

County of San Diego
Jacumba Hot Springs Community Sponsor Group
Minutes for the JCSG Meeting held 6 pm on August 8, 2022
Highland Senior Center, 44681 Old Hwy 80, Jacumba Hot Springs, CA 91934

A. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm with a quorum: Diefenbach, Osborne, and Westley were present. Cousins and Curran were excused. Public present:15.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

C. The approval of the draft minutes for the JCSG meeting held on July 11, 2022 was deferred to the Sep. 2022 meeting due to the absence of some JCSG members.

D. Public Communication:

Maureen reminded everyone of the deadline for candidates to file for even-numbered JCSD seats.

The Chair thanked the JCSD for sending out electronic notices about filing for the even-numbered JCSD seats. She also thanked Brenda for alerting water district customers when the town's water system was shut down for repairs.

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

1. Drought-tolerant landscaping outside of the County Right-of-Way near the JCSD water treatment plant fence on Old Highway 80.

This item was previously discussed at the July JCSG meeting. The Chair has asked the County Right of Way (ROW) Enforcement Department to verify the width of the ROW in two separate emails. The latest request for this information as well as a request for brush abatement in the ROW was sent on Aug. 1st. The County has yet to provide a response.

The Chair believes the ROW along Old Highway 80 in our area is 50 feet. Given that Katrina and Morgan independently measured the distance from the center of the pavement to the JCSD fence at 53 feet, there appears to be a three-foot area where vines or shrubs could be planted. The Chair will continue to press the County for conformation of the ROW width. (It was noted that communities can plant trees within the County ROW through a permitting process.) Further discussion regarding potential landscaping will be placed on the agenda of our September meeting.

2. JVR Solar Project: Discuss/approve a second survey on JVR Solar project community benefits.

According to Jeff, the San Diego judge has not yet ruled on the merits of lawsuit that was filed against San Diego County Board of Supervisors' certification of the JVR Energy Park Environmental Impact Report (EIR). A decision is expected soon.

The Chair provided a brief overview of the initial JCSG Dec. 2021 survey which asked questions about the desirability of infrastructure/program improvements to the Community Park, Highlands Center and the availability of services in town. About 84 people were represented in the 2021 survey responses---or less than 1/5 of the town's population.

The purposes of conducting a second survey on community benefits are to potentially reach more residents, narrow the focus on the things the community wants most, and be able to show PDS that we can build a consensus.

The JCSG reviewed three possible survey formats/versions. Survey 1 uses a prioritization or ranking of desired improvements; Version 2 contains a long list of broad benefit categories and folks can check as many of the benefit areas that they want; Version 3 asks that folks provide three of their own ideas for which community benefit money should be spent. All survey versions included questions on whether some of the benefit money should be invested to fund future projects and whether local groups requesting benefits money should present their proposed project at a sponsor group meeting.

Jeff stated his concern about the feasibility of possible benefits ideas, like trash dumpsters/trash pickup, because of their on-going costs. He also suggested the wording of the survey question about community benefit money investments be revised to ask respondents "how much money should be invested."

The Chair believes trash dumpsters could potentially be managed by the Jacumba Community Services District if that was something the community wanted.

Morgan had a conversation with a trash collection company and she was told that residential trash pickup in Jacumba is not doable.

Bonnie asked about access to County dump sites.

Patty asked about a dog park in town as a possible use for community benefit money.

Maureen stated a preference for Survey #2 because it provides many categories of potential community benefits that were not included on the 2021 survey. She also asked who will decide what projects are ultimately funded.

Mike believes a special foundation that decides which projects are funded and how much money should be invested for the future is the best option. He believes the JVR project developer would be willing to fund the establishment of a new non-profit foundation, but thinks that any request to do so should come after the outcome of lawsuit has been finalized. He also thinks that the County wants to play a minimal role in the management of Jacumba's community benefit funds.

The Chair stated that our sponsor group previously voted that a special foundation was the best option for community benefits management in conjunction with the public transparency offered by a sponsor group meeting.

Jeff agreed that a special foundation would be able to direct the management/investment of funds and that they could also perform grant writing functions. He is unsure if another survey is the best way to get additional community input—he believes a once-a-year well-advertised town hall meeting would be more effective.

The Chair agreed that townhall/special sponsor group meetings will ultimately be needed to determine community support for any proposed community benefit project. The proposed survey would be an interim step in determining priorities for the community.

Paul suggested that we survey the people who attend the monthly bazaar at the old bathhouse. A booth manned by volunteers, preferably with someone who is bilingual, could take advantage of an existing event that is successful.

Bonnie and Tanya volunteered to get people to complete a community benefits survey at the bathhouse bazaar on Sat. Sep 3rd if Jeff would provide them with a cabana for shade. The Chair offered to have copies of a survey printed.

Katrina stated a preference for Survey #3 based on its simplicity.

M/S: To have volunteers use Community Benefits Survey #3 at the Bathhouse bazaar on Sat., Sep. 3rd to get additional community input: Diefenbach/Westley. Passed 3-0-2(Cousins & Curran)-0.

F. Group business/project updates, to include correspondence-discussion only:

1. The Chair sent an email request to DPW on August 1, 2022 for brush abatement along Old Hwy 80 within County Right-of-Way from the bridge at the western end of town to the bathhouse. (Old Hwy 80 is a major fire egress route and brush is currently encroaching into the bicycle lane.) Becky identified the need for a group of volunteers to pick up trash around Jacumba and Katrina suggested posting the trash collection event on social media.

2. August 12 at 5 pm is the County's Registrar of Voters (ROV) deadline for candidate applications for the upcoming election.

3. More renewable energy projects are in the queue for Boulevard, including the 74 MW Rugged Solar Project on 400 acres of the Rough Acres Ranch north of I-8 between McCain Valley Road and Ribbonwood Road. This project was recently approved by the Planning Commission. Another proposed project is the 100 MW Starlight Solar facility located on 570 acres near the Empire Ranch in Jewel Valley between Tierra Del Sol Road and Tule Jim Road. This project will include a battery storage system, collector substation, etc. Groundwater for facility construction (grading) is expected to be supplied by the Jacumba Community Services District and on-site wells.

4. Update on memorial bridge naming. There has been no action on the two bridge packages that we submitted to Supervisor Anderson in June 2022. Linda C. is continuing to collect signatures for the Dennis Ruth Memorial bridge. When the required signatures of 100 Jacumba residents have been collected, the memorial bridge naming will be placed on a sponsor group agenda.

5. Community interface reports.

There were no interface reports provided from the Real East County Fire Safe Council or JBRA (Revitalization). However, on August 20, the Fire Safe Council will be holding a chipping day at the Resource Center in Boulevard.

Mike provided a brief update on the Highland Senior Center which is currently being sued by the JCSD board. As yet, the Highland board of directors have not filed a countersuit. The Highland Board is working with SDG&E on a kitchen upgrade and getting ADA compliant restrooms. The Highland Board continues to work toward the restoration of its non-profit status.

G. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm. Next JCSG meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 12, 2022 at 6 pm.

Approved: Oct. 10, 2022