

Spring Valley Community Planning Group

*** MEETING MINUTES***

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

A. ROLL CALL – QUORUM

9 Present (Gonzalez, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Gibbons, Pearson, Custeau, Woodruff), 5 Absent (Lowes, Robles, Lawson, Gettmann, Christie(arrived later)) 1 Vacant. There is 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.

Robin Todd, field rep for the 79th Assembly District. She is attending tonight to hear about the concerns of the Spring Valley area and is available for contact. Pearson asked if Robin could get us an update on the SR125/SR94 interchange funding status for project phases 1 and 2. Norm Shoemaker thanked the group members for their volunteer service. Norm is the president for the resident's association at Covenant Living at Mount Miguel, representing approximately 400 residents on 41 acres. Joining Norm is the associate director of covenant living, Kristi Florence, and 2 residents, Earl and Bab, who are international pickleball champs. This group is concerned about brush abatement on their southern border. Recent fires in the news emphasized the need for fuel abatement near these devastated communities. Residents of Covenant Living are voicing concern about fire potential near their property. They would appreciate contact information of other civil agencies and authorities to contact for help in controlling fuel around their property boundaries. There was some evacuation chaos, considering the mix of resident types, especially those that are ambulatory, during the recent Quarry Fire. Kristi spoke about the past confusion on who owns what and is responsible for abatement. Recent discoveries show that Caltrans and the County own the property of concern. Pierce urged them to attend the San Miguel Fire Board meeting on February 12 to express their concerns.

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

1. Approval of Minutes: 1/14/2025. Vote on this item.

Motion to approve by Shaffer, second by Pearson. 8 Yes (Gonzalez, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Pearson, Custeau), 0 No, 1 Abstain (Gibbons), 5 Absent (Lowes, Robles, Lawson, Gettman, Christie), 1 Vacant. The motion passes.

2. Informational Item: Sweetwater Loop Trail Update. Presenter: County Parks and Recreation. No vote on this item.

Mark Caro, senior park project manager; Amy Hoffman, project manager and Israel Marquez, Sweetwater Authority (SA) will present/discuss. The trail is multi-use and roughly 16 miles long with about 11 miles existing. The southern portion along the reservoir, the northern portion, which mostly needs to be developed and the summit campground connecting the various portions. There are 4 property owners: US Fish and Wildlife, the county, Caltrans, and the Sweetwater Authority. Caro displayed the open/unfinished segments of the trail. Segments 5-7 are the most recent being worked on and Caro gave specific location points on the trail sections. Parks & Rec is working on easement issues with Caltrans to get some more sections open. Lakeview station was open late last year with horse trailer and auto parking, a kiosk and a future portable (due to no water service) restroom. Segments 8-10 are in the planning stages, and they hope to lay out development rules with SA by this spring and then they will begin designing. Segment 8 hugs SR54 and may need structures over a runoff system. The county owns the segment 9 property. Segment 10 makes the connection with the bridge at the U.S. Wildlife property. Custeau asked about segment 8's proximity to SR54 and it would be just on the other side of the SA fence. Eugenio asked if there was any discussion about an animal crossing in trail section 8. Caro said that such a project is under the Resource Management division. As to the missing segments of northern segments of the trail, projection is to begin construction in the fall or winter of 2026. Parks and Rec will return to SVCPG when they are in the design phase for further input on trail routes. Right now, \$4 million is appropriated for the project, i.e. section 8-10 and the rest of section 6 and 7 and hoping for another \$2.5 million for fiscal years 2027-2028. Custeau asked if the money is just for report that might not be for actual construction. Caro said that they need to know if any structures are needed, from the design phase and that most of the route is already known except for needed habitat avoidance. Marquez

