

**HOMESTEAD VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING IN JOHNSON VALLEY AUGUST 16, 2010**

Opened with Flag Salute at 3.05 pm

Present were Maryan Barkley, Adrienne Bishop, Phyllis Burns, Jim Hanley, Jim Harvey, Ken Jones, Earlene McCloskey, Betty Munson, Tory Preston, Nancy Sammons, Joyce Wheeler, Linda Willgues, Alan Rasmussen

Guests: Gary Benedict, Fire Dept. Division Chief; Dave benfield, Fire Dept; Ken Cash; Larry Coulombe; Mary Coulombe; Bob Dockendorff; Elva Rasmussen; Mike Romage, Code Enforcement

Delegate List approved unanimously, with addition of Ken Jones as Councilman from Flamingo Heights, and removal of Randy West from Landers

Agenda approved unanimously, with 2 additions

Minutes of July meeting, posted to the Website in draft form, approved unanimously.

Treasurer's report: Earlene McCloskey.

June beginning balance \$6,771.43; Income \$1558.84; Expenses \$1875.85; Marine Fund checks written \$1,166.19 Balance \$7,620.61

Marine Fund: Total collected \$2,462.81; Expenses \$1,792.61+35.65 = \$634.55 balance

We agreed to subtract the \$11.24 PayPal percentage charge from HVCC operating expenses, rather than Marine Fund.

Jim Hanley congratulated all who participated, and commented we would not be able to have done this if we were a Brown Act body. Earlene expressed her pride in the four homestead communities, contributing \$2400 in only one month. Linda told of Landers reaction to the emailed photos of the Marines opening our packages in Afghanistan.

Jim Harvey sent a thank you letter to the radio station for the coverage. Suggested a thank you to newspaper.

Adrienne spoke of the people at the July 3rd celebration at Homestead Valley Park and their instant generosity toward the Marines.

Earlene proposed we build the Marine Fund to \$1,000.00 for another unit, as money continues to come in. Jim Harvey agreed we should continue fund raising to have a head start on the next sponsorship, and to continue accounting for the donations separately so we can assure contributors that every penny goes to the Marines. Alan said we could build it up for a line battalion, or sponsor another small unit. We will continue publicizing the program on the website and newsletters.

1. Guest Comments:

• Mike Romage, Code Enforcement:

-update on the change in the OHV ordinance. Mike said it was working well; noise and dust violations, cite for public nuisance as before.

-update on the JV Clean-up day, Nov 13, 8:00-noon. Mike said there will be 3 dumpsters, and use of Fire Station #43 parking lot cleared by Fire Dept for household hazardous waste collection.

Community groups to contact him as far in advance as possible to schedule clean-ups.

-When asked about illegal dumping, Mike said they could investigate, get GPS co-ordinates, but as far as cleaning up, it depends on if it's private property or government land. If private property, they hold the owner responsible. Mike repeated the hotline for reporting illegal dumping 760-243-0703, 7am-5pm, Mon-Fri. including lunch hour. Give GPS co-ordinates if possible. If it's a small amount CE can

take it away in their 4WD pickups.

-Hugh Orem has switched with Bill Begley, senior officer in this area, doing OHV, and will come to some of the meetings for Mike. Both are Code Enforcement Officers.

-Administrative citations vs going to court in Joshua Tree, working well, a lot has been cleaned up; dismissed without prejudice 600 cases in South Desert to "admin cites."

-Code Enforcement working hard to serve the people throughout the transition from Land Use to Environmental Health Services; now also doing apartment building inspections.

-When questioned about cleaning up burned-out houses, he said Fire Dept notifies Code Enforcement and Building & Safety. Building inspector goes out, Code Enforcement condemns it, but it usually waits for insurance settlement for clean up. Uninsured property that sits there a long time, CE condemns it, but it could sit for years until funds become available. Third District has helped with funds and a couple of abatements have been done this year. Complaints can move it to the top of the list.

-Jim Harvey thanked Mike for the OHV reports. HVCC supported the amendment to the ordinance and it's nice to know we were on the right side.

• **Gary Benedict-SB County Fire Dept.**

-Added info on household hazardous wastes. Leave fluids unmixed for recycling. Know where items came from and what's in them. Open cans of leftover paint and let them dry out, then dispose of in regular trash.

-Gary introduced Cpt. Dave Benfield, who was in Fontana 18 years and Arrowhead 10 years. His office is now in Yucca Valley.

-CERT Community Emergency Response Training. Discussed program, which trains you to handle family and home safety first, then to help neighbors and report problems such as downed wires, etc. Battalion Chief Mike Snow, primary instructor, available to speak to community groups about CERT. Contact him to find out minimum number needed to make up the classes.

Story that JV Fire Station would be changing from #43 was incorrect; only 3-digit numbered stations are changing to 2-digit, and 43 remains in JV.

Jim Harvey invited Mike Romage, Gary Benedict and Dave Benfield to attend any HVCC meetings so this kind of information can be disseminated to the four communities.

2. Committee Reports

-Fund Raising / Events:

Outside table at Yucca Mesa Country Faire, September 18, Desert Plant Sale by HVCC. Volunteers needed to work the table, 9-3 pm. HVCC Brochures to be handed out; Marine donation jar set out.

The annual HVCC Wine and Cheese Party planned for October 23, with Joshua Tree National Park 75th Anniversary presentation. Use JTNP logo? 5-9 pm, music, etc. Earlene felt \$100 donation from communities not necessary this year. Event will have a schedule. 100 \$10 tickets to be sold by communities. Neil Derry and Alan Rasmussen to be invited.

Short informative presentation on wines and cheeses planned. Donation of hors d'oeuvres requested from members.

