

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOULEVARD PLANNING GROUP (BPG)**

***** MINUTES/SUMMARY FOR IN-PERSON MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2023 *****

A. MEMBERS PRESENT: 1) Manuel Casanova; 3) Kevin Keane; 4) Donna Tisdale; 5) Michele Strand; 6) Michael Coyne.
MEMBERS ABSENT: 2) Earl Goodnight 7) Nancy Good (EXCUSED).

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (optional):

C. MINUTES/ SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 5TH MEETING:

- ***M/S: Keane/Casanova: Accept January 5, 2023, Minutes/Summary as written: Passed: 5 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAINED.***

D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: No public comments were made.

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

1. **REGIONAL DECARBONIZATION FRAMEWORK (RDF) – COUNTY STAFF PRESENTATION:** This project still focuses on large-scale wind and solar projects in the Boulevard / Jacumba area to allegedly reduce carbon emissions regionally. See details and comment: <https://engage.sandiegocounty.gov/rdf>
 - Presentation by County staffer, Murtaza Baxamusa, with handouts:
 - The RDF has been a 2-year process to date with 5 trips to the Board of Supervisors.
 - Previous feedback from the BPG has been incorporated.
 - Public health / climate impacts and how to adapt.
 - How to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions – decarbonization.
 - Work with new Office of Environmental Justice & Sustainability.
 - The RDF does not have regional enforcement. There is a liaison.
 - There is regional collaboration: Federal, State, and local.
 - One scenario = 150% of regional need can be met with utility wind and solar.
 - Up to 90% of need can be met with solar on commercial and residential rooftops, infill projects, parking lots, and brownfields.
 - Chair Tisdale asked Mr. Baxamusa to identify the two brownfields that are shown on the maps that overwhelmingly target the Boulevard area.
 - He said he did not know that answer but promised to follow up.
 - Tisdale repeated concerns with Boulevard / Jacumba being overly burdened with projects and requested *an independent peer review of the numbers that went into the electricity supply chapter of the RDF and we want the County to take the time needed to vet this 30-year decarbonization plan with County residents.*
 - Mark Ostrander complained that Boulevard and Jacumba are always targeted.
 - Mark Ostrander and Kevin Keane both urged caution regarding the challenges of allowing or encouraging fire prone Electric Vehicles and charging stations in the backcountry.
 - Mr. Baxamusa pointed to maps in handouts with green (ag) and blue (water) areas that can store / sequester carbon.
 - Chair Tisdale commented on previous Soitec Solar projects where staff ignored the ability of chaparral to store carbon. The response then was that when chaparral burns, the carbon is released.
 - Mr. Baxamusa said Staff now knows the conservation value of chaparral. He said when all Climate Action Plans are added up, they are still short.

- It is a challenge to ID real “green jobs” and “green industry”.
- Life cycle / circular economy must be addressed of “renewable energy”, but the RDF only addresses the local emissions / impacts and does NOT address the mining, processing, and manufacturing emissions for wind and solar energy.
- Tisdale stated that water is a major issue for rural industrial wind and solar projects in our fully groundwater dependent backcountry communities. Construction of SDG&E’s 60 + acre ECO Substation, east of Jacumba, required an increase in the over 1 million truck miles (emissions) to haul water from San Diego. They had to increase their original vastly underestimated water needs by millions of gallons and had to increase it several times along with VMT.
- Mr. Baxamusa stated that Water will be added to the 5 elements: Buildings, Electricity, Food Systems & Circular Economy, Land Use & Natural Climate Solutions and Transportation.
- Chair Tisdale and Mark Ostrander repeated concerns that Boulevard and Jacumba qualify as Disadvantaged Communities but are NOT recognized as such.
- Mr. Baxamusa agreed that Boulevard and Jacumba should qualify as Disadvantaged Communities. His research shows lots of poverty and need.
- He accepted Tisdale’s offer to provide a personal tour of our impacted communities.
- The RDF is going back to the Board of Supervisors on or around March 15th.

2. REQUEST TO ENDORSE DRAFT LETTER ON REGIONAL DECARBONIZATION FRAMEWORK (RDF) DEFICIENCIES FROM THE PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION: The billions of dollars of new transmission infrastructure required for large-scale wind and solar was not included for targeted rural communities.

