



**OJAI VALLEY
MUNICIPAL
ADVISORY
COUNCIL**

**FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, January 24, 2022 at 7:00 PM
Oak View Community Center
18 Valley Road Oak View, CA**

Chair: Chris Cohen, Vice-Chair: Joseph Westbury
Council Members: Barbara Kennedy, Grace Malloy, Terry Wright

1. Call to Order of the Meeting

Chair Cohen called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

2. Flag Salute

3. Roll Call

PRESENT:

**Council Member Barbara Kennedy
Council Member Terry Wright
Vice-Chair Westbury
Chair Cohen
Council Member Grace Malloy (joined late)**

ABSENT:

STAFF: Maruja Clensay, Executive Officer

4. Adoption of the Agenda

- a. Modification to Item 9 - Request from General Services Agency (GSA) Parks Department for Letter of Support from OVMAC for CAL FIRE Protection Grant.**

GSA Parks department also looking for a second letter of support for an application to remove Arundo in Foster Park.

Chair Cohen called to adopt the agenda for January 24, 2022, with noted modification
Moved: Cohen

Seconded: Wright

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Kennedy, Wright, Westbury, Cohen

Noes: None

Absent: Malloy

Motion Carries: 4-0

5. Public Comments by Citizens on matters Not Appearing on the Agenda (Time limit per item – three minutes).**Speaker 1: John Brooks [READ INTO RECORD]**

Updated OVMAC on request for support for an EIR on the gas compressor project on Ventura Ave. Supervisor LaVere will bring an agenda item to the board of supervisors on February 1st. Ask if anyone would like to support this request, please send an email of support to Supervisor LaVere at clerkoftheboard@ventura.org before the February 1st meeting date.

Speaker 2: Ron Solorzano

Update OVMAC on Library's transition to no indoor services, walk-up services only at all locations. No end date, for this yet, libraries are still open, books are still available for pick up and all online services are still available.

Opened Library Technician I position on county's website, anyone interested in applying the listing is open beginning today and closing Friday, January 28th.

Answered question from member Wright: Following the directive from the county, all county buildings remain closed to the public operate by appointment only. Will again take a directive from the county on when this will change.

6. City of Ojai Planning Commission Update

Commissioner Katherine Lotts provided an update of the recent happenings of the City of Ojai Planning Commission:

- The General Plan Update is underway, will be multi-year efforts
- The planning commission will be hosting a special meeting on February 9th at 7 pm to discuss land use and transportation concepts. Looking at areas with some potential for change or modification.
- After the special meeting, the planning commission will begin looking into general plan policies
- Commission currently working to set up a community workshop sometime soon.
- El Roblar Hotel, The Oaks. The Commission is looking at the proposed 50 rooms, restaurant and event space, and parking proposal. Historic Preservation Commission will also be looking at the project reviewing historical resources report. They will then make their recommendations to Planning Commission.

- Council agenda for 1/25 will review proposed development agreement with the Becker group for multi-family housing including affordable housing, 65 units with approximately 25 affordable units, some moderate and some low. 4 sites, Mallory Way cottages, and world university. Staff reviewing RFQ for hiring a consultant to do environmental work on the project.
- Community development director commented seeing a higher level of interest and request to the city to add entertainment uses to existing uses.

7. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2021

Motioned: Wright

Seconded: Mallory

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Members Kennedy, Malloy, Wright, Westbury

Noes: 0

Abstain: 1

Motion Carries: 4 – 0

8. Review of a Tentative Parcel Map (TPM), General Plan Amendment (GPA), Zone Change (ZC), and Area Plan Amendment (APA) (Case No. PL20-0086).

The applicant proposes a Zone Change, General Plan Amendment, and an Area Plan Amendment for four properties totaling 27.13 acres from a mix of Rural Residential and Open Space, to all be zoned Open Space- 20 acre minimum, a General Plan land use designation of Open Space, and an Area Plan designation of Open Space – 20 acre minimum. A Tentative Parcel Map is proposed to combine all four properties into one property totaling 27.13 acres. The project as proposed would not increase the development potential on the subject property.