described the urban runoff system as a stormwater conveyance system. Section 8 runs parallel to the runoff system and will cross the divergence area and some wetlands. Marquez continued describing the runoff structures and gating system used to divert water. Pearson asked about the multiple jurisdictions and whether they meet as some form of advisory council such as Mission Trails has. Marquez said there is not a collaboration of jurisdictions, but during planning the groups would all be engaged in the process. A community member asked about the amount of parking available, Caro gave specifics on the parking. Custeau brought up the land purchased by the county near the Pointe and how it could provide more parking in the eastern area and make access to the trail near the river. Caro said they would investigate that as it is on a hillside, and it is a secure area for the reservoir. Woodruff is glad the trail is being considered again and getting some action. Pierce asked about shortening section 10, due to switchbacks and steep terrain. Would SA want to shorten the south side trail? Make the trail closer to the reservoir? This is possible, making better access for fishing and a better view of the reservoir. The north side roads are busier than the south side, which allows the trail to be considered closer to the water. Fishing is now allowed 4 days a week. Custeau says it is a long trip to get to the fishing location, particularly for the disadvantaged. How about allowing fishing on the north side of the lake? Marquez mentions the reservoir master plan and maybe that can be considered from recent community input. Grant funding could open up consideration for recreation, like kayaking, fishing, etc. Custeau emphasized that the reservoir has never had much recreation offered and has been historically inaccessible, and it would be great to have the master recreation plan allow greater access. Woodruff agreed that it is time for this recreational asset to be available to the community. Pierce asked about trail access around Grand Avenue. Parks and Rec says there is an easement to have trail access, but the easement needs to be altered at that location. Custeau said that the easement could be acquired from Caltrans as the land is not planned for anything now and would be a great project for the State Assembly to consider. A community member asked about bridging low points at oasis and palm groves. Caro said they are not looking to develop any new paths but use the existing.

3. B Waiver: Jack in the Box; APN: 505-081-23-00; 10255 Campo Rd; replacing the exterior lighting and signage. Presenter: Custeau. Vote on this item

There are some changes to lighting, no changes to signage since this building was last approved by SVCPG in February 2024. Custeau displayed the elevations and the only lighting changes is LED rope lighting that face down to illuminate the sides of the building. The building is now stucco instead of wood siding and has boards to hold posters on specials and limited time items, which is the same as previously approved plans. Custeau continued through the elevations, comparing the plans SVCPG approved last year and the new version. Change is primarily coloring. Custeau made a motion to approve these plans as presented, seconded by Eugenio.

Vote is 9 Yes (Gonzalez, Pierce, Wallace, Eugenio, Shaffer, Pearson, Gibbons, Custeau, Woodruff), 0 No, 1 Abstain (Christie), 4 Absent (Lowes, Robles, Lawson, Gettmann), 1 Vacant. Motion passes.

4. Informational Item: Community Assessment and the impact of Alcohol Retailer Density. Presenter: Institute for Public Strategies (IPS). No vote on this item.

Seraphina Eberhardt is the presenter with her colleague, Angelica. They did a community assessment down Grand Avenue. Angelica will talk about retail alcohol concentration and the next steps. The IPS, a nonprofit, has a substance misuse disorder

focus and hold a county contract for substance misuse prevention in the east and south county regions. IPS does not want to bulldoze, but uplift. IPS reviews key factors such as infrastructure, services, transportation. Goals are to gather insight on strengths and challenges for planning and strategies for improvements or intervention and to bring the information to the community's attention. They walked a mile on Grand, for about an hour, including alleyways and recorded litter, alcohol trash, needles, etc. they use the term "blight" to define what they found. Eberhardt went through the photos taken showing the trash, including small liquor bottles. Cars parked where sidewalks should be which impedes 'walkability' in that area. This trash, graffiti and disorder causes fear in the community. Walkability promotes health and social interaction. In Lemon Grove, they now have a Broadway Revitalization Group coalition which works to increase walkability and increase community presence. An example of community involvement would be the cleaning up and removing obstructions in the alleys and identifying the wrong kind of businesses can draw the wrong kind of presence in a neighborhood. Angelica will talk about alcohol licensing, and introduced the state Alcohol Beverage Control

