

# Spring Valley Community Planning Group

## \*\*\* MEETING MINUTES \*\*\*

Tuesday, July 9, 2024 at 6:00 P.M.

### A. ROLL CALL – QUORUM

In Attendance: 9 (Lowes, Robles, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Gibbons, Pearson, Snyder), Absent 4 (Gonzalez, Custeau, Woodruff, Morgan), Vacant 2.

**B. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION** – Opportunity for the public to speak to the Planning Group on any subject matter within our jurisdiction that is not on the posted agenda.

Pearson attended the Board of Supervisors meeting regarding comment on the homeless tiny homes proposed project on Jamacha Road. He agreed then with the comments against the project, but, upon a detailed review on other existing projects in California, he has switched his position and now supports local tiny home projects. He stated that the Hope Mission is transitional housing and not an encampment of drug addicts, criminals, and the mentally ill. Here are the links to the Hope Mission: <https://hopethemission.org/our-programs/tiny-homes/> <https://hopethemission.org/our-programs/tiny-homes/arroyo-seco/> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caofz5\\_cb0Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caofz5_cb0Y) (3 links). Snyder mentions that the latest project proposed will be at Troy Street and Jamacha Road, which is in the City of Lemon Grove. Lemon Grove is having a meeting on July 18. Joshua Dunn, community rep for District 4, said the meeting will be at the Lemon Grove Community Center at 6pm.

Other District 4 updates are an additional \$7.5m for Calavo Park funding, cool zones programs are ongoing now, and the property tax assessment period is now until the end of the year.

Mikayle Lowery, community rep for district 1, \$125k has been allocated to the Sweetwater Park restroom project, she spoke about the ‘tell us now’ app for reporting clean up needs in the community.

Dave Covarubias, a community member on the leadership committee for the Spring Valley Coalition 2024, disagrees with Pearson on his position regarding homeless cabins in Spring Valley. Dave emphasized property damage and theft and threats of violence in the area of the proposed project, by the homeless. He feels that the Troy Street proposal will not work either. He recommended Camp Barrett in east county as a better location.

Update from state senator Steve Padilla’s office, Spring Valley liaison is Rosanna Javier. She gave an update on the senator’s pending bills; have companies disclose their wastewater programs, wastewater permit review for a new landfill in the Tijuana River Basin, create a safe and ethical framework for AI service providers and create a CA AI research hub and a program with CSU and community colleges to recruit teaching candidates. Also, please contact her if you are interested in joining their contingent for San Diego Pride on July 20.

**ACTION ITEMS** with designation as to whether there will be vote or not on the item:

**1. Approval of Minutes: 5/28/2024.** Vote on this item.

One change, names of people absent were omitted from the roll call vote and will be added to the draft. Due to the potential number of abstentions and today’s absentees, a vote on these minutes was tabled until the next meeting.

**2. A request by the Department of Parks & Recreation to vacate portions of Kempton (formerly Sweetwater Road) and Faxton (formerly San Diego Avenue).** Vote on this item.

Tom McCabe, senior land surveyor, for real estate services in San Diego County general services is the presenter. These two planned streets bisect Sweetwater Regional Park. The streets were never built, so the county wants them removed from the maps. Vacating means the public right of way goes away. The roadways will become park land, not private land. This park land is part of the trail system around the reservoir. Planning on making a staging area for hikers. Motion to approve by Shaffer, second by Wallace. Vote is 9 yes, 0 no, 4 absent, 2 vacant.

**3. Discussion: Development Feasibility Analysis (DFA) Update.** County-led study to explore housing development in unincorporated communities. Presentation by Paola Garcia-Betancourt. No vote on this item.

