

# Spring Valley Community Planning Group

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

Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 6:00 P.M.

**A. ROLL CALL – QUORUM** 11 Present (Lowe, Robles, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Gibbons, Peason, Custeau, Woodruff, Snyder), 2 Absent (Gonzalez, Gettmann), 2 Vacant. We have a quorum.

**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.

Kate Needham-Cano from Congresswoman Jacob's office for an update. Jacob will return to local area in October, accepting service academy nomination applicants; 155 in total. Also accepting student applicants for the congressional app challenge; details on the congresswoman's web site. Snyder asked if congress is in the election black-out period; yes and there will be no contact through newsletters, etc. until after the election. Rosanna, from State Senator Steve Padilla's office gave an update on pending legislation; SB 764 protects against financial abuse of content creators, SB 892 concerns AI procurement guidelines for government agencies, SB 1105 extends farmworker paid sick leave during climate emergencies, SB 1006 is the study of grid enhancing technology for transmission lines. Contact the senator's office for any help with state agencies. Joshua Dunn, from the office of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, announced that the county's procurement process for non-profits and small businesses has been streamlined. County is putting 30 Medical-centric beds into UCSD's east campus. Calavo Park's groundbreaking happened on 9-12, and the supervisor's office will monitor construction progress. The board is in the grant application acceptance period until 10-1. Joshua spoke of the need for candidates for filling of board and commission seats. Scott, working with Colin Parent as a candidate for the 79<sup>th</sup> assembly district, went over the candidate's priorities. The high cost of housing's effect on the homelessness issue, ensuring the funding of public safety and improving/repairing roads. Mikayla Lowery, from Supervisor Vargas' office, gave an update. 9-30 is the last date to apply for a community enhancement grant, Malcolm Gettmann was appointed to SVCPG, Sweetwater Road intersections of St. George Street and Orville Street have been placed on the county traffic light list. Mike Mendoza, a property owner who was flooded by the storms earlier this year, has been working on issues of roads, water flows, easements to prevent flooding. Wallace suggested he join the planning group and he was given directions.

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

**1. Approval of Minutes: 8/13/2024.** Vote on this item.

Motion to approve by Eugenio, Second by Custeau. 10 Yes (Lowe, Robles, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Gibbon, Pearson, Custeau, Woodruff, Snyder), 0 No, 1 Abstain (Shaffer), 2 Absent (Gonzalez, Gettmann), 2 Vacant. Motion passes.

**2. 8915 Troy Street, APN 503-290-09-00, Request CPG to approve plan changes.** Vote on this item.

Property owner presented. Residence on the property has already been approved, still working on the commercial side permit. One example of a design change is the location of fencing along the storm drain easement. The last approved tenant for the building was a market, prior to the unapproved tire shop. The use will go back to a market. There will be no windows in the front of the building due to the integrity of the structure. The building is possibly 100 years old and he does not want to retrofit the building, so no changes to the exterior. The main reason for presenting is the removal of the proposed front windows from the design. Wallace asked when this came to us and why; this was a B waiver request. Snyder covered the history of the entire APN's review by the group. The split by the flood channel, the nonpermitted shed, the setback violation. Wallace asked that, in the future, when we see a project for the second or third time, some history of the permit request be provided. The owner agrees to use wrought iron fencing instead of chain link. Custeau asked if the presentation is a request to vote on the site plan. Also, there isn't a presenter on this project from our group and there should be. Wallace made a motion that this review be tabled until a review by a presenter in the group. Chair Pierce said that the county said this was just a request to change the window design for the front, but it now appears to be a full site plan. No sidewalk will be added, parking is behind the building, there will be landscaping and an ADA walkway and ramp from the front to the building entrance. Landscaping will also be added to the residence. The PDS planner has to be determined as the previous planner has left the county. Recently, the property has become very trashy. This project is tabled until next meeting and the chair asks for volunteers to review. Robles volunteers for the review and suggested that a team work on this. Gibbons asked if the proponent has a set of

plans. This latest version of the project did not come to the group through the county. The county needs to specify what it is they want us to approve. Lowes and Gibbons will also be on the review team. Robles asked for contact information and county project designation. Comment covered the need for PDS to be involved in this process including the documentation that the group signs. No vote as item is tabled.

