

County of San Diego
Jacumba Hot Springs Community Sponsor Group
Minutes for the JCSG Meeting at 6:30 pm on May 8, 2023
Highland Senior Center, 44681 Old Hwy 80, Jacumba Hot Springs, CA 91934

A. The JCSG meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Those present were: Seat 1. Hafdell; Seat 2. Greg Curran (Vice-Chair); Seat 3. Cherry Diefenbach (Chair); Seat 4. Jeffery Osborne; Seat 5. Katrina Westley (Secretary). Public 10.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Approval of the draft minutes for the JCSG meeting held on April 10, 2023.

M/S to approve the draft minutes for the JCSG meeting held on April 10, 2023: Curran/ Westley. Passed: 5-0-0.

D. Public Communication: The public may comment on any subject within the JCSG's jurisdiction that is not on the posted agenda. (Speakers are limited to 2 minutes and no action can be taken on non-agenda items.)

Chair: Tracy McPherson recently passed away and this was a big loss to the town.

Bonnie: Asked if there was any update on landscaping in front of the JCSD water facility on Old Hwy 80.

Katrina: If you would like to have the water board discuss landscaping, please send an email to the JCSD requesting it be placed on a future meeting agenda.

Chair: Provided info about the County's new Hi-Lo siren system now on sheriffs' patrol vehicles. The Hi-Lo siren indicates the need for residents to immediately evacuate the area. She encouraged residents to go to ReadySanDiego.org to sign up to receive emergency alerts on your smart phone. She also reminded residents 62 or older or those with disabilities to take advantage of the County's Knoxbox program.

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

1. Local trash removal remains a problem for residents of Jacumba as dumpsters are expensive. Unfortunately, there is no easy fix. No community receives free trash pickup services—Residents in the City of San Diego are going to lose their free trash collection services in FY2026. Some short-term options for Jacumba residents:

--Partner with neighbors to share the cost of an EDCO dumpster and recycle bin. (EDCO customers can pay an additional \$15 to arrange for EDCO to pick up a large item such as a couch or appliance.)

--Old mattress/box springs can be recycled on Monday mornings at the Backcountry Resource Center in Boulevard. (They will also recycle plastic/glass bottles and cardboard there.)

--The Real East County Fire Safety Council has four backcountry community clean-up/chipping of green waste events scheduled from 8-11 am this year: August 19th at Boulevard; September 16th at Campo; October 21st at Jacumba; November 18th at Potrero.

Some possible long-term solutions:

--Use some of the \$3.55 million in undesignated JVR community benefit money to pay for the placement of a number of community dumpsters at a central location like the Senior Center or Community Park. An organization with a bank account would need to set up an EDCO dumpster account and then develop a plan to give Jacumba residents access to the dumpsters. (Given the on-going legal litigation, that benefit money may not be available for another year.)

--Consider requesting the County Board of Supervisors provide their support to get EDCO to provide individual trash pickup for Jacumba residents. (The BOS may not be willing to do so, even if residents are willing to establish individual EDCO trash pickup accounts, and pay the monthly fees of about \$40/per month.)

Greg: When communities do not have regular trash pickup services, some people dump their trash along the road or on other people's property and this is a real problem.

Chair: While the sponsor group was successful in getting DPW (after several asks) to get the trash removed from the public right-of-way near the former Miller recycling business, the issue of individual trash pickup is not something that the sponsor group is in a position to solve.

2. While strict defensive space requirements for backcountry residences have been mandated by the State fire marshal, insurance companies have been cancelling fire insurance policies or significantly raising the insurance premiums for private residences and facilities such as senior and community centers that are operated by non-profit groups. Collecting data from rural residents impacted by insurance cancellation/rate hikes and providing that information to those in leadership positions might raise awareness and help to solve this problem.

Maureen: I am representing the Real East County Fire Safe Council. A number of major insurance companies are threatening to pull out of the insurance market in California due to the financial risks associated with writing fire insurance policies.

--Many residents in small rural communities like Descanso who do not have an existing mortgage, also do not have fire insurance coverage. That is because fire insurance has gotten too costly. (If you have a mortgage, you must have fire insurance.)

--Everyone can get fire insurance coverage through the California FAIR Plan but it too, is very, very expensive.

--A five question survey could be posted on social media that would collect information about insurance cancellations and rate increases based on zip codes and insurance status: homeowner, renter, business owner, or non-profit organization. This data would help to identify the scope of the problem.

--According to the State Fire Marshal, Jacumba is identified as a "High" Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ).

Jeff: The area just east of the town is identified as a "Medium" FHSZ.

