

# Spring Valley Community Planning Group

## \*\*\* MEETING MINUTES \*\*\*

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

### A. ROLL CALL – QUORUM

Present: Gonzalez, Lowes, Robles, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Gibbons, Pearson, Custeau, Woodruff

Absent: Morgan, Snyder

Vacant: 2

**B. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION** – Opportunity for the public to speak to the Planning Group on any subject matter within our jurisdiction that is not on the posted agenda.

Pierce pointed out our 2 vacancies. Malcolm Gettman spoke on how does land use impact social structure. Decisions should not be emotionally charged, but fact based. He cautioned the group to act judiciously. A campaign staffer for Colin Parent, La Mesa city council, spoke on the candidate running for state assembly seat including the Spring Valley Area. The campaign is focusing on homelessness, housing, roads and public safety. A rep from District 1 spoke of grant money available and how to apply.

**C. ACTION ITEMS** with designation as to whether there will be vote or not on the item:

**1. Approval of Minutes: 5/28/2024 & 7/9/2024.** Vote on this item.

5/28/24: Motion and second to accept: Yes 10 (Gonzalez, Lowes, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Gibbons, Pearson, Custeau, Woodruff), No 0, Abstain 1 (Robles), Absent 2, Vacant 2. Motion passes.

7/9/24: Motion and Second to accept (Robles/Gibbons) Yes 9 (Gonzalez, Lowes, Robles, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Gibbons, Pearson) No 0, Abstain 2 (Custeau, Woodruff) Absent 2 (Snyder, Morgan) Vacant 2. Motion passes.

**2. Discussion: Capital Improvement Projects Update with Murali Pasumarthi.** No vote on this item

Ryan Lau and Mike Kenny presented. Mike spoke about operations and maintenance project with the transportation dept. retiming of signals at Jamacha and Sweetwater roads and the 125 onramps. Recently reviewed the signals at Sweetwater Road and St. George St and are starting the process to add traffic signals, installed a four way stop at Tyler and Central and restriping near the school on Tyler to accommodate pedestrians. Will be canvassing Spring Valley for replacing old and faded signs. Ryan spoke on upcoming larger capital improvement projects. 10 miles of road will be resurfaced in the next year. Quarry Road bridge is undergoing environmental review for completion in 2025, certification of right-of-way in 2026 and construction in 2027. Apple St sidewalk project, 550 feet on the south side of Apple between Grand and Ramona, has been awarded and the project may begin soon. Presioca St sidewalk project is in discussion. This is between Jamacha and Birch. Issue is shutting of commercial driveways to install sidewalks. Construction is projected for late 2025. Jamacha Blvd and La Presa Ave intersection improves, protected left turn lanes traffic signals are going in and pedestrian visibility is being improved. This contract should be awarded this month. Ryan also reviewed the current sewer projects are in design or going out to bid for construction in 2025 and beyond. Custeau asked about the Quarry Road bridge project. Ryan says that any mitigated declaration can be approved by the director of PDS. Member of the public asked about speeding on Ildica Streets and that it be studied at length. Robles thanked Public Works for responding to requests here in Spring Valley. Malcolm Gettmann asked about substantial erosion and how it may affect sewer outfall projects. Transportation needs to look at Parks creating a T intersection at Quarry Road and Lakeview Ave. needs to be a four-way stop. Mike said they will work on these issues.

**3. Informational Item: Law Enforcement Update with California Highway Patrol and San Diego County Sheriff's Office.**

No Vote on the item.

Lt. Rick Rodriguez and SGT Ryan Duran represented the CHP from the El Cajon Station. They are responsible for traffic control in

