

Mission Canyon Association
Minutes of the Board of Directors
September 1, 2015

1. Call to order & introductions Board members introduced themselves and guests were asked to sign in

2. Board Members Present: Richard Axilrod, Alex Feldwinn, Darby Feldwinn, Kellam de Forest, Barbara Lindemann, Kevin Snow, Karl Hutterer, Richard Solomon, Hugh Twibell, Jean Yamamura, Laurie Gitteau, Laurie Dahl

Absent: Ray Smith, James Madison, Alastair Winn

Guests: Steve Windhagen (SBBG), and guests listed below.

3. Minutes of August 4, 2015 Accepted as written.

4. Old Business:

4.1 Museum of Natural History update (Luke Swetland sent by email in advance)

4.2 Botanic Garden update, Steve Windhagen reported on the progress of the Pritzlaff center construction and events at the Garden

4.3 Laurie Gitteau reported that brush chipping was completed on Tunnel Rd. The Fire Department was unable to keep to its original schedule because of the pressure of fighting fires elsewhere in the state. Capt. Rob Hazard in the last week of August mobilized enough crew, aided by a last minute repair of an aging chipper, to take care of the brush piles that were drying out and posing a threat of fire in the heat of August. Chipping still needs to be done on Las Canoas.

4.4 Discussion of the proposed Verizon cell phone tower at 1010 Tunnel Rd. on Botanic Garden property took up most of the meeting.

Chairperson Lindemann reported that a representative from Verizon did not attend the meeting; in light of the opposition expressed to the tower, he was seeking more information from Verizon staff.

Lindemann read one of the many emails received in opposition to the proposed tower, and said that she intended to recommend that the Board not give their approval to a cell tower in that location.

She wanted the Board to hear concerns of the residents, especially of the nearest neighbors most affected by the tower, those next door and those on the hillside above where a tower would be directly in their view. First she asked some of those present to state their concerns, urging folks not to repeat points already made, since there were more than 40 guests in attendance.

Among the concerns expressed were:

- Mission Canyon is not a site for a tower, which is out of keeping with the semi-rural character. Please reconsider.
- Neighbors' physical well being is at risk due to microwave transmission, especially danger to the houses on the hill only 100 feet from the top of the 30 foot talk tower.
- The top of the tower is directly in front of several houses on the opposite hill, ruining their view of the canyon and mountains.
- Individual property values would be substantially negatively affected.

- Federal law does not permit the county to deny a tower permit on the grounds of health, as long as the tower meets all of the federal guidelines for safe levels of electromagnetic radiation.
- Suggest that Verizon use towers already in place by other cell phone companies.
- Seems too low in the canyon to be effective.
- The tower placement is on a historic possibly Chumash antiquities site.
- Concern that Botanic Garden support the tower because of income gained.
- Microwaves will affect children.
- Heightened danger from lightning strikes threatens nearby home.
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Barbara repeated to the Board that it would take at least 2 years, during which there is much opportunity for community testimony, before all approvals would be granted by agencies involved.

Steve Windhagen reminded the Board that the Botanic Gardens will go with the community needs and will not contract with Verizon if the community is against it. If, on the other hand, the community wants better cell reception, and an acceptable site can be found on Garden property, their Board would be supportive.

Captain Rob Hazard of SB Co Fire Dept responded to the Board request for information about cellular transmission in emergency situations. The County Fire Department has Verizon as their carrier. Capt. Hazard said that during emergency calls fire department staff use personal cell phones as well as portable computers to track the location and keep communication with the person making the call. Good cellular reception is important for these calls, but not essential. There are only a few “dark spots” in the canyon where they cannot get reception. During a major wildland fire, the crews rely on radio communication and are far too involved to use cell phones, even though the higher commands are communicating by cell. No matter where a cellular tower was placed, the fire crew would not give high priority in a wildland fire to protecting a cell tower.

Capt. Hazard volunteered to check the signal strength in different parts of the canyon and report back to MCA.

Laurie Guitteau moved to rescind the 1010 Tunnel Rd Botanic Garden Site, and, if a tower was deemed important for the canyon, consider other possible sites. Seconded by Richard Solomon. Passed unanimously.

Barbara said that the consideration of other sites would be on the agenda for the October meeting. She pointed out that Verizon can always contract with a private land owner and seek a permit from the County. Verizon requested that MCA consider their identified sites, but Verizon is not bound by MCAs disapproval. MCAs job is to respond to the needs of our residents, and respect the Mission Canyon Community Plan, which specifies that the semi-rural character and fragile environment of the canyon be preserved.

Laurie requested an email blast to hear from residents whether there is even a demand for better cellular reception. The subcommittee of Richard Solomon, Alex Feldwinn, and Hugh Twibell will work on the questionnaire and email residents.

4.5 Chaparral designation: Discussion ensued about designating chaparral as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat in the Eastern Goleta Valley Community Plan. Barbara sent a letter on behalf of the Board to the Board of Supervisors requesting a policy for the whole county, to be drafted with widespread public participation. The goal would be a policy that protects chaparral without interfering with zones necessary for community defensible space.

4.6 Vacation Rental Workshop

Hugh Twibell and Laurie Dahl reported on the public forum held by the SB Co Planning Department at Westmont College.

The county is drafting a policy that will probably distinguish between vacation rentals by absentee landlords, and short term rentals when the homeowner is present.

Those present at the public forum appeared to be overloaded by owners of short term rentals and favored absentee owners by 4 to 1

4.7 Graffiti removal under bridge at the water tunnel on the hiking trail.

Barbara heard back from Mayor Helene Schneider; Mayor Schneider had passed on to appropriate staff the MCAs request that the massive graffiti be removed. So far, no action.

5. New Business

Barbara reported that residents of Exeter Place met with County staff from Parking and Safety to agree on where there should be white striping to limit parking for public safety. Barbara was pleased to see this neighborhood initiative and cooperation.

6. Additional Committee Reports (as needed)

6.1 Newsletter (Jean Yamamura, Laurie)

6.2 Architectural Design Review (Hugh Twibell)

6.3 Parking and Traffic (Dick Axilrod)

6.4 Land Use Committee (Kevin Snow)

6.5 Membership (Laurie)

6.6 Fire Committee (Ray, Laurie, Jean)

6.7 Botanic Garden Advisory Committee (Darby Feldwinn)

6.8 Garden Whys Committee

6.9 Natural History Museum Committee (Kevin Snow)

6.10 Mission Heritage Trail Association (Alastair Winn, Karl Hutterer)

6.11 Web site (Alex Feldwinn)

Next meeting October 6, 2015

7:30 MacVeagh House

Museum of Natural History

Respectfully submitted

Richard Axilrod (Acting Secretary)

*Liliana Taylor, Anna Gardner, Brittney Burrows, Sven Vesepony, Margarot Van Sickle, Alys Steidler, Sharon Dooyes, Judy Doernberg, Pamela Holst, Laurie Koc, Paulina Conn, Erika Shaeghi, Tracy Bettles, Dave Bettles, Tore Matas, Mary Brown, Barbara Bartolome, Darryl Eaton, Nathan Ridgell, Spencer Foosherian, Rob Hazard SB Co FD, Mitchell Bass, Marlene and Van Granaroli, Nelson Willie, Fran Galt, Heidi Hullander, Priscella Soleil, Michael Hullander, Beth Ruben, Shira Kronfeld, Carole Boom, Harriet Pitman, Ana Martinez, Roseann Crawford