

CREST-DEHESA-GRANITE HILLS-HARBISON CANYON SUBREGIONAL PLANNING GROUP. Minutes of the meeting on 8 January 2024, at Crest Community Clubhouse, 113 N. Park Drive, El Cajon, CA 92021.

A. ROLL CALL. Chair Darin Wessel called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM. Planning Group members Rich, Ulm, Nehring, Wessel, Becker, Bretz, Manning, Lutz-Partain, Geiger and Lucas were present, forming a quorum of 10. Seat 4, Seat 7, Seat 11, Seat 13 and Seat 14 are vacant.

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

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Planning Group member Tim Lucas moved that the Group approves the minutes of the 11 December 2023 meeting, as provided for review by Chair Wessel. The motion passed (10 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

D. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION. No one from the public, nor from the Group, requested to speak.

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. This agenda item was postponed to the February meeting of the Planning Group, as updated plans are not ready.

E2. Presentation and request for community input regarding updated design for replacement of existing Crest Fire Station (San Miguel Fire Station #18). Chair Wessel introduced Mr. Ron Quinlan, and invited him to give his presentation about the plans for replacement of the Crest Fire Station. Mr. Quinlan's presentation, illustrated with slides, described the history of San Miguel Fire Station # 18, that began with its construction in 1948, with remodeling/additions in 1972, 1995 and more recently; that a Facilities Assessment in 2022 concluded it was in poor condition and not fully reliable; that it did not meet community needs, nor did it meet Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards; and that possible asbestos issues/problems, inconvenient fire-fighting equipment apparatus proximity for rapid personnel response, and public safety issues regarding emergency equipment departures all combine to make replacement of the existing facilities, rather than additional remodeling, the best alternative.

He continued to describe the current plans to construct a replacement facility based around a 6,900 square-foot, two story steel Butler Building, which will have a 50-100 year lifetime, at a cost of about \$4.1 million; that this will provide improved health and safety for resident firefighters, increased space for additional staffing, a community room for public use, incorporation of modern technology and building standards codes, improved curb appeal for the Crest community, and reduced response times for emergency services.

He then explained that this project will require merging the three existing lots into a single parcel, and using Fire Facilities Replacement/Renovation Funds and Grants over multiple Fire Department budget cycles to accomplish all of the planned goals; and that it is expected that a “Temporary Station” will be arranged utilizing the existing facilities by April 2024, with necessary demolitions in June 2024, new onsite grading in July 2024, followed by construction of the replacement building shell in October 2024, and completion of the replacement Fire Station facility in March 2025.

Mr. Quinlin emphasized that information about the project and its progress could be accessed online at: SanMiguelFireStation.org. He requested input from the Crest community regarding such features as the building color, roofline and exterior design.

Comments from the Planning Group included the request there will be appropriate, clear signage and warnings about Fire Station equipment access onto adjacent roads; approval that there will meeting room space and available parking for County Sheriff personnel and the public; and anticipation that the upgraded improved facility could contribute to the establishment/recognition of Fire Wise Community designations for Crest neighborhoods.

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. Discussion by Planning Group members included recent observations that the night lighting has been somewhat reduced; that after night time store closing there are no business personnel on site in case of emergency conditions at operating pumps; that some gas deliveries have been made with single tank trucks located on the property and not interfering with public roadways; and that landscaping shrubbery on the business property continues to need maintenance trimming to provide safe visibility for passing road traffic.

Chair Wessel requested that he be provided with any relevant information, including photos of inappropriate conditions observed, which he will compile; and that the Group can review these observations about the gas station operations gathered by the community at the April meeting.

E4. Ad Hoc Committee update regarding evacuation in case of wildfire. (Nehring/Lucas). Planning Group member and Ad Hoc Committee Chair Ron Nehring reported that the Committee working group met today, 8 January 2024, concerning improved wildfire protection and evacuation planning for Crest. Discussion included homeowners’ fire insurance cancellations; Fire Wise Community designations which can be initiated by groups of 8 or more homes, which may qualify those homes for fire insurance availability and discounts; ongoing efforts to update the Crest Community Plan by an amendment or appendix including the gathering of information from Fire Districts concerning how to make communities more fire resistant; and ongoing efforts to upgrade Suncrest Truck Trail from its current inadequate conditions, to become a recognized emergency evacuation route; and the need to acquire two more voluntary easements to qualify this route for obtaining possible public funding for improvements to it.

E5. Update on the property owner closure of California Riding and Hiking Trail. (Wessel). Chair Wessel reported the County Trails Coordinator informed him by email

that between 15-19 January the County will have contractors walking County Trails located in the Crest-Dehesa-Granite Hills-Harbison Canyon Subregional Planning Area to examine and evaluate the condition of these trails; that an update of the status of the California Hiking and Riding Trail between Sloane Canyon and Jamul will be available by the February meeting of the Planning Group; that the County Department of Parks and Recreation is coordinating with the State Department of Parks and Recreation concerning its deeding the public easements for the California Hiking and Riding Trail (CRHT) segments in San Diego County to the County; and that the State Department of Parks held discussions with various property owners concerning interference with the CRHT public trail easement, but it is unclear whether this included discussions with the two owners currently blocking access to the CRHT at Beaver Hollow Road.

Planning Group member Pat Ulm requested that the Cornelius Ranch Trail is included in these review efforts by County DPR, and was assured that it would be.

E6. Action on Proposed amendments to Planning Group’s Standing Rules.

Planning Group member Ron Nehring moved that the Group approves, without any changes, the proposed amendments to the Group’s Standing Rules, which Chair Wessel provided for review by email to the Planning Group members.

The motion passed (10 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

F. GROUP BUSINESS.

F1. Announcements and Correspondence Received. Chair Wessel reported that he was informed by email from the Planning Group Coordinator that a new Liaison Officer for the County Sheriff’s Office has been appointed; and that he will inquire about inviting this Officer to provide a presentation at a future Planning Group meeting about Sheriff’s Office policies and programs for serving our communities.

F2. Discussion Items/Action Items.

F2a. Consideration of applicant(s) to fill vacancies for Seats 4, 7, 11, 13 and 14.

Chair Wessel requested that persons interested in making application to vacant Planning Group seats inform him by email; that the County now has online application forms available for potential candidates to submit; that the Registrar of Voters will review a submitted online form for an applicant’s eligibility to a specific vacant Seat; and that after the applicant is informed of their eligibility, then the Planning Group can consider this application and provide its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors about approval for appointment of the applicant to that vacant Planning Group seat.

F2b. Status/reports – Association of Planning Groups. Chair Wessel reported that SANDAG voted to accept a representative from the Association of Planning Groups (APG) as a non-voting member; that the first official APG meeting will be held 10 January 2024, when it will elect its representative to SANDAG, and will approve the APG rules of operation.

Planning Group member Ron Nehring commented that the establishment of a non-voting APG representative to SANDAG is a very positive improvement, which will provide SANDAG a much-needed voice from the rural unincorporated County area.

F2c. Community Plan update – Progress report. Chair Wessel informed the Group that the Board of Supervisors has to authorize providing help for updating and changing Community plans; but that proposing amendments or appendices are not considered *changes* to the existing Community Plans.

F3. Meeting updates.

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

F3b. Next meeting date, 12 February 2024 at Crest Community Clubhouse, 113 N. Park Drive, El Cajon, CA 92021.

G. ADJOURNMENT. Member Robert Lutz-Partain moved adjournment at 8:15 PM. The motion passed unanimously (10 yes; 0 no; 0 abstain).

Respectfully submitted, William Bretz (Secretary)