

CREST/DEHESA/GRANITE HILLS/HARBISON CANYON

Minutes of the meeting on 14 April 2025, at Crest Community Clubhouse, 113 N Park Drive, El Cajon, CA 92021

- A. ROLL CALL.** Chair Ron Nehring called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM. Roll call was conducted. Planning Group members Rich, Ulm, Nehring, Griffin, Healy, Lutz-Partain, Geiger, and Lucas were present, forming a quorum of 8. Members Manning, Becker were excused. Seats 5, 8, 11, 13 and 14 are vacant.
- B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (optional).** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion made by Member Ulm to approve March 10, 2025 minutes. Motion passed (8 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain)
- D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION** - An opportunity for members of the public and Planning Group to speak on items within the jurisdiction of the Planning Group and not on the agenda. Time limit 3 minutes. No group discussion, action, or vote.

Representative from Sup Anderson office, Ms Haley Mitchell provided overview of 2024 legislative actions and accomplishments, including upgrades to Ramona Sheriff's substation, Lindo Lake Improvements, East County archery park and keeping Lake Hodges, Sutherland and El Capitan reservoirs open to the public. His office is working to mitigate the \$138.5M budget gap in 2025-2026. On 3/11, Sup Anderson's Unsafe Camping Ordinance advanced to the next step at the Board of Supervisors to empower authorities to enforce unsafe fire starters, and will return to the Board of Supervisors on May 6 for final approval. Starting on 1 July for 2025-2026, Sup Anderson's office will offer 2 grant opportunities: Neighborhood Reinvestment and Community Enhancement. In 2024-2025 there was \$4,128,605 in District 2. Sup Anderson office is always looking for interns/volunteers - please go to his website to apply.

Dave Geiger presented his concerns regarding the proposed SDGE high voltage power line extension through Crest/Harbison Canyon to connect the Suncrest substation. Especially concerning was the ability to fight fires with these high-powered lines and raise awareness.

Paul Healy presented his concerns as a resident regarding the March mtg presenter, Jim Kelly, in regards to Mr. Kelly's comment that insurance rates increased due to socialism. Mr. Healy researched and found no reference to that, but mostly due to climate change. Healy presented his concern regarding SRPG voting to approve reducing/removing CEQA requirements, feeling there are already management policies in place for clearing/burning and recommended that SRPG does not vote against such regulations unless it's going to accomplish something and is concerned with no regulations things would return to pre-EPA environment.

- E. ACTION ITEMS** - *Discretionary projects, tasks, motions, proposals requiring a decision or vote* - Nothing at this time
- F. GROUP BUSINESS** - *Reports, updates, announcements, administrative discussions*

1. Presentation concerning South Crest Ecological Preserve – Member Griffin introduced Michael Beck and Chris Manzuk from Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC). EHC provided a presentation regarding the South Crest Ecological Reserve to clarify use and stem misinformation on social media. South Crest Ecological Reserve is private property but open for public use WITH restrictions – **No Motorized Vehicles or “trail making”** due to conserving the habitat. The preserves in Crest are part of the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) for San Diego County. This program aims to protect a network of habitats and species, including rare plants and animals, across a large area of San Diego County. The South Crest Ecological Reserve, specifically, is a critical link between other conserved lands and supports high-value species and habitats. Community concerns were addressed on why trails @ South Crest Ecological Preserve are not maintained. EHC is following the MSCP to only maintain trails in accordance with their plan. There is an entrance @ the west end of the reserve off Eucalyptus Drive for horses. It was recognized that prior to acquisition in 2000, residents freely used this property, but since this area has now come under the MSCP, the use restrictions are being enforced. Prior to purchase South Crest Ecological Reserve was purchased for \$15M and saved it from being developed and having a main road installed down to Dehesa. There are 14 well maintained/reengineered trails @ Crestridge Ecological Reserve off Horsemill in North Crest for hikers, mountain bikes and horses.

Member Griffin asked about equestrian access. Chris Manzuk replied – there is access at the west end of Suncrest Blvd. The reason no access to south crest property on South Lane is because the entry point makes it hard to control access to unauthorized motorized vehicles. Michael Beck also added that the only Ecological Reserve in San Diego that allows mountain bikes are in Crest.

