

MEETING SUMMARY

Ojai Valley Municipal Advisory Council

July 21, 2014

Todd Wilson Called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Members present were Todd Wilson, Terry Wright, Carin Kally, and Joe Westbury.

Under public comment, several residents of Oak View expressed their interest in holding Zumba classes at the Oak View Park and Resource Center and their concern that zoning restrictions are preventing the classes from occurring. Steve Offerman said he would discuss the issue with County agency that oversees the facility.

Laurence Nicklin of the Ojai Planning Commission said that Commission was review conceptual plans for conversion of the former Ford dealership to a winery, a live/work project on North Signal Street, and an RV park on Bryant Street.

Brian Baca of the County Planning Division gave a staff presentation on a CUP application for a cell antenna proposed for installation on an electrical powerline tower in the "Edison Curve" power facility in Casitas Springs. Mr. Baca said that this would be the third cell antenna in that location and that the CUP would be for a term of ten years. Gail Topping asked about the health effects of the antenna, and Brian Baca said that the County is prohibited from addressing health issues by federal law. He noted that the nearest home is 230 feet away. Terry Wright made a motion to recommend approval of the CUP to the County Planning Director. The motion was seconded by Joe Westbury and approved unanimously.

The next item of business was consideration of a "Dark Sky Ordinance" for the unincorporated Ojai Valley. Gail Topping discussed the City of Ojai's Dark Sky Ordinance and how it distinguishes "essential lighting" from non-essential lighting, how it applies to new construction and larger remodels, and how the City Council will soon consider possible means of strengthening the ordinance. George Berg mentioned that the City of Ojai creates a dome of light in the night sky and that education efforts are underway regarding the benefits of reduced lighting. Mary Ellen of Los Angeles discussed how rural communities in Los Angeles succeeded in gaining approval of an ordinance for unincorporated Los Angeles County to prevent "light trespass" from infringing on neighboring properties. Deborah Pendrey of the Ojai Valley Green Coalition said that Dahl's Market provides a good example of lighting that would comply with a dark sky ordinance, that citizens worked with the City of Ojai for five years to develop an ordinance, and she encouraged the MAC to support pursuing a Dark Sky Ordinance. Sandra of Encino Drive said that there are health benefits to a dark night sky, as well as the awe of the stars. Concerns were expressed about increased light

from the Mira Monte shopping center and a letter from John Broesamle in support of an ordinance was noted. Gene Elerding asked about vintage lights and Christmas lights. Gail Topping said that under the Ojai Ordinance both vintage lights and holiday lights are allowed. Greg Gamble of the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy said that excessive night lighting is an issue for the Land Conservancy's purpose of maintaining the Valley's natural environment, that he has heard widespread concern about night lighting, and that he supports pursuing adoption of an ordinance. Laurence Nicklin said that the Ojai ordinance is in the voluntary phase with regard to existing development and that new business lights must be on motion detectors after 10 PM.

Joe Westbury asked how Ojai enforces their ordinance, and Gail Topping said it is complaint-driven, and the City Council will discuss potential additional enforcement on August 26th. Joe asked whether athletic field lights are covered, and Gail said that they would be addressed over time. Joe asked whether business' security lighting is restricted, and Gail said that the standard is essential versus nonessential lighting, and that the Ojai police chief testified that there is no correlation between lighting or lack of lighting and crime.

Carin Kally said that walking along unlit roads can be a safety or trip hazard. Terry Wright made a motion to recommend that the County pursue the adoption of a Dark Sky Ordinance for the unincorporated Ojai Valley. The motion was seconded by Carin Kally and approved 3-1 with Joe Westbury voting "no."

The next item of business was election of officers. The following nominations were made by MAC members: Chair- Joe Westbury; Vice-Chair- Carin Kally, and Ojai Planning Commission liaison- Terry Wright. Nominations were closed and the slate of officers were recommended for approval on a motion by Terry Wright, seconded by Carin Kally. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.