

CREST-DEHESA-GRANITE HILLS-HARBISON CANYON SUBREGIONAL PLANNING GROUP. Minutes of the meeting on 11 September 2023, at Dehesa School, 4612 Dehesa Road, El Cajon, CA 92019.

A. ROLL CALL. Chair Darin Wessel called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. Planning Group members Rich, Nehring, Wessel, Becker, Bretz, Manning, Lutz-Partain, Geiger and Lucas were present, forming a quorum of 9. Members Ulm and Scholl were absent, but excused. Member Wilbur was absent, but not excused. Seat 4, Seat 7 and Seat 13 are vacant.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Member Mary Manning moved that the Planning Group approves the minutes of the meeting of 10 July 2023, and the roll call for the cancelled August meeting, as submitted by Secretary Bretz. The motion passed (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION. No member of the public requested to speak.

Chair Wessel reported that walkers on Sloane Canyon Road spotted a mountain lion. Member Bretz reported that a game/trail camera at the east end of Sloane Canyon recently photographed a mountain lion. Member Becker expressed her thanks to the staff and administration of Dehesa School for supporting/facilitating the Planning Group meetings at the school.

E. ACTION ITEMS.

E1. Discretionary Permit for Site Plan PDS2023-STP-23-009, proposed mixed use 2-retail spaces on first floor and single-family dwelling on second floor at 534 Harbison Canyon Road, El Cajon, CA. Chair Wessel made a request for the project applicant or any project supporter for Site Plan PDS2023-STP-23-009 to discuss the proposed project with the Group, but no one was present to respond. Member Mary Manning recommended that this item should be tabled, and she expressed concerns that it would not be appropriate to discuss the project or take any action at tonight's meeting, without first hearing an appropriate presentation about the proposed project and its potential impacts. Members of the Group commented that the project location between Harbison Canyon Creek and Harbison Canyon Road, and its commercial zoning, present a number of design challenges regarding compliance with code requirements for septic and water services, and certain setback distances; and that required proper notification of the proposed project has not been provided to neighboring property owners.

Chair Wessel moved that the Planning Group recommends a tentative denial of the application for the Discretionary Permit and Site Plan PDS2-23-STP-23-009, with the recognition of an opportunity possible for future consideration of the project by the Planning Group for its approval, subsequent to and subject to the applicant making a

presentation to the Planning Group and answering its questions. The motion passed (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

E2. Discretionary Permit for PDS2023-VAR-23-066, for variation allowing installation of a pool/spa at an existing single-family residence at 863 Audry Way, El Cajon, CA. Member Tim Lucas reported that his speaking with a County planner about the application for Discretionary Permit for PDS2023-VAR-23-066 did not provide clear answers to his questions about the possible unintended precedents and impacts that could result from approval of the requested variance; that a number of specific findings are required to support a requested variance, but all of these are not yet determined; and that this issue could be continued to a future meeting, allowing time for the County's discovery processes to provide a base for factual findings to be considered.

The property owner and project applicant was present to explain and discuss: 1) the need for a variance, due to unusual and specific circumstances of the property's history, topography, boundaries, and the non-public neighborhood access road; and 2) the existing reality of similar pool/spa installations on neighbor's properties.

Planning Group member Nehring suggested that the details provided by the project applicant made it clear to him, especially considering the other pool/spa installations of the neighbors, that there is not a good reason to deny recommending approval of the permit. Chair Wessel suggested that the Group votes to recommend approval. Member Tim Lucas stated that he did not have the information needed for voting to recommend approval.

Member Ron Nehring moved that the Planning Group recommends approval of Discretionary Permit for PDS2023-VAR-23-066, for variation allowing installation of a pool/spa at an existing single-family residence at 863 Audry Way, El Cajon. The motion passed (8 yes; 0 no; 1 abstain: Lucas).

E3. Follow up and potential action regarding alleged Crest gas station zoning/use permit violations, 24-hour operation of gas pumps and allegations of misrepresentations by project applicant. The owner/operator of the Crest gas station was not present. Group discussion included observations of possible slight improvements in the management of lights and hours of active pump operations. Member Mike Rich moved that the Group tables this issue tonight, to be continued at the next Planning Group meeting in October. The motion passed (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

E4. Construction/Code compliance issue at 2408 Suncrest Blvd. in Crest. Crest residents spoke to the Group about the construction/code compliance issue on a neighboring property at 2408 Suncrest Blvd., describing that the property owner began construction without required permits; that a code compliance complaint was filed with the County; that a notice of record about violations has been issued; that stealthy illegal construction work has continued; and that are separate septic system issues with the project, including the location of the leach field on a neighbor's lot.

Chair Wessel informed the speakers and Group that with County Code Enforcement officially involved, the Planning Group will do nothing right now; that if Code Enforcement fails to take reasonable action, the Group will then try to influence appropriate County action. He recommended that the speakers contact County

Environmental Health about the issue of the septic field location on an improper lot; that they contact Supervisor Anderson's office about their problems regarding the quality of work being done by County staff for the public interest; and that they come back to the Planning Group in the future if necessary, for it to consider and take action to make recommendations concerning construction/code compliance issues at 2408 Suncrest Blvd.

