

Valley Center Community Planning Group

Approved Minutes for a Virtual Zoom meeting held on **September 14, 2020** at 7:00 p.m.

Delores Chavez Harmes, **Chair**; Kevin Smith, **Vice-Chair**; James Garritson, **Secretary**

A=Absent; Ab=Abstention; DRB=Valley Center Design Review Board; N=Nay; P=Present; R=Recused; VCCPG=Valley Center Community Planning Group; VCPRD=Valley Center Parks & Recreation District; Y=Yea

A. Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81811721373?pwd=NS9RRktlSkRHalRRdEI2KzBJMW1idz09?>

Meeting Meeting ID: 818 1172 1373 Password: VCCPGSept

B. Roll Call

- Meeting was called to order at **7:00 p.m.** and a Quorum was established with **12 members present.**
- Lisa Adams - **P**
- Jeana Boulos - **P**
- William Del Pilar - **P**
- Susan Fajardo - **A**
- Julia Feliciano - **P**
- James Garritson - **P**
- Delores ChavezHarmes-**P**
- Steve Hutchison - **P**
- Joey Martinez - **A**
- Matt Matthews - **P**
- Kathleen McCabe - **P**
- LaVonne Norwood - **P**
- ~~James Radden - **A**~~
- Kevin Smith - **P**
- Renee Wolf - **P**

Guests:

- David Ross
- Jim Bernet
- Ashley Smith
- Bunny and Roland Horakh and Mrs. Leichfuss
- Chief Napier
- Erik
- Barnaba
- Afuller
- Regina Ochoa
- Mark Turner
- Justin Salter
- Holly's iPhone
- Matthew Winter
- Corinne Lytle Bonine
- Micah Mitrosky
- Crystal's iPhone
- Al Stehly
- Susan Herrera
- Alysha stehly
- Dave Bohorquez

C. Pledge of Allegiance - Mr. Smith

D. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting of August 10, 2020.

- **Motion: To approve the August 10, 2020 Minutes.**
- **Maker/Second:** Norwood/McCabe
- **Motion Carries 11-0-0 (Y-N-Ab). Ms. Boulos arrived at the meeting after this vote.**

E. Public Comments: Members of the public may address the Planning Group on any topic not on the agenda.

- Jim Bernet, of the Valley Center Fire Foundation, asked to speak on the Valley Center Battery Storage project. He will speak during the action item on the agenda.
- Mr. Smith mentioned that the October 12 meeting falls on Columbus Day and wanted to discuss changing this meeting date. This topic was moved to subcommittee reports-Member Updates.
- Valley Center Fire Chief, Joe Napier shared that he will address agenda items that are related to fire.

F. Action items (VCCPG advisory vote may be taken on the following items)

1) Arco PDS2015-STP-15-012 (Harmes): Informational -- New updated sign plans submitted with external illumination for wall and monument.

- Chair Harmes shared that new plans were submitted by Arco to the DRB. The developer met with the DRB and Mr. Smith shared that the revised plans show all lighting is now exterior lit. He also shared that the lighting design is much better looking than previous design plans that were submitted. Chair Harmes shared the Planning Group and DRB worked well together with Sean Oberbauer of the County to present a united front to the architect and developer resulting in lighting that adheres to the Valley Center design review guidelines.

2) Valley Center Battery Storage PDS2020-STP-20-011 (initially presented as Terra Gen Battery Storage) (Matthews/Harmes): Update – County zoning hearing August 27, 2020. Zoning change for the project was approved by the County.

- Jim Bernet, of the Valley Center Fire Foundation, shared that a \$25,000 donation has been made to the Valley Center Fire Department prior to the meeting held tonight. The company will provide an additional \$150,000 donation towards building a new fire station if the planning board does not delay the project.
- Dr. Matthews shared his concerns that the donations might appear as a conflict of interest. Chair Harmes also expressed the same concerns and sought guidance from county counsel. The result from county counsel is that as long as no endorsement of a political candidate or measure is taken by the planning group, there would be no conflict of interest.
- Mark Turner shared that their company has always wanted to work with the community and provide benefits. The Planning Group already shared that they had fire concerns. He is keenly aware of the community's concerns for fire and feels this would help mitigate the risks and add benefit to the entire community and the Valley Center Fire District. He explained that this battery storage project will prevent outages during fires and heat waves. This project will come online by 2021. Consultants believe that the direct and indirect benefits could amount to \$40,000,000 over time.
- Dr. Matthews has concerns that neighboring property owners might lose property value once this project is built. Mark Turner shared that there is no longer opposition for the project among adjacent property owners. Mr. Turner also mentioned having had conversation with Mr. Corley, who owns property adjacent to the SDG&E site and who also shared at a previous planning board meeting that he is interested in building a lithium battery storage facility on his property. Mr. Turner is hopeful that his company can bring this project online before the next fire season and provide benefits for the community.
- Chair Harmes shared that building another fire station will help lower fire insurance premiums for property owners. It will also help emergency response to the additional 1,400 homes which are being and will be built. An additional fire station is a requirement to keep up with the growth that is taking place in Valley Center. A new fire station is a big win for the entire community.
- The County has already approved this project in spite of an appeal submitted by the planning group.
- Mr. Garritson asked for clarification about donation funds and how they are used for the Valley Center Fire Department Foundation. Chief Napier explained that the Valley Center Fire Department Foundation is a charitable organization. It is no different than other County charitable organizations.

