

Rainbow Community Planning Group

Advising the Board of Supervisors ~ San Diego County
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at 6:30 PM Held Via Teleconferencing

- I. Open Provisions
 - A. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Kurland at 6:30 PM
 - B. Pledge of Allegiance
 - C. Attendance: Lynne Malinowski, Martin Kurland, Mark DiVecchio, Greg Doud, Michele Sheehan, Fred Rasp, Doug Gastelum, Paul Georgantas (early departure). 7 members being present, a quorum is declared.
- II. Motion to approve the agenda by Mr. Doud, second Mr. Gastelum, approved unanimously.
- III. Public Comments
 - A. Becky Rapp spoke about Supervisor Desmond's efforts on Fentanyl education and recommended citizen/resident input to County on Cannabis Ordinance regarding code enforcement criteria.
- IV. Consolidated Motion
 - A. Motion to approve prior meeting minutes from 21 September 2022 made by Mr. Rasp, second Mr. Doud, approved unanimously.
- V. Continued Items, Discretionary Projects and County Action Items
 - A. None.
- VI. Old Business and Reports
 - A. Announcements and Correspondence Received – Nothing new.
 - B. Architectural Subcommittee – Ms. Malinowski reported on Community Signage program status.
 - C. Social Media Subcommittee – Ms. Malinowski reported standard agenda/minutes postings.
 - D. Parks and Beautification Subcommittee – Mrs. Sheehan reported that input received from community on park PLDO concentrated on lighting and safety. She will bring a proposed PLDO list to the November meeting for approval and submission by end the of November.
 - E. I-15 Corridor Design Review Board – Mr. Doud reported no projects were to be reviewed.
 - F. Roads and traffic status – Dr. Kurland reported that Richard Chin, County project manager, communicated that the status of the traffic light was dependent on electricity supplied by SDGE, which is now in the works. Dr. Kurland reported that resident Heather Reinhardt is concerned about speed of traffic on 5th Street near school. She has contacted the County, who is considering a 4-way stop sign at Huffstatler and 5th to slow the traffic at the school.
 - G. Water and Environmental Issues Report – Nothing new.
 - H. ARC Update & Community News – Mrs. Sheehan reported that she met with Shawn Fisher for the resumption of ARC Newsletter. They are soliciting articles for publication, and the ARC will move towards collaboration with the Rainbow Grange.

Purpose of Planning and Sponsor Groups: Advise the County on discretionary projects as well as on planning and land use matters that are important to their community.

- I. Cannabis and Social Equity Program update – Mr. Doud reported that the plan for transition of licensing and enforcement from the Sheriff Dept to the Planning & Development Services Dept will be voted on at the upcoming October 26th meeting of the Board of Supervisors.
- J. Vallecitos School District Update – Dr. Kurland reported that the Board hired Meliton Sanchez, formerly of Blythe, CA, to fill the Superintendent position.
- K. Rainbow CPG Boundary Realignment – Nothing new.
- L. Coordination of County of San Diego and utility company projects letter – Mrs. Sheehan reported that the letter is in progress, and she will prepare draft for review at November meeting.
- M. Telecom service in Rainbow – Mr. Gastelum distributed written research and thoughts on topic, and will continue to pursue how to complete the ‘last mile’ of infrastructure.
- N. Member/Administrative Reports – Nothing new.

VII. New Business

- A. Dark Skies Initiative – Mr. DiVecchio reported on the efforts of the Fallbrook Beautification Alliance to pursue certification for Fallbrook as an International Dark Sky Community. He will consider how this application will affect Rainbow. Mr. DiVecchio will request that the RCPG write a letter of support for Fallbrook. This will likely be a multi-year process.
- B. Community access to fire hardening and insurance premium control programs – Mr. Gastelum distributed written research and commentary on fire hardening programs, brush clearing, and financial assistance programs. He concluded that an organization is needed to receive funds to then distribute to residents for actions. He will continue to pursue more information and potential actions.
- C. Rainbow Community Plan – Ms. Malinowski reported that she has not yet received a reply from the County LUEG liaison on having a staff member of the PDS department speak to the group on how the community plan impacts project approvals, and she will continue to follow up. The group believes that the Rainbow Community Plan should be updated, so this will be pursued.

