

County of San Diego
Jacumba Community Sponsor Group (JCSG)
Minutes for the JCSG Meeting at 6:00 pm on Monday, March 11, 2024
Highland Senior Center, 44681 Old Hwy 80, Jacumba Hot Springs, CA 91934

A. Call to order/Roll call:

The JCSG meeting of March 11, 2024 was called to order at 6:02 pm with the following JCSG members present: Seat 2. Greg Curran (Vice-Chair); Seat 3. Cherry Diefenbach (Chair); Seat 4. Jeffery Osborne; Seat 5. Katrina Westley (Secretary). (Note: Seat 1 is currently vacant.) Public present: 9.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Approval of the draft minutes for the JCSG meeting held on February 12, 2024.

M/S to approve the minutes for the February 11, 2024 JCSG meeting: Curran/Westley. Vote: 4-0-0. Motion passes.

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: It appears that our problem of migrants flowing freely across the border has been somewhat reduced now that the Mexican government has set up immigrant processing tents on the Mexican side of the border.

Tanya: Governor Newsom visited Jacumba last week to see firsthand the migrant crossing problem and no one knew he was here. They had cleaned up the areas in the U.S. where the immigrants had been congregating beforehand.

Greg: Supervisor Jim Desmond also visited the border at Jacumba today.

Katrina: I am worried about the migrant warming fires that have the potential to spread.

Chair: The County will soon be installing a weather station at the Jacumba Airport. With any luck, we may be able use the information that it collects to document potential temperature increases associated with the solar farm.

Tanya: There is a tiny fenced in area at the airport where I believe the County is going to have their weather equipment.

Chair: The County Fire authority is still trying to purchase land for Jacumba's new fire station. The county has a team of people working the acquisition of land, likely some of the JVR Solar property.

Katrina: The proposed location within the JVR property is outside the JCSD water district and the JCSD is not prepared to provide water service there.

Jeff: I think they are trying to locate the new fire station north of Old Hwy 80 in the project buffer zone.

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

1. Discuss/vote on Steven Perelman's application for JCSG Seat #1. (The term for Seat #1 expires on 1/6/2025.)

Chair: At our last JCSG meeting on February 12, we announced the vacancy of JCSG Seat #1 and posted notices of that vacancy on the County's website, at the Jacumba library, and on local social media. We received only one application from Steve Perelman which was subsequently certified by the SD Registrar of Voters (ROV). After our review of Steve's application, we will vote on whether to nominate him to fill JCSG Seat #1 and then forward that recommendation to Supervisor Anderson and the County PDS. Hopefully, they will be able to get his application placed on the agenda of the next Board of Supervisors' (BOS) meeting. Once he has an official date of appointment by the BOS, he will need to complete his annual training requirement and submit a form 700 before he can be seated on the Sponsor Group.

Steve Perelman: I have been a resident of Jacumba for eight years. My home is just west of the JCSD water treatment facility on Old Hwy 80. I would like to serve on the Sponsor Group to help solve issues that could impact Jacumba residents.

M/S to nominate Steven Perelman to fill JCSG Seat #1 and forward his application to the BOS for appointment: Diefenbach/Westley. Vote: 4-0-0. Motion passes.

2. Discuss concerns about retaining/obtaining homeowners fire insurance to include the potential

requirement for getting a wildfire certification to satisfy defensible space requirements.

Chair: I believe that some people may not have gotten the word about the relatively new requirements to make your home wildfire safe. A wildfire certification is required for the sale of your home. It includes the creation of a 5-foot noncombustible buffer around your house...dirt, concrete, gravel next to the structure and around any stairs. No vegetation or combustibles are allowed in this area; combustible fences within the five-foot area would also need to be replaced with non-combustible fence. Roof, gutters, and vents are included as part of the inspection. Thankfully, this level of compliance is NOT part of our local fire department's annual wildfire checks--it is only required when you sell your home and potentially it may be required for you to retain your homeowner's insurance. Of course, there is a fee associated with getting a certification. For more information please visit: <https://wildfireprepared.org>.

Tanya: Bonnie had to remove all plants within five feet of her house in order to continue to have homeowner's insurance.

Chair: I put this wildfire certification requirement on the agenda because it is something that all backcountry homeowners will eventually be faced with.

3. A variety of CA legislative bills are currently being proposed that would help to encourage the installation of rooftop solar and that could help to lower electric bills for all customers.

AB 1999 would limit SDG&E's baseline fee (for all customers) at \$10 per month. Recently, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved an income-based baseline fee ranging from \$34 to \$178 per month before charging the customer for any power that was used.

Jeff: There are efforts underway to form a not-for-profit public power company for the city of San Diego that would offer more affordable electrical rates. Although it would not impact the affordability of our electricity in Jacumba, if the referendum gets on the ballot and people approve it, then it would start to unravel SDG&E's hold on the unincorporated areas of the county.

Chair: San Diego already has the most expensive electrical costs for consumers in the country and both SDG&E and SD Community Power have about a third of their customers who are behind on their electric bills.

Steve: I was under the impression that SD Community Power was a cheaper alternative to SDG&E.