**3. Informational Item: Meet New San Diego County Code Compliance Officer for Spring Valley.** No Vote on the item.

Frederick Robinson and Gerardo Vargas presented. Robinson is new to county code enforcement, having come from the city of San Diego. Vargas is a veteran of county code enforcement. Robinson covers Spring Valley and a pie slice of Mt. Helix. He does inspections; examples are graffiti, structures and inoperable vehicles. He has 200 open cases. Cases like building violation take a long time and graffiti would be a short time. Robinson's coverage is cut off at Jamacha Road, another officer, James Bray, covers south from there. He works through the Tell Us Now app, phone call, or online through the county site. Pierce asked for an explanation about how cases are created. Go through the channels to do your reporting, which is anonymous. Code Enforcement is reactive only. Proactive can lead to targeted enforcement. Wallace said the issue is the public knowing what a violation is, how to educate the public. Robinson said they are very flexible and work to educate the public, giving time to correct violations. Their handout defines what is a violation. Pearson said that an education about terminology, definitions, etc. would be helpful. Shaffer mentioned the history of enforcement areas as being huge. Jennifer Teitelbaum asked about graffiti. Robinson said they have a contract firm that does graffiti removal. Eugenio asked about graffiti on vehicles. Make a specific case, but if the vehicle is mobile, then no.

**4. Discussion: Tree Removal at 3633 Fairway Dr (center median).** Vote on this item.

The tree is dead and has fungus growing on it at the base. Fairway has a center median which is a sidewalk that covers a storm drain. The county has posted that the tree will be cut down and has sent their tree replacement policy to our Chair; who read the policy to the group. The county is not going to replace this specific tree. Per Robles, 3-4 years ago, the county removed a bunch of trees in La Presa. There are large parts of Spring Valley that do not have trees and thus, no shade. Studies show that lack of tree canopy contributes to a poorer quality of life and less outdoor activity. Custeau said this is a unique situation, a concrete cover over a storm drain. There can't be more than a couple of feet of soil above the concrete, which may contribute to the trees dying. Pierce said Supervisor Vargas has a goal to plant 5,000 trees. Mikayla Lowery speculated that infrastructure could be part of the problem as to why the county does not want to plant more trees. Pierce said that he has been told that the county just does not want to maintain the trees. Lowes said the developers used the wrong trees, affecting sewers and causing the subsequent need to remove the trees. Where trees were planted with root barriers, the trees did not need to be removed. Joshua Dunn asked if this was an issue of a lack of shading or trees. Trees were the answer. Robles has access to studies of the benefits of natural shade. He has seen people seeking shade during the heat, mostly by being behind structures. Pierce made a motion to remove this dead tree, but that the county replace with a new tree and draft a letter to the county to change their policy and plant new trees when there is viable options. Chris Pearson seconded. Pearson said that Calavo Park will have over 200 trees and the park over I-15 has healthy trees, so such planting is doable. Vote is 11 Yes (Lowes, Robles, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Gibbons, Pearson, Custeau, Woodruff, Snyder), 0 No, 0 Abstain, 2 Absent (Gonzalez, Gettmann), 2 Vacant.

**5. Discussion: Citizen proposed CIP project to address drainage issue caused by storm water flowing from 2600 Block of Helix St. onto private property and discharging into properties along 9100 Block of Avocado St.** Vote on this item.

