

Valley Center Community Planning Group

Approved Minutes for a regular meeting held on **October 13, 2025** at 7:00 p.m. in the Valley Center Community Hall, 28246 Lilac Road, Valley Center, California 92082.

Dori Rattray, **Chair**; Lisa Adams, **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

Zoom Link: link

A. Roll Call

- The Meeting was called to order at **7:00 p.m.** and a Quorum was established with **14 members present.**
- ~~Lisa Adams~~ - **A**
- Chris Barber - **P**
- Michelle Bothof - **P**
- Delores ChavezHarmes-**P**
- Vlad Ciupitu - **P**
- Susan Fajardo - **P**
- James Garritson - **P**
- Mary Hodson - **P**
- Steve Hutchison - **P**
- Karen Lieber - **P**
- Bob Littlejohn - **P**
- Matt Matthews - **P**
- LaVonne Norwood - **P**
- Dori Rattray - **P**
- Tom Stinson - **P**

B. Pledge of Allegiance - Mr. Hutchison

C. Approval of August 11, 2025 and September 8, 2025 Minutes

- **Motion: To approve the August 11, 2025 Minutes.**
- **Maker/Second:** ChavezHarmes/Barber
- **Motion VOTE 13-0-1 (Y-N-Ab).** Ms. Fajardo abstained, as she was not present at the meeting.
- **Motion: To approve the September 8, 2025 Minutes.**
- **Maker/Second:** Chavez/HarmesStinson
- **Motion VOTE 13-0-1 (Y-N-Ab).** Mr. Littlejohn abstained, as he was not present at the meeting.

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

1. Update on Oliver Smith, past Chair [APPENDIX]

- Mr. Hutchison shared that Oliver Smith passed away last week. He was the Chair of the VCCPG and was very involved in the community of Valley Center. He was an engineer and was engaged with a number of local governing boards. Mr. Hutchison will share with Mr. Garritson the tribute he delivered about Oiver Smith.

2. An overview of the Citrus Quarantine in Valley Center, Garrett Cooper & Jasmine Lopez, Dept. of Agriculture, Weights & Measures, County of San Diego

- Garrett Cooper and Jasmine Lopez introduced themselves and gave a presentation about the agricultural quarantines in the County.
- Jasmine Lopez is the Dept. of Agriculture for the County and provided information about the Asian Citrus Psylid. Huanglongbing (HLB) is a bacterial disease of citrus and citrus relatives. It is caused by the bacteria Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus. There is no known cure for HLB. Once infected, a citrus tree will die.
- CDFA surveyors will collect leaf samples and any ACP life stages from all host plants.
- The insect was first discovered in California in 2008. LA County has 2,003 HLB detections; Orange County has 6,750 detections. Riverside County has 590 infected trees. San Bernardino has 660 infected trees. San Diego County has detected 109 infected trees. Ventura County has found 124 infected trees.
- CDFA shared a map of the areas that are in the HLB Quarantine. CDFA will not treat with chemicals if bees are present.

3. An update from the Office of Jim Desmond, Board of Supervisor, Adrienne Cisneros-Selekman, Community Liaison

- Adrienne thanked community members who showed up to the Butterfield Trails Ranch event. Supervisor Desmond and the community had a great time planting trees.

Butterfield Trails Ranch & Star Valley Park Survey

- “We’re now planning how to use both parks in the future. One idea is to build an intergenerational center—a place where people of all ages can connect. We’re also exploring other park features and programs.”
- <https://engage.sandiegocounty.gov/parks-valley-center-intergenerational-center>

Michael Kenney, Department of Public Works

- Michael provided an update on the Dark Skies ordinances and lighting standards. Michael shared that the Dark Skies Ordinance does not apply to the community of Valley Center. It does apply to the communities of Pauma Valley and Julian. Michael will try to replace lightbulbs that burn out with lighting that is more compliant with the Dark Sky Ordinances.
- Eddie Lain (community) shared details about some lights in Valley Center that he would like to dim or change the color luminosity. CEQA standards do not apply to traffic signals.

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

1. A recap and timeline update on the Cole Grade expansion and SDG&E undergrounding, Bob Littlejohn, Energy Subcommittee Chair (INFORMATIONAL)

- Mr. Littlejohn presented slides about the Cole Grade Road widening project. It will precede utility undergrounding at the Keys Creek location.

- Dewatering will not be needed for utility undergrounding; limited dewatering is needed for new bridge construction.
- Two lanes will remain open during construction most of the time. All powerlines will be undergrounded once this project is completed.

2. A community call to action regarding the Social Equitable Cannabis Program - Information Call on Friday, October 17, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. Matthews/Rattray

- Dr. Matthews and Chair Rattray shared that it is important for a number of people to attend the Social Equitable Cannabis Program Informational meeting this Friday. The CDC has put out Cannabis warnings that “use may have a wide range of health effects on the body and brain.” <https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/index.html>
- Becky Rapp encouraged community members to show up in person if possible to share their concerns about the cannabis equity program.