Member Rich asked about fire mitigation on the Reserves. Chris Manzuk replied 2 high level items they are obligated to perform – 1) required to abide to fire abatement zone of 100 feet from resident and 2) work closely with CalFire to provide fuel break (150 acres). EHC does not provide any brush clearing within the property boundary except for controlling the invasive plants.

Member Ulm asked how we can stop people from starting fires. Michael Beck replied EHC has been working with San Diego Management Monitoring Program and CalFire to establish strategies to harden Crestridge to create a buffer space between Highway 8, will take years to get implemented. Plus they do not allow smoking or any fire sources on the property.

Resident Janelle commented on the reason she purchased her property was to access the horse trails and now they are all overgrown. She doesn't want to pack up her horse and drive to Crestridge. Michael Beck replied that managing public access is very challenging and can't design their work strategies to conserve habitat and still allow public access. Mr. Beck also reminded her that both these locations could have been houses and there would be no horse trails. Chris Manzuk also commented that South Crest Ecological Reserve is private property, they are not obligated to provide public access but appreciate the relationship with the Crest community

Resident Mack asked about horse trails in South Crest. Christ Manzuk replied they can ride on the fire road. Michael Beck said there are no plans to create trails on South Crest Ecological Reserve.

2. Announcements and Correspondence Received. None at this time, except the subdivision of a lot in Granit hills that will be agendized for later.

3. Discussion

a. Community plan, fire resolutions and related actions update

Chair Nehring has a meeting with Congressman Issa and Supervisor Anderson in April to discuss the Fire related resolutions that the SRPG has adopted. Chair Nehring will specifically speak to the Stoneridge County Preserve with Sup Anderson and lack of sufficient progress concerning Suncrest Truck Trail as an alternate emergency route.

b. Consideration of applicant(s) to fill vacancies for Seats 5, 8, 11, 13 and 14.

Nathan Morgan for Seat 11 was introduced. No questions from SRPG members. Chair Nehring mentioned regarding all of the obligations and paperwork required. Member Lutz-Partain made the motion to approve Nathan Morgan for Seat 11. The motion passed unanimously (8 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain). Chair Nehring will forward to Sup Anderson's office to recommend Nathan Morgan is appointed to Seat 11 - Harbison Canyon.

4. Meeting updates.

a. Reports on and upcoming BOS, PC and other Hearings/Meetings. None

b. Chairman's/Vice Chairman's Report. None

c. Member reports

Member Ulm reported that Code Enforcement has not taken action on the above ground septic tank, that has now overflowed. Chair Nehring recommended that Member Ulm relay this information to Sup Anderson's office representative in attendance at the meeting.

Member Griffin made a motion to pay the Crest Community Association \$400 (\$100/mo -Jan-Apr) to rent the CCA clubhouse for the SRPG meetings. The motion passed unanimously (8 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain)

Member Griffin announced that the Crest clean-up day on 3/22 with the grant funds received from Sunrise Powerlink Fire Mitigation Group collected over 10+ tons of debris from about 50 residents along with chipping. Also, San Miguel Fire & Rescue/CalFire/Alpine Sheriff will come brief defensible space/structure hardening and updated evacuation education @ Crest School on 4/22 @ 6:30, along with Bonnie Burchill from SPFMG and Jennifer Farmer from Brandguard Vents to brief the available grant opportunities to residents and ember resistant vents. In addition, Crest will be expanding their Firewise boundary to include all of Crest.

Chair Nehring asked Member Geiger if he wanted to agendaize the high-voltage line going through Crest/Harbison Canyon that Member Geiger get as much information as possible or Rep from SDGE.

d. Next meeting date **Monday, May 12, 6:30 PM at Olde Ironsides County Park, Harbison Canyon**

G. ADJOURNMENT. Member Lutz-Partain moved to adjournment at 7:28 PM. The motion passed unanimously (8 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain)

Respectfully submitted, Diana M Griffin (Secretary)