VIII. Call for New Agenda Items for next meeting

- A. Agenda items can be submitted up until the next meeting’s agenda is posted at the meeting site.
 - i. Rainbow CPG letter to Supervisor Desmond expressing concerns on County related/governed issues – Mr. Gastelum
 - ii. Voting locations in Rainbow.
 - iii. Rainbow Community Plan update
- B. Continuance of Teleconferencing Meeting Option Pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(e). Mr. Doud moved that Pursuant to Government Code section 54953(e)(3), the Rainbow CPG has reconsidered the circumstances of the State of Emergency and state and local officials continue to recommend measures to promote social distancing. Second Mr. Gastelum, approved unanimously.

IX. Adjournment by Vice Chair Kurland at 7:40 PM to the next regularly scheduled meeting 16 Nov 2022 which will be held via teleconferencing starting at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Lynne Malinowski Secretary, Rainbow CPG

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2160 Rainbow Valley Blvd, Rainbow CA 92028

19 October 2022
Rainbow, CA

Presented to the Rainbow Community Planning Group :

The Fallbrook Beautification Alliance has embarked on what will probably be a multi-year quest for Fallbrook to be designated an International Dark Sky Place.

As the application process proceeds, I will be asking the Rainbow Community Planning Group to provide a letter of support.

To give you an idea of what a designation as an International Dark Sky Place means, let me read a description of the program as described by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA)

The International Dark Sky Places conservation program recognizes and promotes excellent stewardship of the night sky.

The IDA founded the program in 2001 to encourage communities, parks and protected areas around the world to preserve and protect dark sites through responsible lighting policies and public education.

International Dark Sky Communities are legally organized cities and towns that adopt quality outdoor lighting ordinances and undertake efforts to educate residents about the importance of dark skies.

As of January 2022, there are 195 certified Dark Sky Places in the world.

The IDA designates Dark Sky Places following a rigorous application process requiring applicants to demonstrate robust community support for dark-sky protection and document designation-specific program requirements.

Applications are reviewed periodically by an IDA standing committee composed of dark-sky experts and previously successful program applicants. Regular status updates after designation ensure that Dark Sky Places continue their commitment to dark-sky preservation.

Upon certification, the IDA works with certified places to promote their work through media relations, member communications, and social media. An International Dark Sky Place designation helps enhance the visibility of designated locations and foster increased tourism and local economic activity.

I don't yet understand how this application will affect the Rainbow Community. Whether we can make a separate application or somehow be included with Fallbrook. Or if it even makes sense to attempt a Dark Sky Places designation for Rainbow. The County's latest update to the light pollution code shows that the County is interested in dark skies and is willing to enforce the new code.

Respectively submitted,
Mark DiVecchio
Rainbow Community Planning Group

¹**There is a California Interactive Broadband Map** that has some information about what is supposedly available in our area. At my house, and along my road it lists a service from AT&T that I have never heard of or been offered called “VDSL” at 50MBps down and 10 up. Where Rainbow Heights Road East and West split (and where I know that people have Starlink) it lists only SDBB as available with 100 down and 25 up. That seems to be the case along Rainbow Crest as well. The northernmost portions of Rainbow Heights Road also list AT&T VDSL as available. Even though we have anecdotal evidence that ATT Fiber is going in or has gone in at the conservation Camp, the map lists no provider at all there.

The “eligible entities” who can apply for money include “local government agencies.” Certainly that would include San Diego County, but we may need more advocacy from our County Supervisor to allow for a supervisorial district (that is bigger than most counties in the country), a Planning Group Area, or something like “Rainbow Municipal Water District” to apply, fund, and obtain the money for an “area” like Rainbow. Perhaps we could establish something like an “ombudsman” with the County to get something like this done.

