

Valley Center Community Planning Group

Approved Minutes for a regular meeting held on **December 9, 2024** at 7:00 p.m. in the Valley Center Community Hall, 28246 Lilac Road, Valley Center, California 92082.

Delores Chavez Harmes, **Chair**; Dori Rattray, **Vice-Chair**; James Garritson, **Secretary**

A=Absent; **Ab**=Abstention; **DRB**=Valley Center Design Review Board; **N**=Nay; **P**=Present; **R**=Recused; **VCCPG**=Valley Center Community Planning Group; **VCPRD**=Valley Center Parks & Recreation District; **Y**=Yea

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88949827302?pwd=cIkxDCBoEA8TE8QSoNboaSj1UMgP6r.1>

A. Roll Call

- The Meeting was called to order at **7:02 p.m.** and a Quorum was established with **11 members present.**
- Lisa Adams - **P**
- Chris Barber - **P**
- Michelle Bothof - **P**
- Delores ChavezHarmes-**P**
- Vlad Ciupitu - **P**
- Susan Fajardo - **P**
- Julia Feliciano - **P**
- James Garritson - **P**
- Steve Hutchison - **P**
- ~~Matt Matthews~~ - **A**
- LaVonne Norwood - **P**
- Dori Rattray - **P**
- ~~Kevin Smith~~ - **A**
- ~~Vacant Seat~~ - **A**
- ~~Vacant Seat~~ - **A**

B. Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Harmes

C. Approval of November 11, 2024 Minutes

- **Motion: To approve the November 11, 2024 Minutes.**
- **Maker/Second:** Barber/Norwood
- **Motion Carries 10-0-1 (Y-N-Ab).**
- Ms. Bothof abstained, as she did not attend the November meeting.

D. Public Comments: Members of the public may address the Planning Group on any topic not on the agenda.

- Vito Pesce (community) wanted to know what it would take for the County to place a Welcome to Valley Center sign in our community. Chair Harmes explained that the County has spent a lot of money recently on capital improvement projects.

1. SDG&E Strategic Undergrounding Program [APPENDIX]

- Steve Wood, the senior project manager for SDG&E introduced himself and explained the background about the strategic undergrounding project. Mr. Wood shared that “to reduce the potential of wildfires in the region, SDG&E is hard at work strengthening infrastructure, raising awareness and enhancing communications.” The Strategic Undergrounding (SUG) and Electric System Hardening (ESH) Projects focus on High Fire Threat Districts (HFTD).
- Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) are part of the ongoing strategy to reduce wildfire risk. Crews will visit the project area to perform surveying work. Surveying will take 3 to 4 months. Design and engineering firms will work with each customer on a specific design

and construction plan unique to their property. This will take 4 to 8 months. Review of Designs will take 1 to 4 months. Processing of Documents will take 6 to 13 months. Construction will include trenching and installation of new underground cable. Work may take place in phases.

- Ms. Adams asked a question about the cost of this work of the line from street to meter and new meter cost for homeowners. Steve stated that this work is completely paid for by SDG&E. A map of the undergrounding was shared with color codes for the Underground Conductors.
- Mr. Ciupitu asked about how SDG&E will work undergrounding lines in areas.
- Ms. Bothof shared that she spoke with a SDG&E engineer, Mr. Van Zant, about questions related to undergrounding.

E. Action items (VCCPG advisory vote may be taken on the following items)

1. Clean Energy Solar Project PDS2024-MUP24-012 PDS2024-ER-24-08-004 15225 Rock Hill Ranch Rd.(APN 189-020-39-00 & 189-020-40-00): Rattray – Solar & BESS system on two parcels totaling 141 acres.65.4 acres utilized for 660 W solar panels. 5.1 acres for battery and energy storage system #1 and 8.8acres for battery storage system #2 for a total of 78.6 acres or 55% of total acres combined. (Vote)

- **Motion: To oppose the Solar and Bess system Project PDS2024-MUP24-012 PDS2024-ER-24-08-004 located at 15225 Rock Hill Ranch Rd.**
- **Maker/Second:** Bothof/Ciupitu
- **Motion Carries 11-0-0 (Y-N-Ab)**

● Lisa Adams - Y	● Susan Fajardo - Y	● LaVonne Norwood - Y
● Chris Barber - Y	● Julia Feliciano - Y	● Dori Rattray - Y
● Michelle Bothof - Y	● James Garritson - Y	● Kevin Smith - A
● Delores ChavezHarmes-Y	● Steve Hutchison - Y	● Vacant Seat - A
● Vlad Ciupitu - Y	● Matt Matthews - A	● Vacant Seat - A

- Ms. Rattray shared information about how the VCCPG must follow County guidelines and our Community Plan with regards to this project.
- Fire Chief Lafredo shared in his report (A copy was shared to the board during the meeting) that this type of project is referenced as industrial. Dori referenced the County of San Diego PDS property summary report that states the property is located in Semi-Rural Residential (SR-4) and regulation use is Limited Agriculture (A70). In Chief Lafredo’s report, the fire protection facilities are not expected to be adequate to serve the proposed development within the next five years. The report says the District will submit conditions at a later date.
- In addition, the report states that the proposed project is located in a hazardous wildland fire area, and additional fuel break requirements may apply. Environmental mitigation requirements should be coordinated with the fire district to ensure that these plans do not increase fire risks.