Julie Marlett and Allison Lee are also providing input. Today's presentation is an overview and an update to their presentation on May 28. They do have results of their technical analysis and want our feedback on their high-level recommendations. Two virtual workshops are scheduled to also cover the results and get community input; July 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. note that recommendations to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) are still being developed and community input will be included in the results. The DFA provides to the BOS parcel level barriers, such as zoning, infrastructure, and market demands, to housing development and an analysis of these barriers. The team has spoken to the community, development reps, building industry experts and working groups, and attended various pop-up events to engage. Questions about housing needs, possible locations and what prevents development. Residents wanted overwhelmingly more affordable housing. Also, good roads, sidewalks, and transit services. The building industry feels constrained by the county's approval process and uncontrollable market factors such as labor shortages. The county is working on streamlining their programs. The technical analysis looks at infrastructure such as utility services gaps and stormwater issues, types of housing that are suitable to build and possible changes to zoning. It has been determined that there are adequate services to support housing growth. Some roads have been identified for improvements such as bike and parking lanes. Stormwater systems are an issue for our area. Capture of these waters is very expensive, but is mandated by the state, so alternative methods are being considered. Market analysis is ongoing, looking at supply and demand in the market, pricing, income levels and access to nearby transit. Multi-story and/or multi-unit development are being studied, i.e. townhomes as an example. Different design configurations were defined and there are five case study sites being reviewed. The studies have not set any target densities yet. Nothing has been set as far as what type of construction is suggested on which properties. If there are potential properties, the team would like to know of these locations. Lowes asked if the builders' input was included? The team is looking at creative financial strategies to have affordable housing. Eugenio asked what is affordable housing, since the county has not defined expected pricing? For sale townhomes have the strongest market support in Spring Valley, garden-style and stacked flat apartments do not pencil for today's market. Further, there is a large gap between the recommended mortgage vs income and the reality here. These are financial feasibility findings. Pearson asked if we are spending 41%, how do we get to the recommended 28%? Shaffer asked what factors are not working to keep prices down? Construction and labor costs are pushing up prices. Robles asked if the study included mixed-use developments, because of our patchwork zoning and that mixed-use seems to succeed in other areas. This is not considered for Spring Valley, but other study areas such as Casa De Oro. Eugenio commented that our CPG proposed a near-by mixed-use development, but the builder declined because of lack of profitability. Pierce asked why aren't these kinds of projects considered for us? The team said that mixed use rentals are not feasible. Lowes asked if the county has said what they want for our area, because what we see is no plan and that anything goes. The team responded that the purpose of community outreach is to find out what is wanted for our area. They are looking at land use policies, including density and whether it aligns with the real estate market, maybe increase the labor pool, partnerships with other agencies and financing alternatives. Malcolm Gettman asked about the possible HOA conflict in a mixed use development, the size of a development to turn a profit, as finding locations in our area and retail failures that open up retail centers for redevelopment, but real estate turns over very fast. Another community member spoke of water and sewage capacities coming in 5 years. Gibbons asks about the need for services, such as hospitals, and local role model communities as examples. Eugenio brought up the infrastructure example of flooding in Spring Valley, due to inadequate storm water control. The January storm clean-up is still not complete. Malcolm Gettman mentioned that emergency response is also inadequate. Pierce brought up walkability, safer streets and sidewalks and too many junkyards. The public wants more engagement, more awareness of such studies and opportunities to feedback. The team detailed future local events they will attend plus virtual workshops. The final document will be an interactive tool, to engage the public. Wallace felt the code enforcement needs to be proactive in cleaning up.

#### **4. Pre-intake Review: Calle Los Arboles -- Collina Cannubi Project.** No Vote on this item.

Nicolo Gobbi is the owner of the parcel being presented. This is a 12 acre parcel and they have designed 18 lots with a

large open space. Marcello Pozzi is the architect and did the design. They want to respect the environment and do the least amount of grading. These are individual homes along the east side of the street. They did receive a link to the SVCPG Design Guidelines from the county. Minimal change to the environment, i.e. no retaining walls. This is a sloped open space with few flat parts. The design would be of a similar standard of living of the locale. Zoning is now open space. With just 18 homes on the parcel, this could be considered very underdeveloped. They want to preserve the natural drainage. Two story housing would be on either end of the street, where the lots are flat and the footprint can be small. Lots are approximately 80ft by 140 ft. One story homes would be suspended over the property on a vertical post inside a concrete framework. Snyder commented that Calle Los Arboles is a fast road, sort of an artery for the neighborhood. Maybe the speed limit would need to be adjusted. Eugenio asked if these are affordable homes. They have not yet spoken with the fire dept, just PDS. The developer has not addressed fire mitigation, this is a very preliminary design. Pierce emphasized the high fire danger and frequencies of fires on or near this parcel. Robles commented on the unique design as exciting compared to other designs we have reviewed. Maybe add an access road to reach the lower portion of the property for fire mitigation? Wallace suggested that one or two of the homes be affordable housing. The developer would consider that, but what comes in return? Faster process, etc.? The corner flat lot can be two units with additional ADUs. There can be street parking, but the setback from the street is narrow, 15 feet is being proposed. The house driveway is a bridge. The garage is a story of the house. Most of the construction will be steel, facilitated by a crane from the street. The discussion went into home design features presented by Marcello. Pierce asked if the 3 story homes would be right next to the existing homes on the north edge of the parcel. Yes, they would be, but changes can be considered. An example would be tall ADUs in the College area next to single family homes. There will be no grading on the parcel. Lowes said the county does not have any restrictions about blocking views. Gibbons asked about the geology of the area for drilling the posts. No geology survey yet. Snyder asked about earthquake proofing and the developer responded that that would be part of their design. They do not want a stepped design on the slope. A public commenter asked if ADUs were even possible on these narrow-sloped lots. ADUs would have to be part of the structure, such as over the garage. Malcolm Gettman asked piling or caissons. These will be pilings surrounded by a cruciform concrete structure that that house will rest on. Harriet Taylor asked about handicapped accommodations. Getting from one floor to another, but most of the designs are one story. Pierce went over the list of our concerns; road speed, geology related to foundation, fire hazard and insurability, seismic, setbacks according to the county, street parking and height limits. Street lighting was added as a concern but looks to already exist. The group is generally positive about this project and concerns have been listed. Overall, the project is very innovative, and the group wants to stress that to the county.