- Chief Napier has never met with Mark Turner. He is pleased about the donation that was provided to the Valley Center Fire Department Foundation. The Foundation was created to help achieve the goals of the VC Fire District, which includes updating twenty year old fire equipment and apparatus as well as raising funds for a new fire station. Funds cannot go to wages and salaries. The community wants developers to help contribute to the building of emergency services in Valley Center. TerraGen complies with this request by their contribution.
 - Mr. Smith believes that the battery storage project will provide numerous benefits to the community while Mr. Del Pilar does not believe so. He states the project looks very good on paper, but in practicality there are still potential problems.
 - There was a discussion between Mr. Smith and Dr. Matthews about making revisions to the motion.
 - Chair Harmes addressed the fact that the County determined the project was safe according to their guidelines. The fire department has also approved the initial project plans. This is an opportunity for the Planning Group to mitigate their losses. Use this opportunity to have a developer pay a considerable amount to the costs of a new fire station that would be able to respond to any potential risk the battery facility provides. The planning board has already submitted an appeal which was overruled for a previous project. The process for an individual to submit an appeal is \$1000.
 - **Motion: To appeal the County decision, as it lacks local community benefits, it has poor project design, and there are battery storage safety concerns.**
 - **Maker/Second:** Matthews/McCabe
 - **Motion Fails 3-8-1 (Y-N-Ab). Mr. Hutchinson abstained, as he is a member of the Fire Board.**
- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| ● Lisa Adams - N | ● James Garritson - N | ● Kathleen McCabe - Y |
| ● Jeana Boulos - N | ● Delores ChavezHarmes-N | ● LaVonne Norwood - N |
| ● William Del Pilar - Y | ● Steve Hutchison - Ab | ● James Radden |
| ● Susan Fajardo | ● Joey Martinez | ● Kevin Smith - N |
| ● Julia Feliciano - N | ● Matt Matthews - Y | ● Renee Wolf - N |

3) Noise Variance PDS2020-VAR-20-017 (Harmes): Informational – Paradise Mtn Rd. & Lake Wohlford Rd, C1030 – Phase 1 Skyline Ranch. SDGE initiative for fire safety strategic undergrounding of electrical wires. Eliminate fire risks, reduce power grid shut offs. Variance allows for work hours beyond Mon-Fri (potential Saturday and Sunday). (no action required)

- Mr. Smith shared that any fees are outside of the ability of the Planning Group to provide advice to the County.

4) Soccer Field PDS2020-MUP-20-009 (Wolf): Major use permit to allow for two outdoor soccer fields, event space for weddings with existing canopy structure and 132 parking spaces.

- Ms. Wolf shared that the project is located along Valley Center Rd. and Vesper Road. The property is flat and the property owners would like to use the land as a benefit to the community.
- Matthew Winter shared a short presentation about the Barnaba Soccer Field project. This project does not involve any construction. The Barnaba family purchased the property in

2011. The proposed project area is 7.6 acres on a 21 acre site. There are not any project traffic problems with the site.

- Mr. Horakh (audience) shared that illegal weddings have taken place on the property. The family shared their concerns about the project and the lack of benefits provided to Valley Center residents. They do not believe that the major use permit fits the A70 zoning of the property, as these regulations are intended to create and preserve areas intended primarily for agricultural crop production. They are very concerned about potential traffic accidents because the property lacks a traffic signal.
- Chair Harmes provided names of community members who have submitted letters of opposition to this project: Jane Scibilia, Sandy Dobbins, Dean Nichols, Al Stehly, Lynne Leichtfuss.
- Matthew Winter would like to address any project concerns that the family and community has at the next Planning Group meeting.
- Ms. Wolf asked Matthew to address some of the concerns that the Horakh family shared.
- Soccer events would only take place on weekends. Club teams are always looking for space to play soccer tournaments and to practice.

5) Park Land Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) (Norwood): Informational – Request for 2020-2021 park land dedication ordinance and recreation programming priority lists.

