

CREST-DEHESA-GRANITE HILLS-HARBISON CANYON SUBREGIONAL PLANNING GROUP. Minutes of the meeting on 8 May 2023, at Olde Ironside Park, Harbison Canyon.

A. ROLL CALL. At 6:35 PM Planning Group Chair Darin Wessel requested the Roll Call to open the meeting. Planning Group members Rich, Ulm, Nehring, Wessel, Bretz, Manning, Lutz-Partain, Scholl, and Lucas were present, forming a quorum of 9. Member Becker was absent, but excused. Member Wilbur was absent, but not excused. Seat 4, Seat 12 and Seat 13 are vacant.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (optional). The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Member Pat Ulm moved that the Planning Group approves the minutes of its meeting on 10 April 2023 as submitted by Secretary Bretz. The motion passed (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION. No member of the Planning Group requested to speak.

Crest resident Kandy Franklin requested that the Planning Group reviews and discusses, as an agenda item at its June meeting, the funding and actions by County Department of Parks and Recreation, regarding improvements for South Lane Park.

Another Crest resident spoke about the terrible pothole problems of the roads in Crest. (Group member Ron Nehring suggested calling the County at one of its phone numbers for Road Problems: (877) 684-800; (858) 694 3850. Chair Darin Wessel commented that in the fall the County will be seeking input for its annual List of Road Improvement Priorities.)

A third Crest resident spoke about stormwater runoff/drainage problems related to County's lack of adequate maintenance of public culverts, and lack of its response to repeated calls about flooding issues attributable to County's inaction. (Group Member Michael Rich observed that Crest is experiencing unusually high groundwater and flowing surface springs this year, which is contributing to local flooding issues.) A fourth Crest resident commented that many homes in Crest have short/shallow septic drainage fields on small lots, which could fail to percolate properly/adequately when groundwater level is unusually high; and he commented that one should be careful when calling the County concerning certain flooding issues in residential areas, if septic systems are involved.

Ms. Korral Taylor, Community Representative for Congresswoman Sara Jacobs (51st District of California), stated that she would welcome residents of Jacobs' District contacting her at (619) 280-5353 about these or other community problems which possibly could be helped by involvement of her office

E. ACTION ITEMS.

E1. Presentation and request for community input regarding preliminary study and planned replacement of existing Crest Fire Station (San Miguel Fire Station #18). Chair Wessel introduced Mr. G. Browning (San Miguel Fire District,

Operations/Facilities), and invited him to give his presentation about the planning that has begun for the replacement of the existing Crest Fire Station (San Miguel Fire State #18). Mr. Browning provided a handout of the Preliminary Site Plan, and explained that the existing location of the Crest Fire Station is very good; that the District owns the property; that during construction of the new facility, adequate equipment/engine cover will be provided; that the Fire Station crew will be provided modular housing which will be removed after completion of the project construction. He also explained that the District will go through the legal processes to marry the five legal lots currently owned into one parcel, prior to seeking approval for the final proposed site plan for the project; and that at that time the District will seek Planning Group approval of the project before seeking approval from the County.

Discussion included questions and concerns about the design and costs expected for the replacement structure; about the possible impacts of the completed project on fire insurance ratings and costs for property owners in Crest; about the possibility of tax increases to pay for the project cost; and about opportunities for providing community input as the project progresses.

Mr. Browning assured the Group that the District is trying to be transparent about the project by describing what is currently in the works, and that it will request input in the future concerning possible landscaping, site plan and building design features; and that it maintains the website: info@sanmiguelfire.org, which provides the opportunity for following the progress of the project and providing input.

E2. Discussion and potential action regarding Crest gas station zoning questions and 24-hour operation of gas pumps. Member Eutha Scholl reported that County Zoning does not include ordinances regulating dark night sky and light pollution; that the Laguna Observatory considers Crest to be a dark night sky community; that the Observatory defines “light trespass” as the night sky light glow that impacts its operations; and that the Observatory wants impacting night lighting turned off from 11:00 PM until sunrise; and that the County allows night lighting for/at a business to be on if the business is open and operating, and functioning self-service gas pumps define a business as “open and operating.”

Discussion included recognition that the Community Plan for Crest includes a statement about conserving/protecting the community’s dark night sky environment; that County approval for the Crest gas station includes a 10:00 PM “closing time,” but does not define “operating hours”; that there are differences between statements made by the property owner while seeking approval, and how the gas station is actually operated now regarding night lights, fuel truck deliveries and impacts of landscaping choices.

Member Michael Rich suggested this item should be tabled and continued as an action item at the June meeting. Member Tim Lucas urged that more information be obtained about the gas pumps being operated at time when there is no trained attendant on duty at the business, about the public road obstructions caused by fuel deliveries to the business, and about any possible binding conditions that might be included in the County’s approval. It was also suggested that the property/business owner of the gas station should be contacted about the community’s concerns being considered by the Planning Group.

Chair Darin Wessel suggested that the Planning Group could send a letter to appropriate County officials about the community’s concerns regarding the gas station

situation, describing how the Group recommended approval of the business based on conditions and understandings about its operations that haven't been met; and that the health and safety of the community is at risk under the current circumstances.