- *M/S: Keane/Casanova: Authorize endorsement of the Protect Our Communities RDF letter and authorize Chair to expand on local impacts: PASSED: 5 YES, 0 NO, 0 ABSTAINED.*

3. REQUEST TO ENDORSE PROPOSAL/DRAFT LETTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ADMITTED WITH AN ADVISORY MEMBER ON SANDAG BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WITH SELECTION OF ONE UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER AND AN ALTERNATE FROM AMONG THE 28 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SPONSOR GROUPS:

- This effort has been coordinated through the Ramona Community Planning Group. To date, the following community planning/sponsor groups have endorsed the proposal: Borrego Springs, Campo, Descanso, Fallbrook, Jacumba, Jamul/Dulzura, Rainbow, Ramona, San Dieguito, Twin Oaks, Valley Center. The proposed term would be 2 years, beginning in January 2023.
- Primary goal is to secure a new Unincorporated Communities Advisory Board Member on the SANDAG Board of Directors.
- We are a 500,000 strong community underrepresented at SANDAG; the agency responsible for regional planning and funding. All five County Supervisors have unincorporated communities in their Districts; proportion varies greatly.
- SANDAG’s Equity mission statement adopted by both the County and SANDAG demonstrates intention to include the underrepresented.
- Upon discussion by those participating, it was determined that in addition to this initiative we could use these meetings as an opportunity for Groups to meet and identify/discuss/share information and ideas on issues of interest to the Unincorporated Communities.

- *M/S: Coyne/Strand: Authorize endorsement of draft letter/proposal for rural communities to be recognized and admitted with a single advisory member on SANDAG Board of Directors: PASSED: 5 YES, 0 NO, 0 ABSTAINED.*

4. SHOULD SUPERVISOR ANDERSON BE CONTACTED REGARDING BACKCOUNTRY RESOURCE CENTER FUNDING?

- During the Board of Supervisors approval of the Rugged Solar project, staff was directed to report back in 180 days with options for 'community benefit' funding in the Mountain Empire area when funding from that project should be solely focused on Boulevard where Rugged Solar will be located.
- Parks & Recreation is reportedly starting on that process now through a stakeholders group. Help is needed to find funding options.
- *M/S: Keane/Casanova: Authorize Chair to contact Supervisor Anderson regarding help with funding for the Back Country Resource Center.*

F. GROUP BUSINESS, ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Reminder: A Notice came in the mail announcing that in April 2023 San Diego Community Power will automatically become our new electric generation service.
- People can opt out and stay with SDG&E but that requires some form of personal action.
- Chelsea Jander of Parks & Recreation is trying to set a date to lead a discussion to hear from our community regarding operational needs for the community center, as well as gaps for intergenerational programming, educational and workforce training.

1. REVITALIZATION & FIRE SAFE COUNCIL REPORTS:

- Mark Ostrander reported that they are applying for a curtain burner as an alternative to chipping. The benefits include the end biochar product that can supplement soil and increase soil's water retention.
- A letter of support from the BPG would be appreciated.
- They are currently operating a food pantry at the community center from 10-2 on Mondays.
- Volunteers are desperately needed for both groups to continue community services and clean up events.
- New Board members are needed for our Real East County Firesafe Council. Meetings are held quarterly with next meeting set for Monday, April 17th.

G. PROJECT UPDATES:

1. NOVEMBER 9TH VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING WAS HELD TO HELP IDENTIFY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE UNINCORPORATED REGION:

- The County is requesting public input to expand the identification of "Environmental Justice Communities". Contact: Denise Vo: PDS.LongRangePlanning@sdcounty.ca.gov ; 858-505-6677. Project website: <https://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/longrangeplanning/ejcriteria.html> .

2. TERRA-GEN'S BOULDER BRUSH FACILITIES (SUBSTATION GEN-TIE) PDS2022-MUP-19-002TE:

- *The County vested Terra-Gen's project so their permit Time Extension application has been withdrawn.*
- On October 21, Judge Ronald Frazier granted Intervenor-Defendant Campo Band of Diegueno Mission Indians' Motion to Dismiss the legal challenge to the County's approval of this project, due to their sovereign immunity: <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/pds/ceqa/BoulderBrush.html>. An appeal is in process by a non-profit.