In July 2021, Governor Newsom signed SB 156 providing a historic \$6 billion to accelerate the state’s commitment to bridging the digital divide by increasing equitable, affordable access to high-speed internet service across California. Of this, \$2.75 billion was allocated to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to establish a \$2 billion “federal funding account to build last-mile infrastructure for Californians without access to high-speed broadband service.” Another part is a “\$750 million Broadband Loan Loss Reserve Fund [that] supports costs related to the financing of local broadband infrastructure development. The reserve fund expands local governments’ ability to secure financing for building last-mile projects, with an emphasis on public broadband networks.” And finally, there is a “\$50 million Local Agency and Tribal Technical Assistance grant program to reimburse Tribes and local agencies for eligible pre-construction expenses that facilitate deployment of broadband network deployment projects to areas in need.”²

Each of the funds has rules for distribution, requires applying for the money, and is overseen by the California Public Utilities Commission. Each of them requires co-funding by the recipient (which in our case could come from County funds).

The “Federal Funding Account” seems to be the most applicable to Rainbow since it is “last mile” infrastructure that we really need. That fund says that “eligible areas” can be individual households or businesses, but that “serving these households and businesses may require a holistic approach that provides service to a wider area, for example, in order to make ongoing service of certain households or businesses within the service area economical.”³ The program guidelines, however, require that application be made for any money in the program, and “The Commission will evaluate eligible project applications based on the following [10] criteria.” *Id.* As far as I can tell, no application was made for San Diego County District 5 or Rainbow.

In June 2022, the Federal Government announced availability and awards in a number of programs aimed at increasing access to broadband internet to rural communities throughout the country. Many

1 <https://www.broadbandmap.ca.gov/>

2 <https://broadbandforall.cdt.ca.gov/last-mile-broadband/>

3 <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/SearchRes.aspx?docformat=ALL&docid=470543650>

billions of dollars were involved.⁴

Some of the money was from pre-existing programs, because at that time, “the Treasury Department announced the first state awards of the Capital Projects Fund, which is providing resources, in addition to the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, to states, territories, and Tribal governments to deliver affordable, reliable, high-speed internet infrastructure and other connectivity projects.”

There was also a “Capital Project Fund” to provide broadband to over 200,000 homes and small businesses. The “first awards, totaling more than a half a billion dollars, will make resources immediately available to support Louisiana, New Hampshire, Virginia, and West Virginia in deploying infrastructure to connect over 200,000 homes and businesses to reliable internet service at download and upload speeds of at least 100 Mbps.”

California “invested” “over \$500 million of Fiscal Recovery Funds as part of a larger initiative to fund grants for “last-mile” broadband infrastructure projects to provide affordable access to unserved households, anchor institutions and local governments.” Many other communities had already accessed funds to “build out 95 miles of “middle-mile” infrastructure,” leveraging funds to get bids “on a fiber to the premises network that would provide Gig speed fiber connections to all homes and businesses in the city,” or “pilot a fiber-to-the-home connectivity project to approximately 2,000 homes in the Hope Village neighborhood with affordable 1 Gig service.”

Up until now, our County apparently did not participate in any of this, since on **August 23, 2022**, the “Golden State Connect Authority” announced the awarding of \$2.7 million in American Rescue Plan grant funding through the Economic Adjustment Assistance program for the development of broadband strategic plans in 27 rural California counties. The GSCA noted that “High-speed internet availability in rural California is often a critical missing component of infrastructure. Its absence precludes residents and businesses in unserved and underserved communities from participating in the 21st Century economy.”⁵

Grandstanding as usual for politicians, the GSCA Board Chair and Tehama County Supervisor blithely stated that “With this grant award all rural counties in California will now have established, proactive plans for broadband implementation for their underserved residents, representing an important milestone in the drive to achieve digital equity throughout the state.” And indeed, Tehama County was one of the counties that actually got money to do these things.⁶ Even though the law seems to allow for smaller subdivisions of counties to qualify for grants, it seems that only entire counties obtained them. All 27 counties that obtained any measure of assistance from broadband strategic plans and/or Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) are north of Santa Barbara County.