- Ms. Norwood shared a brief description about this ordinance and asked that it be on the October agenda as she needs to coordinate information with VC Parks and Rec.

6) Valley Center Professionals PDS2020-STP-20-008 (McCabe): Update – Progress on scoping letter i.e. archaeology, traffic study, phase 1 elements, etc.

- Ms. McCabe provided details about this project. This project will not begin until later next year.

7) Valley Center Corridor Concept Plan: Discussion - Link sent to members. County staff and consultants present themes for the Corridor Concept Plan. Process for providing input on themes also provided.

- Chair Harmes asked all Planning Group members to review this concept plan.
- Chief Napier shared the pros and cons about roundabouts. He provided comments about all three iterations of the plan. He explained that emergency response times are slightly delayed with either a one or two lane roundabout. The Fire Protection District did a roundabout study and saw noticeable delays if multiple roundabouts were built along Valley Center Road. While the plans are beautiful, he has concerns about each iteration of the proposed plans. Valley Center is adding more vehicles to the community. He understands that the community would like a village feel but it should not come at the expense of emergency services.
- Ms. Adams did have a concern about the green bike lane bollard as it might cause the community to lose road space. It also prevents cars from the ability to pull to the side of the road for emergency vehicles. Ms. Norwood also had questions about the project.
- Mr. Garritson shared that he does not agree with the County building any roundabouts along Valley Center Road and was very disappointed to learn that all three options proposed by the county included some type of roundabout. The County has finally built a four lane road and now wants to create bottlenecks again in Valley Center by reducing down to one lane each way.

- Mr. Hutchison shared that roundabouts have numerous environmental benefits and not all residents of Valley Center need to commute to work.
- Susan Herrera (audience) shared concerns that 18 wheelers will struggle delivering goods if roundabouts are placed along Valley Center Road. Truckers might need to drive many more miles to deliver goods and increase carbon emissions and wear and tear on the roads.
- Ms. Feliciano shared that the County spent years improving Valley Center Road to include four lanes and now it is trying to create single lane roundabouts. This plan does not make any sense.

8) County Revitalization (Harmes, Adams, Norwood): Update – Meeting w/ county scheduled for Sept. 23rd to address Emergency Evacuation, Infrastructure and Parks & Rec.

- Chair Harmes shared a brief update on this action item.

G. Subcommittee Reports

1. Community Plan Update (Steve Hutchison, Chair) - Title 8, Division 1 Subdivision Ordinance Amendment

- Mr. Hutchison provided a brief update about the ordinance.

2. Emergency Evacuation (Delores Chavez Harmes, Chair): - Update for August meeting - Ready Set Go Wildfire Safety event at Bates Aug. 22nd joint event with SDGE - Full packet of handouts and information posted on our website - Suggestions for roads/areas for fire/brush abatement - Corridor Concept plan

- Chair Harmes shared information about the 2nd annual wildfire safety fair at Bates Nut Farm on Aug. 22nd. The Valley Center Fire District along with the Greater Valley Center Fire Safe Council and SDG&E created fantastic packets and included numerous resources. The GVCSC will work to address fire concerns along roads. The SDG&E partnership is working very hard to support fire services. Chief Napier appreciates all of the support that SDG&E is providing to the Valley Center Fire District.

3. Mobility (Lisa Adams, Chair): Valley Center Corridor Concept Plan - Traffic Engineering Workshop Wed. Sept. 9th

- Regarding the Events Ordinance, Ms. Adams shared that nonprofits will not pay any fees to hold an event that requires a permit. Annual events that qualify will not need to reapply for new traffic control permits if one previously existed. Additional information is available on the County website. Ms. Adams provided comments to the County requesting bus stop turnouts be included in the VC Corridor Concept Plan to prevent busses from stopping in the traveling lane.

4. Villages (William Del Pilar, Chair) Village Station

5. Parks & Rec (LaVonne Norwood, Chair)

6. Tribal Liaison (Jeana Boulos, Chair)

- Mr. Smith shared that Valley View Casino paid for the construction of a turning lane at the intersection of Valley Center Road and Cole Grade Road. It is part of the traffic mitigation for the recent Valley View Casino improvements.

7. Nominations (Susan Fajardo, Chair)

8. Member Updates (Delores Chavez Harmes, Chair)

- Discussion about changing our next meeting date from October 12 to October 19 due to the Columbus Day holiday. Members were in favor of keeping the original October 12 meeting date.

9. Website (Renee Wolf, Chair)

- Ms. Wolf provided an update about the website.

I. Adjournment

- Next regular meeting of VCCPG: **October 12, 2020 at 7 p.m.**
- **The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.**
- **Minutes were approved on October 12, 2020.**

James Garritson, Secretary