3. 74 MW RUGGED SOLAR PDS2017-MUP-12-007W1 MAJOR USE PERMIT MODIFICATION APPROVED ON 10-12-22. CONSTRUCTION EXPECTED TO START WITHIN A YEAR OR SO:

- The developer agreed to remove the concertina wire from fencing; to reduce interior pole height to 40ft; and to include additional \$25,000 to community benefit donation. The Board of Supervisors approved the project on October 12 with direction to the Chief Administrative Officer to report back to

the Board within 180 days with the three options for the Mountain Empire area:

<https://bosagenda.sandiegocounty.gov/cob/cosd/cob/doc?id=0901127e80f2ae72>

4. **DECORATIVE COMMUNITY SIGN:** Waiting for response to our interest from Kenton Jones at DPW.
5. **SDG&E's BOULEVARD MICROGRID & STRATEGIC UNDERGROUNDING:** CPUC approved the project on 6/23/22. It will serve selected Boulevard and Campo Reservation facilities. Work has started.
6. **100 MW STARLIGHT SOLAR PLUS BATTERIES PLANNED FOR 570 ACRES IN 8 AREAS OF JEWEL VALLEY AREA; MAJOR USE PERMIT (MUP) APPLICATION SCOPING LETTER: PDS2022-MPA-22-006. MAJOR USE PERMIT APPLICATION IS PENDING.**
 - New 20 MW Power Purchase Agreement with SDG&EPOWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT REPORTED WITH SDG&E:
7. **TERRA-GEN'S 252 MW-60 TURBINE CAMPO WIND PROJECT. ON OCTOBER 27th THE 9th CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS DIMISSED THE LEGAL CHALLENGE BASED ON TRIBAL SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY:**
 - In 2021, the FAA approved the project for second time despite SO CAL TRACON objections over significant aviation impacts. An appeal of FAA approval is still in process at the 9th Circuit.
8. **90 MW JACUMBA VALLEY RANCH ENERGY PARK (JVR SOLAR); APPROVED BY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON 8-18-21. CEQA LAWSUIT WAS FILED AND DISMISSED. AN APPEAL HAS BEEN FILED:**
 - 90 megawatt (MW) solar energy facility and a battery energy storage system of up to 90 MW (360 MWh) on 613 acres. Project documents are posted at:
<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/ceqa/MUP-18-022.html>.
9. **TERRA-GEN'S 126 MW TORREY WIND PROJECT WITH 30-4.2 MW TURBINES: PDS2018-MUP-18-014:**
 - No project progress reported since approximately 2018. Torrey Wind will rely on Campo Wind's approved but not yet built Boulder Brush Substation. Terra-Gen was granted another project time extension through March 22, 2023.
<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov//content/sdc/pds/ceqa/TorreyWindNOP.html>
 - The CAISO Grid Queue report (#2177) shows a Boulder Brush Hybrid with 105.8 MW wind and 314 MW battery storage with an online date of 6/1/25:
<http://www.caiso.com/PublishedDocuments/PublicQueueReport.xlsx>
10. **60 MW 420 ACRE BOULEVARD SOLAR MUP12-010TE PDS2012-3300-12-00 @ 796 Tierra Del Sol Road:**
 - No project progress reported since 2014. The Permit was set to expire at the end of July 2022. Another Major Use Permit Time Extension is reportedly being processed. Property is for sale.
 - It has been confirmed by Mr. Haagen that there is no easement across Empire Ranch for gen-tie line.
11. **ENERGIA SIERRA JUAREZ (ESJ) WIND II-EXPANSION COMMENCED OPERATIONS:**
 - FEB 8, 2022: Sempra commenced operations of their 108 MW (26-Vestas V150-4.2MW) expansion of existing 155 MW ESJ Wind I project (47-3.3 MW turbines) on 13,000 acres south of the border just east of Jacumba and Ejido Jacume. Energy is exported cross border to SDG&E's ECO Substation. Full capacity at build out is 1,000-1,200 MW.
12. **SEMPRA'S CIMMARON WIND:** New 300 MW wind & 500 MW Volta Mexicali battery storage project in Mexico announced for Jacumba border area. Both projects to connect cross border at SDG&E's ECO Substation.
<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/business/story/2022-10-28/sempra-power-purchase-deal-with-santa-clara>
13. **TULE WIND PHASE II-69MW:** Currently permitted to erect up to 24 new turbines on State land and the Ewiiapayaap Reservation, with a capacity of 69 megawatts, as expansion to existing 131.1 MW Tule Wind I with 57 -2.3 MW turbines.: <https://www.eastcountymagazine.org/state-approves-tule-wind-phase-ii-opponents-voice-concern-eagles-wildlife-residents>

H. MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:30 PM: NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023.

Minutes approved by Group on April 6, 2023

Michele Strand, Secretary: 

For More information contact Donna Tisdale, Chair at 619-766-4170 or tisdale.donna@gmail.com; Current and past meeting agendas and approved minutes are posted on the County website @ <http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/gpupdate/comm/blvd.html>