Chair Pierce asked the county supervisors' reps remain here through this discussion item as it has to do with flooding of residences in their districts. Jennifer Teitelbaum is one of the property owners affected by the flooding in January and led this discussion. She lives on Avocado Street in Spring Valley, pointed out in photographs the area that include her and her neighbors' home. She used an overhead photo to describe how water flows onto her property during storms, where the storm drains are, and what she has done to mitigate the storm flow and water damage. The county has pointed to other agencies such as SDGE and Helix Water as being the issues. She has contacted Ryan Lau, county public works, about a pipe from Helix Street and that it may not be connected to a storm drain, but instead flooding her property. She described the culvert they built behind the Avocado Street home and that it leads to the street to outflow. Pierce pointed out erosion on the hill above the culvert along the homes. Discussion continued on reviewing the drains and lack thereof, on Helix and Montemar. One drain ends on a property on Helix and another is weed choked at its entrance. The property

owner above Jennifer will not allow access to his property. The owner did not want a drain or easement on his property, which is what the county is considering. The owner is planning on developing his property and, at that time, the plan will come before this planning group. Custeau said there are 2 issues, first that water from a public street is coming onto private land and that the county has a responsibility for that. Pierce pointed out that a correction would just cause the flow to disrupt other properties. Custeau said the January flood was a rare once in a century situation, but Eugenio said he has seen this twice since 1974. Spring Valley was never a master planned community with roads any and everywhere and no planning for storm runoff. Bancroft Elementary was heavily impacted by the recent flooding through a canyon, just down from the properties being discussed. Jim Comeau, community member, suggested that Jennifer get an attorney. He brought up the example of a storm drain that empties onto Eugenio's neighbor's property. Another example is the lack of storm drains on South Barcelona, flowing down toward the freeway that the group reviewed in 2017. Spring Valley never had storm water planning and we are paying for it now. Pierce said the county will not do anything for fear of being sued by property owners affected by any change. Robles wondered if our group is in a subject outside of our purview, but that we should continue to monitor the situation. Mikayla, District 1 rep, says that they may not be able to solve the problem, but would work to streamline the process to get the problem addressed. A community member said we should move on from the history that created the problem and, instead, address the problem. Wallace why we are voting on this issue; it is to add the needed storm drain to the CIP list. Shaffer reviewed the function of the CIP list; that we determine after discussion, adding items to the list for the county to only consider action, there are no guarantees. Custeau suggested we make a CIP item that asks the county to consider solutions to the flooding in this portion of Spring Valley. Snyder said that drainage problems come to our group piecemeal, and we should address the whole problem of a lack of a comprehensive engineering plan, get imaginative, but that imagination may not be in the county departments involved. Joshua said that county is working to catch up on the concerns of east county, that had not been historically addressed. The flooding issue is being discussed, but this will take time, infrastructure always takes time. Jennifer said the county told her to come to our group and get the issue on the CIP list. A public member asked if there was an engineer in our group. There is not. Pearson said there is no master storm water runoff plan for Spring Valley, all haphazard. Wallace moved that we add this particular drainage issue to our CIP list with Robles seconded. Lowes asked if we prioritize the CIP list, we do not. The county will address as funding is available and matched to a CIP item. Gibbons asked that we get a county rep to attend our meeting and explain storm water programs; where does the water go? Robles will write the letter to the county requesting attention to the Helix and Avocado Streets flooding issue. Motion is amended to add this letter. Vote is 11 Yes (Lowes, Robles, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Gibbons, Pearson, Custeau, Woodruff, Snyder) 0 No, 0 Abstain, 2 Absent (Gonzalez, Gettmann), 2 vacant. Motion passes.

### **C. GROUP BUSINESS**

1. Announcements: 79th California State Assembly District Candidate Forum, Sept 30, 2024, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m at New Seasons Church. Come and ask questions of the candidates. Address is 2300 Bancroft Drive. Water Conservation Gardens is having their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

2. Reports:  Chair has a list of other boards' vacancies if anyone is interested.

CSA 128 Openings here have been approved.

TAC No update

Highway cleanup is Saturday, 9.28 at 8am at Avocado Blvd. Caltrans asked if we wanted to take on other sites, we said no.

APG No update

Other – Gibbons asked for directions to our sign guidelines. County is still not providing direction to the guidelines to permit applicants. Pierce displayed the location of the guidelines on the PDS website.

3. Next SVCPG meeting: October 8, 2024

### **D. ADJOURNMENT at 7:47pm**

#### **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.