The population of Tehama County is about 64,000 Californians. (It got only \$125k.) The population of district 5 in San Diego County was about ten times that, 645,000, in 2019. Much of District 5 is rural, and much of that does not have the broadband as defined. (“The Fifth District is one of the two supervisorial districts that predominantly contain unincorporated communities. It is also the biggest district in San Diego County, making up over 51% of the entire county. Fun fact, District 5 is bigger

4 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/07/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-over-25-billion-in-american-rescue-plan-funding-to-help-ensure-every-american-has-access-to-high-speed-affordable-internet/>

5 [https://www.gsfahome.org/admin/news/2022/California%20Rural%20Counties%20Awarded%20\\$2.7%20Million%20to%20Support%20Broadband%20Deployment.pdf](https://www.gsfahome.org/admin/news/2022/California%20Rural%20Counties%20Awarded%20$2.7%20Million%20to%20Support%20Broadband%20Deployment.pdf)

6 <https://krcrtv.com/news/local/california-rural-counties-awarded-27-million-to-help-support-broadband-deployment>

than the state of Delaware! Agriculture is a major industry in the Fifth District and the San Diego region. Fallbrook summits and Escondido valleys are covered with groves of avocado and citrus trees. Elsewhere, cattlemen tend their herds in the oak-studded inland valley, and farmers plant and harvest their crops that include strawberries and tomatoes. In springtime, wildflowers carpet the Anza-Borrego Desert.”⁷

Our County Supervisor has discussed what the entire County Board of Supervisors has done to help people in the county on his page. For example, “In September 2021, the Board of Supervisors applied for a grant that will fund 7,400 laptops and mobile internet hotspots for households that lack computers and internet access. The grant also includes a one-year data access plan for the mobile hotspot services to be covered. The County Library will make these devices available for a one-year loan, which includes one laptop and hotspot per household, to mitigate the digital divide. If approved, the County Library would work with nonprofit partners, other County departments, and local schools to ensure that laptops and internet hot spots go to households that are most in need of this equipment.”⁸

As far as applying for and obtaining Community-wide Broadband benefits, for which there is federal and state money available, it seems that our county supervisor has done nothing. In April 2021, someone published a “letter” in the Village News addressing this as follows: “Last updated 4/7/2021 at 12:05pm. I’ve just read your article in the latest Village News edition, regarding the COVID-19 updates. It was good to see a list of the people who have disabilities or illnesses that are now available to receive vaccines, but it was hard for me to see that one had to have a computer with internet service to access that list. I fully realize that it is 2021, but I can’t believe that I am the only person in San Diego County that does not have internet service and a computer. What would it cost to list a telephone number for help? What would it cost to have a real human on the line.”⁹

7 https://www.supervisorjimdesmond.com/district_5

8 <https://www.supervisorjimdesmond.com/action>

9 <https://www.villagenews.com/story/2021/04/08/opinion/dear-supervisor-jim-desmond/65778.html>

As of January 2021, California has adopted a law that requires a home seller in a designated high fire area built before 2010 to disclose conditions that make the home vulnerable to wildfires. These disclosures are relating to the actual property being sold, not necessarily the community as a whole.¹

Beginning July 1, 2021 any seller of property in a high or very high fire hazard zones shall provide documentation to the buyer stating that the property is in compliance with laws pertaining to state law defensible spaces (Public Resources Code 4291**) or local vegetation management ordinances, or in certain cases the buyer and seller will agree that the buyer is to obtain the documentation after close. *Id.*

The law also requires the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to enter into a joint powers agreement with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal FIRE) to administer a comprehensive wildfire mitigation and assistance program to encourage cost-effective structure hardening and facilitate vegetation management, contingent upon appropriation by the Legislature. The JPA was formed in December 2021.² BUT, as of August 2022, Cal OES was advertising to hire a director of the program., so it is likely not operational yet.³

The pdf report of the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee Meeting from September 2022 has a page entitled “Home Hardening Retrofit Financial Assistance,” but there is no financial assistance information mentioned below the title. Nevertheless, the State has made at least “suggestions” for hardening available at <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/hardening-your-home/#Home%20Hardening>

There is apparently a “Pilot Program” related to the State effort that will not apply to most of us, but could apply to some, at <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/office-of-the-director/operations/recovery-directorate/hazard-mitigation/california-wildfire-mitigation-program/#California%20Wildfire%20Mitigation%20Program>