3. Project Summary Reports, a current list of all projects proposed for Valley Center, Rattray, Chair

- Chair Rattray provided updates about the status of current proposed projects. Starbucks is still waiting for the Albertsons shopping center before it commits.
- Chair Rattray shared that the County reached out to her about the bicycle lane vote last month. *Please state what was said during the conversation with the county staff.*

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F. Subcommittee Reports

Association of Planning – Mr. Hutchison

- There is a meeting sometime in January.

Board of Supervisors - Ms. Norwood

- Ms. Norwood shared that there is a project of 400 homes in the harmony grove area. The project did not have a secondary egress. Supervisor Desmond approved the project with two conditions. One condition was to have bi-annual inspections of the project’s defensible space. The other condition was for staff to research other roads to use as potential egress and report back to the board.

Cannabis – Dr. Matthews

- Information was discussed about the community call to action regarding the Social Equitable Cannabis Program.

Community Plan Update - Ciupitu

- No update.

Enhancement – Ms. Lieber

- There was discussion about a welcome sign into Valley Center.

Design Review Board – Mrs. Bothoff

- No update.

Energy – Mr. Littlejohn

- Information was provided during the Cole Grade expansion and SDG&E undergrounding timeline action item.

Emergency Evacuation – Mrs. ChavezHarmes

- There is a meeting on October 30, 2025.

Government – Mr. Stinson

- Mr. Stinson shared some of the legislation that Governor Newsom recently signed into law. The California Legislature has adjourned until Monday, January 5, 2026.

Mobility – Mr. Barber

- Mr. Barber shared information about streetside vendors. The Department of Public Works is not currently doing anything about roadside vendors. Michael Kenney was the guest speaker for the mobility subcommittee.
- Lake Wohlford Rd. is currently closed. Vendors located at Lake Wohlford Road and Woods Valley Road were permanently closed.

Nominations – Mrs. ChavezHarmes

- No update.

Parks, Rec & Trails – Mrs. Hodson

- Mrs. Hodson provided an update about the PLDO funding. These funds can only be used on larger projects. Please fill out the **Butterfield Trails Ranch & Star Valley Park Survey**. There is a meeting this Wednesday at 1 p.m. about Butterfield Trails Ranch and Star Valley Park. Mrs. ChavezHarmes shared that it is important for the community to make comments about these parks and a potential intergenerational center. San Diego County Parks currently pays \$24,000 a year for outhouses.
- Donna Hein shared that bringing everything up to ADA compliance will cost a little over one million dollars.

Quarterly Chair CPG Update - Rattray

- Chair Rattray shared a number of projects during the Project Summary Reports action item.

Revitalization – Mr. Barber

- Mr. Barber provided updates about a list

Tribal – Mrs. Rattray

- No update.

Chair CPG Update – Rattray

- No update.

Water - Fajardo/Matthews

- A brief update was shared.

G. Adjournment

- Next regular meeting of VCCPG: **November 10, 2025 at 7 p.m.**
- **The meeting adjourned at 9:53 p.m.**
- **Minutes were approved on November 10, 2025**

James Garritson, Secretary

Appendix VCCPG October 13, 2025 Minutes

Oliver Smith Tribute by Steve Hutchison

As you may have heard, Oliver Smith, a former member of the VCCPG and its past chair, died last week on October 7 after a battle with cancer.

For those of you who didn't know Oliver, he was a man dedicated to this community and its wellbeing. Besides serving for years on the planning group, he also served as secretary of the board of the Valley Center Fire Protection District, and as a board member of the Valley Center Municipal Water District. Some of you may know of him through his wife, Janice, who along with their daughter runs Inspirations Quilt Shop here in ValleyCenter.

My first acquaintance with Oliver was in 2009 when I started attending VCCPG meetings regularly. I had applied unsuccessfully to fill a vacancy in the group and Oliver suggested that I instead take a position as a community member on the Mobility Subcommittee, which I did. During his tenure on the VCCPG, Oliver was confronted with overseeing several major projects. One in particular was the revision of the County's General Plan, and especially those parts that affected Valley Center, which culminated in 2011 with adoption by the Board of Supervisors. Sadly, it did not include an updated community plan, but Oliver continued to pursue that goal for the rest of his tenure.

While Oliver and I agreed on many issues brought to the VCCPG, when we did disagree, Oliver generously didn't allow such disagreements to stand in the way of friendship. He strove for cooperation and equanimity as much as possible. Oliver was professionally an engineer, and he routinely considered all the evidence available before making a determination. It was that engineering ethic that guided him through the various land use issues presented to the VCCPG. But, when he was wrong or misinformed, he admitted it and moved forward.

As a member of the fire protection district board, Oliver was active in making the transition from dependence on CALFIRE personnel to our own independent local agency. While he was on the board, the district hired our first independent fire chief, and began the long effort to raise the status and pay of our firefighters and improve the infrastructure that supports them so the community would have lower insurance rates and quicker and more effective emergency responses.

I think Oliver's interest in water as a commodity actually began with a program offered by the water district that introduced him to the extensive infrastructure responsible for collecting, treating and distributing our water. As an engineer, it's not hard to understand his attraction to that system. He continued to serve on that board until this year.

Oliver Smith demonstrated through his engagement in local governing boards the impact a single citizen can have to shape the contours of the community. His willingness to devote his time and energy to wrestle with the decisions put before the community is his legacy, and one we can all appreciate and aspire to emulate.