Chair: The Sponsor Group did submit comments on the draft FHSZ map. Since the BOS is using climate change/VMT as a means to restrict new home construction in the rural, unincorporated areas of the County, I don't see them pushing back on the proposed designations on the FHSZ map.

Katrina: If your insurance company tries to raise your rates, you can request a fire hydrant map from the Water District which shows the locations of nearby hydrants. The close proximity of a fire hydrant with a good water system, and a fire station that is manned 24/7, are things that you can use to argue against potential rate increases.

Greg: Will the survey go to Jacumba residents only?

Maureen: I will be sending Greg the survey so that he can post it online. (Paper copies will be at the library.) I will also be reaching out to other fire safe councils as well. Perhaps I can get information about the survey placed in East County Magazine online. The intention is to circulate the survey to other fire safe councils and community groups., and then send the data that is collected to the State Fire Marshal, CAL FIRE, and State Insurance Commissioner with copies to the BOS.

--Survey monkey can provide the data results to one individual.

Chair: Jacumba will be getting a new fire station in FY 2024/2025 and that could have a positive impact on our fire insurance rates. I have asked for a San Diego Fire Authority (SDFFA) representative to give our community a briefing.

Jeff: Who decides on the design of the fire station?

Chair: The SDFFA has standard fire station plans based on the number of apparatus bays, etc. The FAA will also have to sign off on the design since it will be built next the Jacumba airport.

Bonnie: Why aren't they building it in town?

Chair: There is no available cheap land in town, the County already owns the airport property, our fire station routinely responds to traffic accidents along the I-8 corridor, and finally the airport can be used for Medevacs.

Maureen: This fire insurance data collection effort is anticipated to take several months. In the meantime, if you receive a notice of insurance cancellation, you should go directly to your insurance agent and ask them submit an appeal.

F. Group business/project updates, to include correspondence-discussion only:

1. JCSG comments on the proposed 100 MW Starlight Solar Plus Batteries Major Use Permit (MUP) Notice of Project: PDS2022-MPA-22-006 planned for 565 acres in eight Empire Ranch areas off Jewel Valley were submitted via email on April 23, 2023.

2. The second JCSG request for the honorary bridge naming of the Patricia Fouble Memorial Bridge and the Bert Vaughn Memorial Bridge was emailed to Supervisor Anderson on April 27, 2023. To date, no response has been received from the Supervisor's staff. The Supervisor thinks that honorary bridge naming candidates must be first responders, law enforcement, or military members who died in the line of duty. Using that logic, Pat Fouble, who served for many years as Jacumba's Volunteer Fire Chief, would had to have died while fighting a fire, to merit an honorary bridge. Frankly that seems like "a bridge too far." FYI, The F-53 BOS policy that provides guidance on honorary bridge naming comes up for review on Dec. 31, 2023. If Jacumba can't get some forward movement from Supervisor Anderson on our bridge packages, County staff may revise the policy and it may no longer fit our candidates.

3. Update on the seating of a new Unincorporated Communities Advisory Board Member and Alternate on SANDAG's Board of Directors. Supervisor Anderson will co-author a board letter with Chair Vargas in support of a future resolution in support of this proposal at an upcoming BOS meeting. (Since sponsor group representatives are not elected, they will not be eligible to fill an advisory seat on SANDAG's board. The planning group representatives pushing for a San Diego advisory board member have stated that sponsor groups will be given an opportunity to provide input on issues.) The Chair then explained that Jacumba could choose to convert from a sponsor group to a planning group, but those present did not express much interest in doing so.

4. Community interface reports.

a. Highland Senior Center.

Greg: No big changes. Still working on regaining our non-profit status.

b. Real East County Fire Safe Council.

The fire safe council recently got two new board members. Community clean-up days will be held on the third Saturday of the months indicated from 8 to 11am or until the dumpsters are full: August--Boulevard; September—Campo; October—Jacumba; November—Potrero.

Contact Mark Ostrander for more info or if you would like to volunteer.

c. JBRA (Revitalization).

The Back Country Resource Center is 100 percent reliant on monetary donations and grants. A Food Pantry is open on Mondays: 9am to noon. The Resource Center can also be rented for private events. Contact Mark Ostrander for more info.

G. Adjournment:

M/S to adjoin the JCSG meeting at 7:10 pm: Hafdell/Curran. Passed: 5-0-0.

The next JCSG meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 12, 2023 at 6 pm. (Jim Bennett, the County hydrologist, will make a presentation about Jacumba's groundwater at that meeting.)

For more information, contact the JCSG Chair at csdiefenbach@sbcglobal.net or 619-743-5224.

Approved: June 12, 2023