Jeff: In reality, SD Community Power does not appear to be any cheaper. They are also the company that will be purchasing the electric power generated by the Jacumba Valley Ranch (JVR) Solar Park. On the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) website, there is a new high voltage power line that will link the Imperial Valley with San Onofre. There is a high probability that it may go through Jacumba. That may mean an additional power line or replacing the existing poles with poles that are twice the size.

Chair: What does the CAISO have as the JVR Solar Park's date of operation?

Jeff: I was talking with the JVR Solar Park developer and they expect to start construction in summer 2025.

Chair: Okay. I hope you will visit <https://solarights.org> to submit your support of AB 1999 as well as other proposed bills that would promote the use of rooftop solar systems.

4. Discuss making a request for the County of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department to assume the operation and maintenance of the Jacumba Community Park as a future county park under the Park Lands Dedication Ordinance (PLDO) and Capital Improvement Needs Assessment (CINA) programs.

Jeff: I want to ask the County to provide us with a new park because we do not currently have one.

Katrina: Well, technically we do have one...In-Ko-Pah County Park.

Chair: Please look over the CINA for FY2024/25 - FY2028/29 so you can see the types of projects that are on the existing list. The majority of the BOS must vote in agreement to have a project added to the CINA list.

Chair: This past year, thanks to the individual efforts of Gina, a former Jacumba resident, Supervisor Anderson authorized the expenditure of \$100K in community enhancement grant funds for playground improvements to our existing community park. That is the first time that Jacumba has received any financial assistance for our park in many years. I mention this because that money may be considered by the County in their decision to fund the construction, operation, and maintenance a new park. The PLDO program is another way that we could ask the County to support

a new Jacumba park. Every fall, community groups provide a written PLDO recreation prioritization list to the Parks and Recreation Dept. To be considered a viable PLDO project, it must have full funding for the design, environmental review, permits, and construction and it must identify the entity to finance the operation and maintenance of the park. There is a very limited pot of PLDO money that several communities within the Mountain Empire area all share and it is not likely that our area will see much additional revenue as the BOS want housing development to be centered around transportation hubs in urban areas.

Jeff: Jacumba has a village core that would be a great location for concentrated housing if we can show it would not negatively impact our carbon footprint. There is no harm in asking for a new park.

Katrina: The CINA Plan seems to be a five-year plan that turns into a 20-year plan. I work for the County Recreation Department and it is not currently able to fund the necessary staff at existing parks. Plus, the community would likely need to offer the land for a park and the JSCD is currently focusing on resolving legal issues and getting some new board members.

Greg: I agree with Jeff, that Jacumba needs to get our name on the list, even if the County would not be able to fund it for a long time.

Katrina: The idea of a county park should be presented to the JCS D board of directors to see what they think.

Jeff: The park doesn't necessarily have to be where the Jacumba community park is currently located. I just want to get a county park for Jacumba on a list. As our town starts to grow and political winds change, five or ten years from now, we may have a shot at getting a park.

Chair: The communities on the CINA list that will be getting a new park have much larger populations than Jacumba. Our park proposal might be more acceptable if we offered them park land, some of our existing community park. But before doing that, we should have a master plan that includes the possibility of needing to drill a new well in our park.

Jeff: But we don't have to solve those problems before we ask for a Jacumba county park.

Chair: I would love Jacumba to have a county park as well.

Katrina: I want to remind everyone that the JCS D is currently in the process of getting bids for new playground equipment, shade structures and physical fitness circuit equipment. The JCS D anticipates the playground upgrade to be completed by October 2024.

Tanya: There is a park committee that has been meeting after our Sunday breakfasts.

Jeff: I will ask Greg Kazmer, an advisor to Supervisor Anderson, how much specifics do we need to provide to the Supervisor in order to have our park project considered for the CINA list.

Chair: The CINA screening for a new park is likely part of the PLDO prioritization process.

Jeff: Why don't we just ask the County to acquire, design, construct a new park in Jacumba? Do you ever think we are going to have a nice park like Pine Valley has without getting on this list? I think we should make a motion for the County to acquire, design, to environmental review and construct a new county park in Jacumba. I hope to sit down with Supervisor Anderson and discuss some future plans for Jacumba including the need for a county park.

Pete: I think Jacumba just needs to get on the list.

M/S to ask the County to acquire land, design and conduct environmental analysis and build a new county park in Jacumba: Osborne/Curran. Vote: 2 (Osborne, Curran)-2 (Diefenbach, Westley)-0. Motion fails.

Chair: I want our request to for a local county park to be successful. Further discussion of a new county park in Jacumba will be on the agenda of our next JCSG. I am asking that JCSG member Osborne bring the following information to the meeting: 1) How often is the CINA list updated? 2) Is the placement of a county park based on community population? 3) How much acreage is needed for a county park? 4) Would the offer to use some of our existing community park land give our community a "leg up" on getting a new county park? 5) How does the PLDO process fit into the CINA list?

Katrina: I will also make some phone calls within the Parks and Recreation Dept. about how to move a request for a new county park forward.

