rural communities need reliable access to 911 emergency communication service.

**E5. Storm damage resources and County information.** Chair Wessel reported that he received information from the County Environmental Health Department concerning its available resources for addressing flooding and septic system problems, and that he has sent emails about storm damage recovery resources to the Planning Group mailing list.

**E6. Ad Hoc Committee update regarding evacuation in case of wildfire.**

**(Nehring/Lucas).** Committee Chair Ron Nehring reported that the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee will be 6 March 2024 at the Crest Community Clubhouse. Topics to be considered include updates of Community Plans, establishing recognized Fire Wise Communities, and potential designation of Suncrest Truck Trail as an official emergency evacuation route.

A new topic to be discussed by the Ad Hoc Committee will be the potential fire emergency implications that could be related to the widespread adoption and use of electrical vehicles (EVs), following State legislation that could initiate the banning of the sale and use of internal combustion vehicles beginning in 2025. EVs and the electric systems used to charge and power them can create fires that are difficult to extinguish with traditional fire fighting methods, and that produce toxic air and runoff pollutants; EVs with insufficient battery power could create serious problems on emergency evacuation routes; and the replacement of internal combustion vehicles by EVs could be a counter-productive bad policy for rural communities.

**E7. Update on California Riding and Hiking Trail issues. (Wessel).** Chair Wessel announced there was no update on California Riding and Hiking Trail issues for tonight's meeting.

**F. GROUP BUSINESS.**

**F1. Announcements and Correspondence Received.** Member Mary Manning announced that former Planning Group Member for Harbison Canyon Robert Fligg died recently.

**F2. Discussion Items/Action Items.**

**F2a. Consideration of applicant(s) to fill vacancies for Seats 4, 7, 11, 13 and 14.**

Chair Wessel reported that there is one pending application in the works for Seat 4 (Crest), but that it has not yet reached the official status for consideration by the Planning Group. There are no pending applications yet for the other vacant seats.

**F2b. Status/reports – Association of Planning Groups and SANDAG Draft 2025 Regional Plan.** Group discussion included concerns that the Draft 2025 Regional Plan addresses issues for the unincorporated areas of North County, but neglects consideration of issues important for East County rural communities; that SANDAG planning does not extend east of El Cajon, except to include future management of Interstate 8 highway

lanes; that long-term SANDAG planning makes no sense for East County rural communities, as its 25 year planning vision focuses almost entirely on communities west of the Interstate 15 corridor, while it encourages increasing housing density throughout the entire unincorporated County.

**F2c. Community Plan update – Progress report.** Chair Wessel reported there was no progress on the Community Plan update to discuss, but that this matter would be kept on the agenda of future meetings in anticipation of future County staff actions.

**F3. Meeting updates.**

**F3a. Reports on and upcoming BOS, PC and other Hearings/Meetings.** None to report.

**F3b. Next meeting date, 11 March 2024, at Crest Community Clubhouse, 113 N. Park Drive, El Cajon, CA 92021.**

**G. ADJOURNMENT.** Member Robert Lutz-Partain moved adjournment at 7:55 PM. The motion passed unanimously (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

Respectfully submitted, William Bretz (Secretary)