the unincorporated area. Detailed the only fatality to date, a wrong way driver on SR 125. Also described reporting methods for any traffic issue. Email is [680-trafficcomplaint@chp.ca.gov](mailto:680-trafficcomplaint@chp.ca.gov). A missing No Parking sign was discussed, but that is a Public Works issue. Lowes spoke on cars doing doughnuts at night and the CHP responded to keep them informed, the more information, the better, as they are experiencing short staff. Community member asked about speeding on Troy St. CHP focuses on the major arteries in the area. Community member Malcolm Gettmann if there could be a CHP/Sheriff office in south Spring Valley. CHP agreed as when they are parked, they are doing paperwork. Robles asked about people camping/living in parked vehicles and that the Sheriff says there is nothing that they can do. Lt Mike Gonzales, San Diego County Sheriff, responded that, right now, people are allowed to sleep in their vehicles. But they can't litter or park there more than 72 hours. RVs can't dump their tanks when street parking. The more information, the better, so that law enforcement can investigate. CHP handles state property and there is the Sheriff's HART for homeless outreach. They are waiting on guidance, from various local government entities, on the U.S. Supreme Court on the Oregon homeless decision. Recent state law defines how to handle expired tags on the street. Community member Angelica asked about response time to an emergency. The station provides law enforcement to 100 sq miles and 130,000 people. Community member asked about the homeless camping at a park-n-ride near the swap meet. Capt Amber Baggs, county sheriff, introduced herself. Crime stat are typical for this time of year, no anomalies. Lowes asked about staffing and the lieutenant rought up the number of deputies in training and when they will join patrol. Community member mentioned a homeless person was moved from the north side of SR 94, but has now reappeared on the southside. How to remedy this? Make a nonemergency call.

**4. Discussion: County of San Diego Sheriff's Office: License Plate Readers in Spring Valley. Presenter: Lt Michael Pepin.**

No Vote on this item.

This item was tabled at the request of the Sheriff's Dept.

**5. Discussion & Letter: Troy Street Emergency Tiny Shelters and Letter to Governor Newsom to Recoup 10M for Unhoused in Spring Valley. Vote on this item.**

Chairperson Pierce read a statement concerning allowing a respectful and diverse dialogue regarding this subject. In October of 2021, the Board of Supervisors directed the Office of Homeless Solutions to seek emergency solutions to those experiencing homelessness in east county. in 2023, the Governor offered 150 cabins to the county. In March of 2024, the Supervisors approved a location on Jamacha Road in Spring Valley. In June, that decision was rescinded. This month, the Supervisors went forward with the Troy St location and the state withdrew the \$10 million 150 cabin funding to allocate to another community. This group will consider asking the Governor to reallocate the money back to San Diego County. This item is now open for discussion. Right now, there is no draft letter. Robles asked if this discussion is only about trying to get the funding back or tie it to the new project. Pierce said the letter can contain any intent until we complete. Robles asked why are we discussing the Troy St location since it is outside our planning area. The new location is in the city of Lemon Grove, but is on the east side of SR 125, so it appears to be Spring Valley. But the county said they will operate and pay for the facility. Eugenio asked about access to the property, in Lemon Grove or Spring Valley. Pierce said the group is only addressing the letter to the Governor. Wallace wanted to know what the money is intended for. She wants the money to be available for general homeless services, not just a cabin project. Robles said the money was originally to operate the tiny home project on Jamacha Road. Lowes supports tiny homes if properly managed and for mothers with children and veterans. Pearson agrees with Lowes about tiny homes, something has to be done. He cited a successful operation in San Fernando Valley under Hope the Mission since 2017. He does not support camps of drug addicts near schools and residences. Pearson wants the letter to request the money to support a similar project to Hope the Mission. Wallace feels that the new location is still Spring Valley and she wants to see a plan for this location. She asks that the group request the money back and then have the community decide how it will be used. We need a better solution than a bunch of tiny homes. Robles said there is a difference between the county's proposed cabins and those used by Hope the Mission, which are more like homes. We need to be very specific on what we are asking the money for, if we refer to the cabin projects. We are better suited to ask for the money back and not tie it to a specific project. Pearson stressed we have a transitional housing need and there is no intent to house addicts and criminals in the community. Shaffer spoke on the previous