**5. Pre-intake Review: Olive Garden Restaurant located at 935 Sweetwater Rd. Spring Valley, CA 91977.** No Vote on this item.

Terry Womack is the presenter on behalf of Olive Garden Restaurants. His immediate concern is creating a 15 ft landscape setback buffer, per the design guidelines. This would affect parking and the travel lane. Robles mentioned that there is landscaping on the slope inside the sidewalk. The Chic-fil-A landscaping is outside of the parking and drive-through. Snyder noted the delivery truck travel lane immediately in front of the proposed site. The alternative access is at St. George St., a steep ramp with a tight left turn. This entrance/exit is limited by the parking next to Smart&Final. What's the L-shaped building next to your proposed spot? That building will be demolished. There was a CVS drive-through proposed there, but didn't happen. Why signage on the back of the store, if it's up against another store? The presenter has not yet visited the site. Presenter has reviewed our design guidelines and checklist and we spoke about how sign allowance is calculated. Where the entrance would be should conform to our guidelines and there will be some landscaping near the building. From the community, Malcolm Gettman asked if the entrance on Jamacha Road will be addressed. Not so much adding a turn lane but widening the entrance. Snyder spoke about the difficulty crossing the eastbound traffic. Lowes pointed out that are guidelines, when specific, function as regulations. Robles will work with Womack on the signage guidelines. Malcolm Gettman asked about any proposed EV charging stations. Womack understood that some charging is defined when putting in parking.

**6. Discussion: Sweetwater Authority Solar Project.** Decide to take a position on the proposed project and send a letter to the County Board of Supervisors. Vote on the item.

Pierce projected the draft letter for review. Sweetwater Authority (SA) is now lobbying the state to make the array 200 acres in coverage. Maybe moving fast in order to get the credits from SDG&E? The draft letter asks to slow down the project. A recent fire required helicopter water drops on the reservoir, which may be happened by a large solar array.

Only other projects are a northern CA treatment plant and in Venezuela. Why do it here? After all the recreational requests over the years, 200 acres of panels will eliminate all other activities. Pierce read the draft letter. The letter asks that the county get engaged ASAP, during dry years, the array would cover most of the surface, that SA should not proceed without considering other options. Harriet Taylor, co-chair of the Sweetwater CPG, has a coalition formed to oppose the project, she has messaged Calfire for their position on pulling water to fight fires. She has a poster prepared regarding the opposition. Bonita has a hydrologist reviewing the project. Spring Valley will be seeing this project (loss of views). Robles asked that the letter mention that SA has not engaged in any discussion in good faith. County Water Authority is the governing agency. Harriet spoke of plastics leaching into the reservoir and that SA has the land to place this array. Malcolm Gettman states that 20 acres would cover SA's energy costs, but that the SA's land is also environmentally protected. The State water quality resource board may have authority here. Shaffer asked for a clarification in the letter regarding stating that the project is inconstant with our general plan. Snyder said that the reservoir is going from a drinking water only to being a high-tech business. They need to slow down. Robles says the project goes against the county's goal of providing conservation of natural resources. Per Malcolm Gettman, at one time, before SA, the reservoir was open for recreation, but SA shut it down. The excuse has been that this is a sole source of water for the rate payers and that operating costs are increasing. Send the letter to all authorities; local, state and federal. Motion by Snyder to send the letter, second by Robles. Vote is 9 yes, 0 no, 4 absent, 2 vacant. Motion is approved.

### **C. GROUP BUSINESS**

1. Announcements: tree removal already happened before we could vote on it. Removed by the county. Gibbons is working on the AT&T signage project. Snyder tabled the APG update, the new SANDAG CEO is a 32 year Caltrans veteran. Quarry Road bridge project has found heavy metals in the ground, but this can be readily mitigated.
2. Reports:
  - Chair
  - CSA 128
  - TAC
  - Highway cleanup: cleaned up Sweetwater Springs Blvd last Sunday. The freeway islands need to be mowed.
  - APG
  - Other
3. Next SVCPG meeting: July 23, 2024

### **D. ADJOURNMENT 8:42pm**

#### **PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

We strive to protect personally identifiable information, by collecting only information necessary to deliver our services. All information collected becomes public record, subject to inspection and copying by the public, unless an exemption in law exists. In the event of conflict, governing the County's disclosure of records, the County ordinance or other law will control. You can review any personal information collected about you. You may recommend changes to your personal information, which you believe is in error, by submitting a written request that shows, credibly, the error. If you believe your personal information is being used for purposes other than those intended, you may contact us. In all cases, we will take reasonable steps to verify your identity, before granting access or making corrections.

#### **Purpose of Planning and Sponsor Groups**

Advise the County on Discretionary projects as well as on planning and land use matters that are proposed within their respective community planning or sponsor group area.