No Group action was taken at tonight's meeting.

E5. Ad Hoc Committee update regarding evacuation in case of wildfire.

(Nehring/Lucas). Member Ron Nehring, Ad Hoc Committee Chair, reported that the Committee met today, and also met in August; that the various relevant Fire Fighting and Law Enforcement Agencies are reviewing the Committee's update drafts of the Community and Subregional Plans regarding evacuation in case of wildfire; that two different landowners on the south side of Suncrest Truck Trail are still not yet willing to provide voluntary easements for public use of the Truck Trail as a recognized evacuation route for the Crest community; that representatives of the Agencies have stated that at this time Suncrest Truck Trail can only be used by their personnel when an official state of emergency has been declared; and that it is now only suitable for bringing equipment uphill into the Crest area, but not suitable for downhill evacuation traffic from Crest. The ideal condition of the Truck Trail, for these Agencies to consider it as a designated route for evacuation in case of wildfire route, would be for it to be paved, 2-lane with turnouts, have appropriate shoulder vegetation clearance/maintenance, and have adequate night lighting; and all necessary voluntary easements must be provided before the Truck Trail could be even minimally improved.

Chair Nehring also announced that on Tuesday, 10 October, from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM at the Crest School, the Committee has organized a Community Educational Meeting that will include representatives from CalFire, County Sheriff, SDG&E, Insurance Industry, and others to provide accurate up-to-date information about wildfire issues such as adequate preparations and possible responses.

Planning Group member Michael Rich wanted to know if the process of eminent domain could possibly resolve the problem of the missing voluntary easements needed for Suncrest Truck Trail. A member of the public commented that there was not adequate regulation enforcement, concerning inadequate defensible space maintenance by some private property owners, and also by the County for its properties.

No Group action was taken.

E6. Update on the property owner closure of California Riding and Hiking Trail.

(Wessel). Chair Wessel reported that legal public access to a section of the California Riding and Hiking Trail is still blocked by property owner(s) along Beaver Hollow Road in Sloane Canyon; that there has been heard more frequent shooting in that area; and that he will invite the Dehesa Valley Community Council to make a presentation at the November meeting of the Planning Group, concerning DVCC's possible litigation against the illegal closure of CRHT in Sloane Canyon.

F. GROUP BUSINESS.

F1. Announcements and Correspondence Received. None to report/review.

F2. Discussion/Action Items – Chairs’ meeting with Supervisor Anderson; Joining Association of Planning Groups; PLDO; Capital Improvements Needs Assessment (CINA); County Traffic Advisory Committee 9/8 meeting; Planning Group Chairs meeting. Chair Wessel reported on Supervisor Anderson’s meeting to share ideas about East County governance issues with Planning Group Chairs, and his request that any complaints made about County service/actions should include an informative email/copy to his office, for his attention.

Chair Wessel reported that the Board of Supervisors approved the creation of an East County Representative (nonvoting) to the SANDAG Board; that an Association of Planning Groups has formed, to enable involved Planning Group Chairs to select one of the Association’s members to be the nonvoting representative for East County on the SANDAG Board, to provide it with input and recommendations regarding policies impacting unincorporated, rural areas and residents.

Wessel moved that the Planning Group votes its approval to join the Association of Planning Groups, and to authorize the Group’s Chair to delegate a member of the Crest-Dehesa-Granite Hills-Harbison Canyon Subregional Planning Group as its representative to the Association. The motion passed (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

The recommendations for, and the County’s management of, its spending of the Park Lands Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) funds were discussed; Group member Mary Manning volunteered to review/research and provide to the Chair the Group’s previous PLDO Priority List recommendations, separating maintenance projects from Capital Improvement Projects at the several parks of the Subregion.

The Nancy Jane Park Playground Improvement Project was discussed as a possible candidate for inclusion in and support from the Capital Improvements Needs Assessment program.

At its meeting on 8 September, the County Traffic Advisory Committee recommended an 18 month extension of the closure of Camino Monte Sombre.

At the meeting of the Planning Group Chairs on 9 September there were discussions about: 1) the needs for more objective design criteria for projects like Accessory Dwelling Units; 2) the need for updating guidelines for compliance with State Law changes required in more urban areas; 3) the possible impacts of the Vehicle Miles Traveled Tax issue on the creation of more affordable housing and other development costs; 4) changes to Policy I-1, and the updating of where to file Form 700; and 5) the advice from County Counsel and Planning and Development Services concerning what the Planning Group can do when lacking the necessary quorum to hold a public meeting, which includes holding a meeting, taking comments and having discussions, and even having motions that would fail to be passed due to the lack of an official quorum.

F3. Meeting updates. Chair Wessel announced that he will not be available to attend the next regular meeting of the Planning Group on 9 October 2023.

F3a. Reports on and upcoming BOS, PC and other Hearings/Meetings. None.

F3b. Next meeting date, 9 October 2023 at Dehesa School, 4612 Dehesa Road, El Cajon, CA 92019.

G. ADJOURNMENT. Member Christina Becker moved adjournment at 8:40 PM. The motion passed unanimously (9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

Respectfully submitted, William Bretz (Secretary)