discussion on capital improvement projects. We expanded our list of needs as the county informed us of the variety of funds available. Hope the Mission fits within the definition of what the state/federal money can be used for. We need to know how the money can be used. Homelessness is a complex problem that will take multiple solutions to overcome. He is disappointed that we lost this funding of the Jamacha Road tiny cabins as this is one solution we have lost. He asked the community, what do you want us to do; give us solutions? Gonzalez's understanding is that we will request the money back from the state and that the money would not be for any specific project or even community. We need to discuss more than "not in my backyard (NIMBY)", but are suggested solutions? Gibbons spoke about how should we support the homeless, not get rid of them. We do not need specific purposes for the money, but to just state why we want the money back in a way that the Governor will listen. Custeau said that the community is concerned about the addicted being congregated in one place. This group was never told the details of the first project on Jamacha Road. We need to help those who are there through circumstances beyond their control. The addicted homeless need to be forced into rehabilitation. He feels the funding got pulled because the county didn't do their homework and address the community's concerns. He believes that asking for the money back is beyond the scope of the group, the county should do it. Woodruff agrees that it is beyond the scope of our group on how the money should be spent. Due to the numbers, community speakers will be limited to 2 minutes each. Jeff Wenger (spelling needed on these speakers' names) stressed that we should not ask for the funding back, that there are resources now that are not being utilized. This is just an excuse to have more empty beds. This is not a NIMBY situation, they are already here. There are too many unanswered questions and too many refusing services. James Burns said that the street location is too close to schools, rehab must be included, stop virtue signaling, and reject the state funding. Malcolm Gettmann spoke of an costly encampment fire in 2017 that severely injured a firefighter. We need to find out who these people are and their circumstances. Ask for the money back but have standards. Ken King is against the cabins and we should not ask for the money back. Troy St project was just a moved Jamacha Rd project, to a new location. It was pre-approved, without public comment. The cabins are no better than sleeping in a car. A member of the Spring Valley Coalition 2024 says the community did not fail in holding the funds, the county failed. She felt that there has been social media bullying by CPG members and that the Supervisor, Montgomery-Steppe, lied about the approval at the July 16th meeting, saying she would wait to do an approval. Larry is a Lemon Grove resident and owns a business across from the Troy St site. Has been putting up with the homeless for years. If Lemon Grove wants this, put the camp in Lemon Grove. There are empty buildings in Lemon Grove that can be used. Mental services are required from what he has seen of behavior in the neighborhood. Dana agrees with what has been said. Craig said the Supervisors are at fault for not telling anyone what they planned for the Jamacha Rd location. These are not tiny homes, but sleeping cabins. Not for families or the elderly. Asking for the money, means it will be spent on something, but no one knows what will work. Another community member rejects the Troy St location for any type of project. No nearby grocery stores, just liquor, nearby schools. Do it like Chula Vista and put the camp in an industrial area. A camp near homes drops property values. Another community member spoke of a nearby sober living facility and the crime it brought to her neighborhood. Liana LeBaron, a current Lemon Grove city councilmember, asks the public to understand the difference between her position and the CPG members. On 6.24.24, Montgomery-Steppe sent a letter to the Governor saying that Lemon Grove officials supported the Troy St location. This is not true, this proposal has not yet been reviewed. Victor Vega said 8 out of 10 people offered help, refuse it. Put these cabins in the coastal communities, the east county is overburdened with not enough law enforcement or nearby services. Stephanie Becker says the CPG has no plan but asks for the \$10 million back. Nobody even knows whether the Troy St is in Lemon Grove or Spring Valley. Things just kind of happen, so why should we trust the CPG with the money, since it will just go to the county anyway. She is suspicious that CPG members may have a vested interest in the project. She noted that there are group members on other boards as well. Kathy Smith agrees with the previous speaker. She said that the county has always stated that, if a community does not have shelter, nothing can be done about the homeless. Now the proposed cabins are restricted to families and vets, so the rest are not taken care of. A community member cited a number of transitional living homes in her area and her property is abused by their residents. The project in question will bring in more homeless and not deal with the current population. She says the state has wasted billions as the problem grows. Rosie hears miscommunication regarding asking for money back and what to do with it. The resources are already out there to help with addiction. No one knows where the money goes. Juan cited the large area covered by few deputies and then we will have