Qualifications

To qualify, participants must:

- Be the legal property owner in an eligible area at the time of application
- Be willing to participate in a home assessment to determine the measures which may be taken to safeguard your home
- Be willing to sign a right of entry to your property and allow contractors to implement the defensible space and home hardening activities

CAL FIRE has a San Diego Strategic Fire Plan that consists of the following principles:

- Foster fire prevention and safety through community education and training.
- Promote structural hardening and defensible space techniques to improve structure survivability.
- Establish strategic fuel breaks and reduced fuel zones to improve community defense.
- Maintain dependable ingress and egress routes.

In the meantime, the California “Ready for Wildfire” web site has information on many topics for individual property owners. <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/>

1 <https://wildfiretoday.com/2021/01/07/new-california-law-requires-seller-of-home-to-disclose-vulnerability-to-wildfires/>

2 <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/wofni1sh/cwmp-jpa-agreement.pdf>

3 <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/office-of-the-director/operations/recovery-directorate/hazard-mitigation/california-wildfire-mitigation-program/>

The site has information on insurance through the California Fair Plan in its “prevent” tab, even though insurance never prevented anything. It also has information on “grants” because “state and federal agencies have grant programs that administer funds for projects that help support their direct mission and the state of California’s mission to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve public health and the environment.”⁴ Some of the grants may be useful here, other less so. And their real purpose may be different from ours. The “California Forest Improvement Program,” for example, says that it “is to ensure adequate high quality timber supplies, related employment and other economic benefits, and the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of a productive and stable forest resource system for the benefit of present and future generations.” Which sounds more like supporting the timber industry than protecting homes.

Meanwhile, the Wildfire Prevention and Wildfire Resilience grants, which would have required us to be represented by the County last year, are “closed.” According to the Prevention “Procedural Guide,” “CAL FIRE’s FP Grants Program provides funding for fire prevention projects and activities in and near fire threatened communities that focus on increasing the protection of people, structures, and communities. Funded activities include hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education with an emphasis on improving public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” The guide says that only certain types of entities are eligible to apply.

Those are:

- State Agencies
- Federal Agencies
- Native American Tribes
- Joint Powers Authority (JPA) if the entities involved are eligible applicants
- Local agencies, including:
 - City, county, or city and county
 - Fire protection districts
 - Community services districts
 - Water districts
 - Resource conservation districts
 - Special districts
- Certified local conservation corps
- Fire Safe Councils with a 501(c)(3) designation
- Other qualified non-profit organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation

In situations where a local government has contracted with CAL FIRE for fire protection services, CAL FIRE is considered a local government for purposes of this grant program.

The list of Wildfire Prevention Grant recipients is 170 pages long, and includes a “Ramona West End Fire Safe Council” “to remove dead and dying trees on private property within the SRA of the Ramona Community Plan Area,” and the “Poway Neighborhood Emergency Corps” which says it will use the money to “enhance our wildfire prevention and safety educational outreach with a strong social media campaign and further our collaborative engagement.” It appears that there are annual grants of this type, but we do not have an entity that can be the recipient of any such grant. Perhaps we need one.

Recognizing that “Past land and fire management practices have had the effect of increasing the intensity, rate of spread, as well as the annual acreage burned on these lands,” there is a “Vegetation Management Program” that “is a cost-sharing program that focuses on the use of prescribed fire, and

4 <https://www.fire.ca.gov/grants>

some mechanical means, for addressing wildland fire fuel hazards and other resource management issues on State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands.”⁵ According to the CAL FIRE State Responsibility Area Viewer, all of Rainbow is in an SRA.

(<https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=468717e399fa4238ad86861638765ce1>)

In short, it seems that if we want to tap into any programs for money to help harden the community, we will need some additional entity to be the “recipient” of any such money. Maybe our Supervisor can help us create and maintain such an entity, but there has been no apparent appetite to do so up to now.

⁵ <https://www.fire.ca.gov/programs/resource-management/resource-protection-improvement/vegetation-management-program/>