Member Michael Rich moved that the Planning Group tables this gas station issue, to be re-considered as an action item at the June meeting. The motion passed (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

Chair Wessel stated that the property/business owner would be contacted and invited to attend the June meeting and join the discussion concerning the station's operations and its impacts on the community.

E3. Ad Hoc Committee update regarding evacuation in case of wildfire

(Nehring/Lucas). Ad Hoc Committee Chair Ron Nehring reported that the Committee, including Group members Time Lucas and Mary Manning, met at 2:00 PM today at the Crest Community Clubhouse; that it received a recent report from the County, regarding the status of voluntary easements needed for Suncrest Truck Trail to be an official Emergency Evacuation Route for Crest, which states there are 8 properties that have not yet granted voluntary easements; that it is planning a community education event, about wildfire preparedness, to be coordinated with the Crest Fire Safe Council; that it continues its work on the update of the Community Plan components involving community wildfire preparedness; and that the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee will be at 2:00 PM, 14 August 2023, at the Crest Community Clubhouse.

Additional discussion included the need for the Crest Fire Safe Council to reach out and contact property owners, to help the Fire Agencies in the efforts to obtain needed voluntary easements, for making Suncrest Truck Trail available as a potential route for getting fire/emergency equipment into Crest, if La Cresta Road is impassable for some reason.

No action was proposed for this item.

E4. Follow-up on discussion and potential action regarding Dehesa, Granite Hills and Harbison Canyon joining Crest Fire Safe Council (Manning). Group Member Mary Manning reported that she attended the meeting last Thursday of the San Diego Fire Safe Council; that Alpine Fire and Viejas Fire Districts no longer are parts of the Greater Alpine Fire Safe Council; that the existing Fire Districts want the different Fire Safe Councils to be within the jurisdiction of the Districts; that the Crest Fire Safe Council does not have the option to include Dehesa, Granite Hills and Harbison Canyon. The Jamul area Fire District has used grant funding to develop a Rural Fire Safe Council proposal, and would like to give a presentation about it to appropriate rural communities; and that Caesar Sterling, Jamul Fire District/ www.ruralfiresafe.org / 619-303-0791 can provide more information about the proposed Rural San Diego Fire Safe Council.

Mary Manning commented that the Crest Fire Safe Council is a model for carrying out good communications with the community it serves, while other Councils may not be so effective.

E5. Update on the property owner closure of California Riding and Hiking Trail in Sloane Canyon / Beaver Hollow Road (Wessel). Chair Wessel reported that he learned by an email from trails advocate Mary Ann Vancio, that staff from the California

Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) met in Jamul with homeowners concerned about a blocked segment of the California Riding and Hiking Trail there; that Trail supporters in the Jamul area want the Trail access to be restored and maintained open for public use; and that CDPR is requesting information to compile a complaints/issues file concerning incidents of shooting, blocking and/or signage vandalism

E6. Coalition of planning group chair's efforts to obtain representation on SANDAG. Chair Darin Wessel initiated discussion about the lack of appropriate representation at SANDAG for the rural residents of the County. He explained that the Planning Group Chairs, in response to requests by several rural planning group areas, prepared a letter that requests SANDAG to add an East County rural representative to its Board as an advisory, non-voting member, to be a voice expressing East County rural residents' interests; that this representative would be a sitting Planning Group Chair, or a person chosen by the Planning Group Chairs; and that he moved that the Planning Group approves joining as a supporter of the request letter to SANDAG for the addition of a rural representative to its Board.

Member Ron Nehring spoke about the need for East County rural residents' interests to be better heard and understood, concerning such things as the proposed Vehicle Miles Traveled Tax and fire insurance coverage; and that we should be aggressively providing our advice about such matters in all possible ways, including better representation at SANDAG.

Member Tim Lucas asked if a copy of the Planning Group Chairs letter was available for review. Chair Wessel said a copy was not available at the time, but that the Group could approve the motion to join the letter as a supporter now, with the letter being provided later for ratification at the June meeting.

Chair Wessel requested a vote on his motion that the Group joins in support of the Planning Group Chairs letter to SANDAG, to be later ratified at the Group's June meeting. The motion passed (9 yes; 0no; 0 abstain).

F. GROUP BUSINESS.

F1. Announcements and Correspondence Received. Chair Darin Wessel reported that he received an email from State Senator Brian Jones office announcing that a representative is planning to attend our regular monthly Subregional Planning Group meetings on a quarterly basis; and that he has been informed that the Board of Supervisors will vote on the Planning Group's Seat 12 vacancy prior to our June meeting.

F2. Discussion items. None.

F3. Meeting updates. None.

F3a. Reports on and upcoming BOS, PC and other Hearings/Meetings. Member Pat Ulm reported on the 20 April 2023 Zoom meeting about the County's Capital Improvement Plan for 2023-2028, and she provided details about several items in the

Plan potentially impacting our communities; and she suggested checking the County's website for further information about this Plan.

F3b. Next meeting date, June 12, 2023, at Olde Ironsides Park, 326 Harbison Canyon Road, El Cajon, CA 92021.

G. ADJOURNMENT. Member Robert Lutz-Partain moved adjournment at 9:05 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, William Bretz (Secretary)