this tiny home village to watch. He states that the group is nonresponsive. Craig wants to know, why not La Jolla or Del Mar? A community member cited our agenda as very specific about why we would ask for the money. Group members made a point of order to clarify the intent of the letter. Robles discussed the item with the chair and felt it was not accurate. Chair Pierce clarified that the item is two separate topics. Maria Brown is a resident of Lemon Grove and said there is no trust in elected officials, that the CPG had not been given any information on the 2 sleeping cabin projects, that money should not be asked for if there is no plan. Jonathan asked that the group have requirements for the money, if it takes 5 years to get a traffic light how long to get a solution for homelessness that impacts so many people? Yolanda Oliver stated it is difficult in Lemon Grove to maintain/make changes to your property in order to stay there. Where are the grants for land owners? The daycare by Lemon Grove sees people drunk and passed out. the kids knew about a death at the park. Kirk Wilder said this is not a solution because it is close to their current situation, with no plumbing, using outhouses. Liana said that we should reach out to Lemon Grove and get a discussion going as a lot of decisions are being made prematurely. Per her, the room said to not ask for the money, but to involve elected officials and the community in planning first. Amanda Colorado said there has been no transparency on how the money will be spent and on the CPG's inability to tell the public what is going on. Chair Pierce acknowledged that public comment was complete and stressed that this item was to gather input toward further discussion on the item. Shaffer said we are volunteers, we have vacancies, not enough people sign up for this job, he is laughing at our portrayal as some kind of county henchman and he encourages the public to come back when we discuss signage or public roads. Community member (Stephanie?) wanted an apology rather than an explanation. Lowes took the residents of Lemon Grove to task for not working with their political reps. Gibbons also stressed that this is not a Spring Valley situation, it is Lemon Grove so talk to those representatives. Public members keep stating that our group represents Spring Valley. Chair Pierce helps with polling the homeless and he sees the ones who are working and are in need of transition housing. The public is in denial if they believe there is no homeless problem. The group is trying to start the conversation, but the county will have to provide the solution. Motion by Pearson that the governor return the \$10 million to fund the Troy St homeless cabins. No second, the motion fails.

#### **6. Discussion: Address SVCPG Vacant Seats and high number of member absences. Vote on this item**

Chair Pierce read the rule regarding absences and brought up member Heaven Morgan's record. Discussion about what the group would vote on, it would be to acknowledge Morgan's forfeiture of the seat. Custeau says a better method is to have the absent member resign, but no one has been able to reach Morgan. Pierce was able to textually reach Morgan on one occasion and although she had gone through some issues, she responded that she still had a desire to be on the planning group. Pierce does not feel comfortable asking her to resign. Gonzalez suggested that the vice chair make that contact. Pearson stressed that 'shall' is mandatory regarding forfeiture. Robles asked about new candidates and if we have candidates, to approach Morgan to resign. Wallace says we have an obligation to be here, Morgan should be communicating about her absences. Wallace moves that Morgan be removed from the board; Gibbons seconded. Robles asked that we use this meeting to state we will take action at the next meeting to remove Morgan. That way there is notice given. Custeau asked if Morgan had been in contact about missing further meetings since her last contact. She has not. Malcolm Gettmann said that the motion should state that the group accept the forfeiture of the position. Wallace amended her motion to quote the bylaws regarding forfeiture. Gibbons seconded. Vote is Yes 6 (Wallace, Eugenio, Gibbons, Pearson, Custeau, Woodruff), No is 3 (Gonzalez, Robles, Shaffer), Abstain 2 (Lowes, Pierce), Absent 2 (Morgan, Snyder), Vacant 2. Motion fails. This item will be added to the next agenda as there will be a change in a further attempt to contact Morgan.

#### **D. GROUP BUSINESS**

1. Announcements: Pierce said there is an ice cream social at the Spring Valley Community Church, Bancroft and Olive, sponsored by the Spring Valley Community Alliance (SVCA). July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2pm to 4pm. Robles asked that the agenda go out in another manner as he has had trouble receiving it. Custeau suggested we put a bridge near Avocado on the agenda for an update. Pierce will reach out to the community member for details. Wallace said it is national night out at the Skyline Church on August 6th

2. Reports:

□ Chair none

CSA 128 none

TAC none

Highway cleanup Requested that Caltrans mow the tall grass, trash clean up on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 8am.

APG SANDAG has started to recognize that the APG rep is there, proposal to having an unincorporated area summit to have community members and leaders speak to SANDAG on area matters. Custeau will encourage APG reps to bring up the 125/94 exchange often. SANDAG just did an evacuation tour looking at roadways that are critical to disaster escape.

Other Wallace asked if the election application material can be done electronically. No, best to go to the ROV and do it there.

3. Next SVCPG meeting: August 13, 2024

## **E. ADJOURNMENT 8:59pm**

### **PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

We strive to protect personally identifiable information, by collecting only information necessary to deliver our services. All information collected becomes public record, subject to inspection and copying by the public, unless an exemption in law exists. In the event of conflict, governing the County's disclosure of records, the County ordinance or other law will control. You can review any personal information collected about you. You may recommend changes to your personal information, which you believe is in error, by submitting a written request that shows, credibly, the error. If you believe your personal information is being used for purposes other than those intended, you may contact us. In all cases, we will take reasonable steps to verify your identity, before granting access or making corrections.

### **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.