County Planner John Kessler provided an overview of the proposal for the properties located at 1802 McNell Rd. and 4205 Thacher Rd. in Ojai. This item will be heard by the Planning Commission on March 17, 2022, the staff report will include tonight's recommendation and will request the Commission to provide their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors at a hearing that has yet to be scheduled. The agenda, staff report, and exhibits are available at www.vcrma.org/divisions/planning. In response to member Westbury's question, planner Kessler noted that if a lot is illegally split, it is the new owner's responsibility to rectify/legalize that lot. Chair Cohen asked if there was a specific purpose or if the applicant has plans that require this change or solely to remedy the illegal status of the lot. Planner Kessler confirmed this would be one of the resolutions of this project, to abate the lot status violation, the entire 27 lot will become legal. Lisa Woodburn the representative for the applicant added this will also allow for a single-family home to be built on the property. The existing 1200 ft. home on the McNell property would then be converted to a second dwelling unit. In response to member Malloy's question, Planner Kessler confirmed that once the property is merged to avoid setbacks there is a lot coverage requirement, however, it is a large lot and there is ample room to stay outside of setbacks and to avoid lot coverage issues. Representative Woodburn added they would need to be setback from drainage running through the property. No decision made yet on where the building envelope would be at this point. In response to member Malloy's question, representative Woodburn noted that the open space designation was chosen over rural because it would require a SOAR vote. Does not limit the agricultural potential of the parcel. Does not have an impact on neighboring properties. Member Malloy expressed concern about giant homes built close to setback to another

neighbor. What are setback requirements for a property of this size? There is a height requirement both in rural and open space zones. The lot coverage requirement in open space in ag is 5%, a total of 5% lot coverage. Jeremy McBride advisor to Eric Good and the turtle conservancy provided background information for the project about the turtle conservancy and the 1802 McNell lot. Presented site plan, with the proposed location of the project, least amount impact to neighbors, adjacent to commonly owned property and relatively small to the space available to develop. The main concern with the neighborhood is viewshed. Rick provided an overview of restoration work being done to the property to be consistent with open space designation. Began removal of nonnative trees, removal of garbage, clearing areas where exotic trees and orchards have been, grading, raking, and reseeding with native grasses and wildflowers, with guidance and collaboration with Ojai Valley Land Trust. Replanting with native sycamores and will continue with live oaks, work nearing completion. Shared short video clip of reseeding process. Eric noted they spent several years talking to all neighbors and stakeholders working to find the best outcome for this property, and all have agreed that restoring the land to what it was is the best outcome. No public comments were received for this item. Member Kennedy motioned to support the project as presented by staff.

Motioned: Kennedy

Second: Westbury

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Kennedy, Malloy, Wright, Westbury, Cohen

Noes: 0

Motion Carries: 5 – 0

9. Request from General Services Agency (GSA) Parks Department for Letter of Support from OVMAC for CAL FIRE Protection Grant.

The County's GSA Parks Department has requested a letter of support from Supervisor LaVere and Ojai Valley MAC for the CAL FIRE Protection Grant for the Hazardous Fuels Removal and Tree Replacement Grant Application at Soule Park and Foster Park Arundo removal as modified previously in item 4.

GSA Parks Manager Jeri Cooper presented a PowerPoint providing overview of the Parks Department and application request. The estimated cost to remove 80+ trees at Soule Park is about \$300,000, grant application deadline February 9th, coming before the Board of Supervisors on February 8th. VC Parks Department is the lead applicant for this project. Grant funding for the Foster Park Arundo removal will support programmatic permits, CEQA, and the implementation of the project. Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) is the lead applicant. Member Malloy left the meeting at 8:04 pm. Her comments were read by Executive Officer Clensay: "many thoughts around Arundo removal, specifically rotational grazing alternatives to glyphosate usage, see LA county for example." Park's manager Cooper responded she can't speak to the Arundo removal process that the OVLC is going to be using for the Arundo removal, however, items like RoundUp are not allowed for county use, would not support that type of use for Arundo removal. In response to Chair Cohen's question Parks, Manager Cooper will reach out to the OVLC and ask if there have been any conversations with the prescribed grazing people, not sure if this method can be used in the watershed. She will inquire about the exact methodology of removal and report back to the

OVMAC. Member Wright made a motion to support the request with the addition of looking into the Arundo chemical usage.