(ABC) responsibilities. She focuses on off-sale licenses, i.e. purchase but not consumer on the site. Grand Avenue area has an over concentration of off-sales businesses. Close relative proximity of alcohol sales businesses causes alcohol related harm. The IPS provides statistics, such as underage drinking, to help community groups in protesting these licenses and advocating policy changes. Lemon Grove now has an ordinance for more off-sale training, as an example. Wallace mentioned a store that came to SVCPG to approve a liquor license. She felt that there was already too much liquor retailing in that area. The best way is to protest each new license since the state law defines location density. Custeau asked who sets the boundaries on the concentrations of liquor stores. The state does, through the ABC. The CDC measures by distance between each population member and the nearest liquor establishment. Angelica quotes the CDC rather than the ABC for liquor sales density on Grand Ave. The CDC calculates 2 stores rather than the current 7. Custeau illustrated the inequity in liquor sales between upscale areas and Spring Valley. Pearson asked about statistics on areas that have banned single sales of alcohol. IPS works with the Responsible Hospitality Coalition and that group has helped craft ordinances to ban/control liquor sales. Eugenio picks up trash on either side of Sweetwater Springs Blvd and picks up about a dozen of the single serve liquor bottles. He wondered about statistics beyond crime, such as effects on health. Shaffer said it's good that studies are being done in Spring Valley. But unless there are infractions against a sales site, the license is not in jeopardy. Seraphina said that IPS is not "prohibitionist" and that there is a lot of training that comes with getting a license. Lemon Grove now requires on-boarding and annual training to be a good community member. Wallace mentioned that store windows are often covered against regulation. Notify IPS and they will do a survey and advise the retailer. They research DUIs for the source of alcohol and do an assessment as to why DUIs are happening from there. Custeau asked how the census tract calculation works. Wallace asked if the surveys help with getting sidewalks. Once a survey is done and the community is aware of issues, they can push the information to their elected official. This is valuable in unincorporated areas. Kathy, a community member, asked who had the crime statistics. In our area, That would be the sheriff.

5. Discussion: Updates to SVCPG Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Top 10 Lists for March 30, 2025, Submission Deadline.

No vote on this item.

Pearson emphasized that sidewalks in our CIP submittal. Eugenio said it would be difficult to put sidewalks in our older neighborhoods where there is little space and not even gutters. Eugenio also asked, as a point of order, Jake Christie can now be seated as a member. Pierce said that Jake has been appointed and Custeau mentioned the time period allows Jake to complete his training. Jake got appointed after the scheduled in-person training so he will need to do it online.

D. GROUP BUSINESS

1. Announcements:

2. Reports:

- ☐ Chair: There may be multiple candidates for seat 15, but there is the question of whether this is a District 1 or 4 appointment. The candidates are mixed within the two districts.
- ☐ CSA 128: Pearson says they have 4 vacancies, so it can difficult to get a quorum. At the last meeting, he asked that our funds used to build Calavo Park, be reimbursed. Pearson could not get a second to his motion, but hopes to revisit the issue.
- ☐ TAC: In the meeting last Friday, a four-way stop will be set up at Central and Lamar. Spring Valley continues to have the highest accident rates when traffic proposals come up. Avocado Blvd just north of our planning group boundaries had the speed limit lowered to 40 mph. This is due to drivers going slower, possibly due to deteriorating road conditions. There will also be traffic calming applied, such as lane narrowing, bike lanes, etc. Both items will be on the Board of Supervisors agenda on June 25th. CHP is ramping up their hiring because, during Covid there weren't any academies and there were a lot of retirements. There are also discussions about having sheriff deputies do more road policing. Wallace asked about the 125 southbound On ramp from Jamacha Blvd - can we allow more cars to go through to the ramp during each light sequence?
- ☐ Highway cleanup: Eugenio will get the next 6-month schedule out soon. There seems to be a lot of 18 wheelers parking on Campo Road overnight – which is prohibited, maybe due to lack of enforcement. Pierce reported some abandoned cars, but CHP wanted his street address to complete the complaint.

- APG: Custeau has been appointed to be on the SANDAG Transportation Committee. He said the committee works more on policy than actual projects. They talk about subjects like regional climate action plans and revenue plans. He asked them to consider fire evacuation routes, and the SR125/SR94 interchange, which will become a greater issue with the expansion of the Otay border crossing. Pierce is in touch with the new project manager for this interchange and he will try to schedule for the February 25th meeting.
- Other: New project, the Burlington Coat Factory B waiver, where the Big Lots was. There was a short discussion about whether this should be a B waiver. Gonzalez and Gibbons will work on this project. The adult book store has a mural and the district 4 supervisors office wants the group to decide on the mural prior to the supervisors’ meeting on it.

3. Next scheduled SVCPG meeting: February 25, 2025

E. ADJOURNMENT at 7:55PM

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.