Christmas party date Dec. 18.

Note: Wine & Cheese Party at YMIA, fundraiser for HVCC.

Christmas Party at YMIA, to collect toys for TLC.

-Advisory Committee: no meeting

-Public Outreach Committee: Early newsletter showed photos from the packing party at Yucca Mesa

for the Marines. Planning another page showing the Marines unpacking the gifts.

Website has best outreach program. Jim Harvey started a Facebook page. Need to explain what it's all about.

Seminar on Marketing Your Business attended by Joyce Wheeler. How do these ideas relate to HVCC? Presentation mostly geared to building a business; a followup class is to apply what you have learned. When in a declining economy you capture market from competitors. You apply what is unique about your business. The social networks were covered, search engines catch updates and changes on active pages. Alan Rasmussen commented on unique advertising. If you scratch out your name and put in your competitor's, and it works for him, it's a bad ad. Possibly put Marine program on Facebook, distribute among "friends."

Friday, Aug. 20, 7:00, Karin from JTNP to speak on 75th Anniversary. Comments for Park 25-year plan can be made.

Thank-you letters still to be sent to corporate donors and donors of \$100 or more.

-Community Services/ Improvements/Cooperation: no report

Maryan reported that the builder Mark Howard had put the 640 acres in Flamingo Heights up for sale.

Earlene reported that Burrtec withdrew their application for a collection center in Yucca Valley.

Jim Harvey commended the group opposing Burrtec for their effective yet respectful campaign.

Jim will hold off list of projects for this committee till next month, but one thing he wanted to mention was the community signs. Will do concepts for design; they will be costly.

Discussion of Olivia's sign proposal. specific to Yucca Mesa, anti-litter promotion. Highway signs to welcome to community, with subhead, A Homestead Valley Community. We can't make dual-purpose sign, will make them useless. signs on side roads can be more wordy, since drivers are going slower. Our signs are planned for Hwy. 247, through CalTrans.

-Auditing Committee: Tory Preston, Jim Hanley. Audit of previous fiscal year accounting ending June 2010. Found in perfect order and in complete compliance with financial regulations.

Earlene has been treasurer for HVCC since its inception. Jim Harvey announced that he was pleased to see Bob Dockendorff among the guests, one of the founders of the organization. He was president for six years. Bob said it was wonderful to see how HVCC is functioning these days. Jim replied that a lot of the things we are able to do is emulating their success in the early days.

3. How to grow Your Business in a Declining Market-Joyce Wheeler-was discussed under Public Outreach Committee above.

4. Chevron Solar Project- Betty Munson-

Project planned for Lucerne Valley, only 15 miles down the road from where we were sitting. Now in its last comment period, deadline 30 days from Sep. 13. It is a 516-acre right of way under discussion to be authorized by the BLM.

Betty and Jim Harvey met with representatives from the Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association, Chevron and their new partner, a Spanish solar company (whose representative did all the talking) and the BLM. The spokesman gave some misinformation, and then carried it on to the LVEDA meeting later for people from Lucerne Valley to hear.

They are considering 5 alternatives, including the project as originally proposed, and the No Action alternative, which is our preference. The site is at the end of SCE power lines which stop at Santa Fe Fire Trail Rd. The area looks like typical desert. They finally admitted they would be using bulldozers and would be changing the terrain, they would be altering the drainage, they would be tearing out the vegetation. They would be planting a screen around it so we could not see it so easily. They were going to relocate the tortoises, but there is a big question about the Mojave ground squirrel, which is

endangered also, they have to find if they were present. Jim pointed out that any other creatures hiding underground would just get crushed by the earth movers.

Betty recommended we make comment; AB811 coming up is a big alternative, Chevron is not addressing that. They are also not addressing poisonous compounds used in the manufacture of some solar panels and its effects when used in large amounts for a long time under desert extremes. No real answers. This is just the first project to get this close to approval. Many acres of public lands all throughout this area are proposed for solar and wind rights-of-way, and some in Joshua Tree area. Recommend both HVCC comment and personal comments. People of Lucerne Valley finally seem to be taking notice. Questions will it bring jobs, tax benefits. Chevron says "they always try to hire local labor."

Jim Harvey commented this project is being built in two stages, the first will not require transmission upgrades. Second stage will be easier to get permission, since area is already ruined. Subsidies coming from taxpayers, and in return they get ruined property values and higher electric bills. 20-year right-of-way for this land, then the project will be obsolete, they will own that land and sell it to developers, it can never be restored to its original condition.

Jim gave update on AB811. Apparently Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are not going to allow AB811 first liens on properties, calling them equivalent to home equity loans, which is false, these are assessments. Attorney General Jerry Brown is suing to get them to lay off. Jim asked how many in the room owned their own home, all hands. How many are on a Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac loan? none. These are banks that are funding projects like Chevron and the wind turbines.

5. County update, Alan Rasmussen:

Well for Johnson Valley Community Center, Neil's Chief of Staff was asking about the progress. Gary Benedict said project is moving forward; Fire Dept. OK'd using power from the firehouse.

No update on AB 811.

Hauled water/no building permit policy. Alan said he was told in a staff meeting there was no compromise; you will not be allowed to use hauled water and build. Asked if he could get an official written notification of this policy for clarification, he said he would relay our request.

Alan told us he and Elva were going on a 3-week road trip; Jim Harvey commended him for doing so much for our communities, and we appreciate his presence at these meetings.

6. Items for next agenda-September 20 in Flamingo Heights at 3:00 p.m:

Proposals for committee projects

Signs

Wine/Cheese Party committee

Meeting adjourned 5:00 pm

Betty Munson, Secretary
760-364-2646