

**County of San Diego**  
**Jacumba Hot Springs Sponsor Group**  
**Final Agenda for Regular Meeting 5:30pm on May 18, 2021**  
**Jacumba Hot Springs, CA 91934**

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To attend Zoom meeting via computer or smart phone:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81181825014?pwd=dENnUmxGZGFhWlVXc1lnb1JSNHJsUT09>

Join by Phone

+1 (669) 900-6833 or (253) 215-8782

Meeting ID: 811 8182 5014

Passcode: 281588

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**A. Roll call** (Determination of quorum): Seat 1. Jacari Cousins; Seat 2. Greg Curran; Seat 3. Cherry Diefenbach; Seat 4. Jeffery Osborne; Seat 5. (Katrina Westley's application is awaiting BOS approval)

**B. Pledge of Allegiance.** (waived-due to virtual meeting format)

**C. Approval of draft minutes for Jacumba Sponsor Group (JSG) virtual meeting held on April 20, 2021.**

**D. Public Communication:** The public may comment on any subject within the JSG's jurisdiction that is not on the posted agenda. (Speakers are limited to 2 minutes and no action can be taken on non-agenda items.)

**E. Action items:** (Agenda items may be taken out of order upon request)

**1. Discuss/vote on the revised Jacumba Valley Ranch Energy Park (PDS2018-MUP-18-022) project.**

a. **On March 16, 2021, the Jacumba Sponsor Group voted to support a much smaller solar facility (up to 200 acres) located well north of the town with 1,500-foot setbacks from residences and all public roads.** This smaller facility would utilize underground transmission lines to send its generated green energy directly into the power grid via SDG&E's ECO substation, thereby eliminating the need for a switchyard.

b. **On April 12, 2021, our sponsor group received an electronic copy of the revised JVR solar project map (4<sup>th</sup> submittal) dated 04/08/2021.**

**The revised project involves the construction and operation of an enormous 90 megawatt (MW) solar energy facility on ~623 acres located within Jacumba's Rural Village on a 1,356 acre property formerly known as Ketchum Ranch.** As currently configured, the project footprint stretches from the International border to an area just south of the Subway station along I-8. It would place solar modules and associated equipment (battery storage containers, inverters, transformers, a collector substation, and a large switchyard) within 547 fenced acres immediately east, north, and south of the community of Jacumba Hot Springs; north, south, and west of the Jacumba Airport, for about a mile along both sides of scenic Highway 80; and south of the I-8 corridor near the Jacumba exit/Carriso Gorge Road. **While the revised project map provides slightly larger setbacks than the original project delineated in the DEIR, it is still six times the physical size of the existing village of Jacumba.** The project includes the following:

--approximately 300,000 photovoltaic modules (12-feet high and up to 300 feet in length) mounted on single axis mechanical trackers that follow the movement of the sun from east to west. (The stowed panel position is parallel to the ground; at full tilt, the panel bottom is 38 degrees from perpendicular.)

--75 battery storage containers-three containers at each of the 25 sites (containers are 55-feet long, 19-feet wide and 10-feet high).

--25 inverter/transformer metal platforms on skids (8-feet wide and 20-feet long) adjacent to battery containers.

--5,000-feet of underground electrical collection system.

--an on-site collector substation (152-feet by 180-feet) and a 200-foot-long 65-foot-high overhead slack span transmission line that connects the collector substation to the switchyard.

--a 138kV switchyard (3.2-acres) adjacent to the collector substation with 1,860-feet of overhead transmission lines strung on (five) 70-115 feet high steel poles which will loop the switchyard into the existing SDG&E Boulevard-East County Transmission Line. This project is described as an “interim” land use with the project life projected as 35-37 years. Given that the switchyard will be turned over to SDG&E at the decommissioning of the solar project, it is likely to be followed by another industrial scale energy project. This essentially eliminates any expansion of the town and the possibility of a future international border crossing at Jacumba. (Below is photo of a solar project switchyard.)



--The MUP project area will be enclosed with a 6-foot high slatted chain-link fence with three strands of barbed wire on top, and high voltage signage. Because the MUP area south of Old Hwy 80 has historically been prone to flooding, solar panels within that area may be raised as much as five feet above grade and flood fencing will be used. (Below is a photo of a non-tracking or fixed solar project currently under construction. A slatted fence does not adequately screen even these modules which have not been elevated five feet above grade.)



--All former farm buildings and all existing trees within the project area will be removed. (Many of the old buildings and the trees near the farm are routinely used as perches and scouting posts by a variety of large raptors.)

--A landscaping plan will be implemented 15 feet from the project fencing on both sides of Old Hwy 80, next to the town, and along some portions of Carrizo Gorge Road. Developer to maintain it for the lifetime of the project.

--During the estimated 13-month construction period, up to 500 construction workers will arrive at the site per day. Construction hours are projected as 7 am to 4pm Monday through Saturday. (**The DEIR did not identify any additional first responder staffing** even though the construction project will essentially double the population of the town. Jacumba's current firefighter staffing is just 2 people.) This solar site will be unmanned when completed.

- c. **An informal community forum was held in Jacumba on May 7, 2021, and a variety of local issues were discussed, including the revised JVR project.** Community members were given an opportunity to look at the revised JVR project maps and they were asked to state their opinions as whether they thought the JVR Solar park would benefit Jacumba or whether they thought it would negatively impact the town. Their nearly unanimous responses were that the solar project would provide no benefit to local residents, and that it would do irreparable harm to community character, property values, future tourism, scenic vistas, and flight operations at the Jacumba glider port, etc.
- d. **Following a JVR project presentation made by Geoff Fallon, the sponsor group will further discuss/vote on whether to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the 623-acre JVR project plan.** (Fallon represents the solar project developer, BayWa r.e. Solar Project LLC.)

The Planning & Development Services (PDS) project manager for the JVR project is Nicholas Koutoufidis ([nicholas.koutoufidis@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:nicholas.koutoufidis@sdcounty.ca.gov) or 858-495-5329). The revised 20-page JVR project plan can be viewed at: [https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/ceqa/JVR/DEIR/AdditionalDocs/JVR0Plot%20Plans%20\(Optimized\).pdf](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/ceqa/JVR/DEIR/AdditionalDocs/JVR0Plot%20Plans%20(Optimized).pdf).

- 2. **Discuss/vote on the need for a crosswalk across Old Highway 80 at Carriso St. near the Highland Community center and the Jacumba library.**
- 3. **Discuss the status of the trash/appliance/mattress dumping that has been occurring for more than six months at the former recycling business located on scenic Hwy 80 west of Jacumba.** Should the sponsor group chair formally ask Supervisor Joel Anderson's office to get involved in finding a solution?

**F. Group business and Project Updates-discussion only:**

- 1. Announcements and correspondence.
- 2. Community interface and other reports.
  - a. Fire Safe Council
  - b. Revitalization

**G. Adjournment:**

The next regular Jacumba Sponsor group meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 5:30pm.

**Purpose of Planning and Sponsor Groups:**

Advise the County on discretionary projects as well as on planning and land use matters that are proposed within their respective community planning or sponsor group area.