- Ms. Rattray introduced Adrienne Cisneros-Selekman, the Community Relations Liaison for Supervisor Jim Desmond, who attended the meeting tonight.
- There was information shared that the State of Arizona purchases a lot of discounted energy from solar plants that are located in California.
- Chair Harmes asked Ms. Rattray to share her thoughts about the Solar and Bess system project. Ms. Rattray shared that Valley Center is located in a high fire risk region. The Board of Supervisors will take a vote on high capacity battery storage systems tomorrow.
- There was a lot of discussion among members about the community concerns about this solar farm and the danger of lithium batteries.
- Mr. Garritson asked a question related to the construction of a previous solar farm on Valley Center Road. The property is located in a flood zone.
- The water table is very high on this property. Lithium fires typically burn themselves out, as fire departments are unable to fight this type of fire using traditional firefighting techniques.
- Ms. Norwood was concerned that if the Planning Group took a vote tonight and the issue were to come back at a later date, would members have the opportunity to consider new information after tonight's vote.

F. Subcommittee Reports

1) Emergency Evacuation (Harmes):

- Meetings will take place quarterly at the end of the month.

2) Cannabis Subcommittee (Matthews):

- No update.

3) Parks & Rec/Trails (Norwood):

- The Butterfield Ranch community event was successful.

4) CPU (Ciupitu):

- A brief update was provided.

5) Mobility (Adams):

- The Traffic and Advisory committee voted to add radar at Lilac Road.

6) Revitalization Subcommittee (Rattray):

- Ms. Rattray has a new SDG&E contact that will paint over graffiti on SDG&E equipment.

F. Related Reports

1) Design Review Board (Smith/Adams):

- No update.

2) Tribal Liaison (Harmes):

- No update.

3) Association of Planning Groups (Hutchison):

- The FBI was investigating contract activities.

4) Website (Garritson):

- No update.

5) Nominations & Board (Fajardo/Bothof):

- **Motion: To recommend the nomination of Lisa Adams to serve on the Valley Center Community Planning Group for Vacant Seat 6.**
- **Maker/Second:** Feliciano/Rattray
- **Motion Carries 11-0-0 (Y-N-Ab)**

a. Acknowledgements

- Adrienne Cisneros-Selekman, on behalf of Supervisor Jim Desmond's office, recognized three young women who have served as Miss Valley Center Stampede. Mackenzie Cayford and Madison Wagner have also both served as Miss Rodeo California in 2012 and 2019. Newly crowned Janae Wallace will begin her reign as Miss Rodeo California on January 1, 2025. These women are great representatives for the community of Valley Center.
- Julia Feliciano was given a certificate of appreciation from the office of Jim Desmond for her service on the Valley Center Community Planning Group.

b. Vacancy Seat #6 Candidates

- John Segoria, a candidate that filed an application for the vacant Seat 6, decided to withdraw his candidacy in consideration of Lisa Adams' qualifications.

6) Chamber/VCBA (Fajardo):

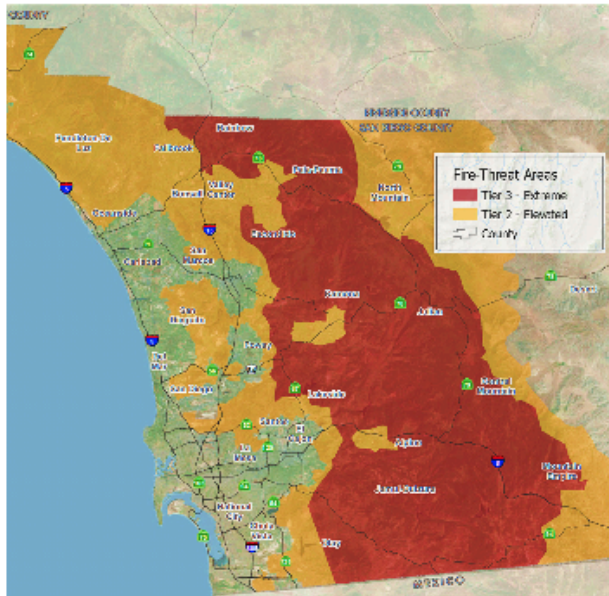
- No update.

G. Adjournment

- Next regular meeting of VCCPG: **January 13, 2025 at 7 p.m.**
- **The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.**
- **Minutes were approved on January 14, 2025**

James Garritson, Secretary

High Fire Threat Districts



- To reduce the potential of wildfires in the region, SDG&E is hard at work strengthening infrastructure, raising awareness and enhancing communications
- When assessing wildfire risk, the High Fire Threat District (HFTD) regions primarily are prioritized as shown on the map on the left
- The Strategic Undergrounding (SUG) and Electric System Hardening (ESH) Projects focus on these HFTD areas



What is Electric System Hardening (ESH)?

ESH Overview

- As part of the commitment to providing safe and reliable energy, SDG&E is proactively addressing fire risk by hardening the critical areas most vulnerable to wildfires
- ESH focuses efforts on replacing old overhead distribution-line components with advanced technology to improve the system and enhance weather resiliency
- ESH replaces existing conductors with stronger steel wire, a process known as reconductoring, and covered conductors, which are designed to withstand 85 mile-per-hour winds reducing risk of failure and potential ignition
- The Strategic Undergrounding Program (SUG) is one of SDG&E's programs that falls under the ESH designation

Project Benefits

- Enhances safety and reliability of the electric distribution system
- Improves electric system performance during extreme weather conditions
- Reduces cost and environmental impacts for future maintenance activities