Motioned: Wright

Second: Kennedy

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Kennedy, Wright, Westbury, Cohen

Noes: 0

Absent: Malloy

Motion Carries: 4 – 0

Informational Items

10. Receive an informational presentation from the County of Ventura Fire Department.

County Fire staff will host a presentation regarding wildfire prevention, fuel management, Fire Hazard Reduction Program, and current endeavors that County Fire is undertaking along with other jurisdictions. [Continued from October 2021]

Ventura County Fire Hazard Reduction Program Unit Manager, Larry Williams presented a PowerPoint of the countywide fire hazard reduction program, commonly known as Weed Abatement. Mr. Williams can be contacted at larry.williams@ventura.org or (805) 947-8543, www.VCFD.org, and www.VCFHRP.org. Ventura County Fire Department Pre-Fire Specialist, Celine Moomey presented a PowerPoint overview of the Vegetation Management Program. In response to Chair Cohen's questions, Ms. Mooney commented that cutting and dabbing is the most effective way to remove Arundo, labor-intensive. Allowed to use roundup through a special permitting and licensing process. Ms. Mooney can be contacted at celine.moomey@ventura.org or (805) 340-6838.

11. Announcements/Updates - Executive Officer Clensay went over the informational items with Council

- New logo for OVMAC to be included in upcoming mailer going out the week of February 14th to all occupants within the sphere of influence of the OVMAC for the February 28th meeting. Happening in person at 7 pm at the Oak View Community Center.
- Fire Station No. 20 Opening Ceremony – pushed because of COVID, will have a new date by our next meeting; if set before, executive officer Clensay will email distribution list informing of event.
- Caltrans Letter RE: SR 33 Speed, the letter was finalized by OVMAC and sent to Supervisor LaVere who then sent it to Assemblymember Bennett and Caltrans director Tony Tovares. Director Tovares replied that he will follow up with an update. Hopefully by OVMAC's February meeting.
- Caltrans rebar complaint addressed – cut down by Caltrans to eliminate the tripping hazard.
- At the December meeting it was requested to send a thank you card for Brian Brennan, in recognition of his work with the RV parking along Crooked Palm Rd. and Hwy 33. Member Kennedy will work with executive officer Clensay on the wording.
- As noted in the public comment by John Brooks – Supervisor LaVere's office is taking a letter before the Board of Supervisors on February 1st at 10 am time certain. Asking the California Public Utilities Commission and the Department of Toxic Substances to

assess the location of the compressor modernization site and relocated to an alternative site based on neighborhood compatibility and environmental implications. The letter will be made public by January 27 or 28 and can be found at the Board of Supervisors website, www.ventura.org.

12. Councilmember Comments

Member Wright commented on the election of a new congressman, representative Carbajal. Seeking council's thoughts about extending an invitation to Congressman Carbajal to a meeting to speak on his goals for the planning and land use in the Ojai Valley overall goals for the Ojai community. The electronic speed sign in Casitas Springs is not working, can it be brought to the attention of Caltrans. What is the schedule for the Hwy 33 lane extension project at Creek Rd.? Construction signs have been up for months; however, no work is being done. Executive Officer Clensay asked member Wright to send a photo of Casitas speed light that is not working for submittal to Caltrans. The Creek Rd. acceleration lane project is currently in the design phase, wanting to do an informational session presentation to OVMAC perhaps in June along with a follow-up on Hwy 33 multimodal study. Final comment from member Wright, what is the status of the Petrochem chemical plant, abandoned and looking worse. Can OVMAC get an update? Executive officer Clensay noted that Brian Brennan will be reaching out to the realtor regarding dumping will have an update in February.

Chair Cohen agreed to the idea to ask representative Carbajal or staff to come to a meeting. Executive officer Clensay will talk to Supervisor LaVere about reaching out to his office, more likely to be virtual.

13. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 8:59 PM

- a. The next meeting will be held on **Monday, February 28, 2022, at 7:00 PM** in person at the **Oak View Community Center, 18 Valley Rd., Oak View.**