



**OJAI VALLEY  
MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**REGULAR MEETING  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**18 Valley Road, Oak View  
Monday, September 19, 2022 -  
7:00PM**

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

**Public Comments FOR IN PERSON MEETINGS may be provided using the following TWO options:**  
**Option 1: E-MAIL PUBLIC COMMENT-** If you wish to make a comment on a specific agenda item, please submit your comment to the Executive Officer at [ovmac@ventura.org](mailto:ovmac@ventura.org) for that item via email by 3:30 p.m. the day of the meeting to ensure your letter is received and entered into the record. PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN YOUR EMAIL: (A) MEETING DATE, (B) AGENDA ITEM NUMBER, (C) SUBJECT OR TITLE OF THE ITEM, (D) YOUR FULL NAME. DURING PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE AGENDA ITEM SPECIFIED IN YOUR EMAIL, YOUR COMMENT WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD. Please limit your written correspondence to 300 words or less.

**Option 2 – IN PERSON PUBLIC COMMENT -** If you wish to make a comment in-person, you must be present at the meeting location and provide your comment prior to the close of the public comment period for the item you wish to speak on. Each meeting will have sign-in sheets to participate in Public Comment at the meeting location for in-person comments.

**THE OVMAC IS CONDUCTING A **SITE VISIT AT 5:00PM** AT THE KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION; LOCATED AT 1098 MCANDREW ROAD IN OJAI. WE WILL RECONVENE AT THE OAK VIEW COMMUNITY CENTER, 18 VALLEY ROAD FOR OUR REGULAR MEETING AT 7:00PM.**

**1. Call to Order of the Meeting**

Chair Cohen called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

**2. Flag Salute**

**3. Roll Call -** All members were present.

**4. Adoption of the Agenda -** Agenda was adopted unanimously by the OVMAC as drafted.

**5. Public Comments by Citizens on Matters Not Appearing on the Agenda**

**Public Comment No. 1:** Dee Bennett and Derek Poultney - Advertising Meiners Oak Park (MOP) site for new park in Meiners Oaks. Letting community know about ability to get involved and to gather input. Asking for people to sign up for the mailing list. Starting to network for public input and will keep you posted. If you are interested please go to [imagineMOpark@gmail.com](mailto:imagineMOpark@gmail.com). You can also reach out to Supervisor LaVere's office for general information about the project.

**Public Comment No. 2:** John Brooks - Two quick things - lady in the Oak View ditch... can't get sidewalks - Understand that Caltrans and Supervisor LaVere's office is looking at Road Encroachment Permit and cost sharing with Caltrans.

**Public Comment No. 3:** Ron Solorzano – Regional library for Ojai Valley – updates on what we are doing; October/November is One County One Book season; Contact the library for more information. The Oak View Library is operational; the Meiners Oaks Library is closed and planning to relocate to the Meiners Oaks elementary campus but we have secured a classroom there for a homework center operating after school hours. Both centers will be opening up recruitment for homework center coordinators. If you are interested please reach out to me or Sharon Dykstra, positions will be posted in the next few weeks.

## **6. City of Ojai Planning Commission Update**

No member was present and no report was emailed to the Executive Officer.

## **7. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of July 18, 2022 - Draft Minutes attached**

Motion made by Member Wright to approve as presented, seconded by Kennedy.

Approved 4-0, with Malloy abstaining.

## **Formal Items:**

## **8. Review of a Conditional Use Permit application for Ojai Valley Organics (Case No. PL13-0178)**

The applicant requests a modified Conditional Use Permit be granted to authorize the continued operation of a "Commercial Organics Processing Operation, Large-Scale (over 1,000 cubic yards on site). The 112 acre project site is located at 534 Baldwin Road, near the intersection of State Highways 33 and 150 in the Ojai area. The property is zoned Open Space, with a land use designation of Open Space.

**County Planner:** Justin Bertoline      [justin.bertoline@ventura.org](mailto:justin.bertoline@ventura.org)      805-654-2466

Staff gave presentation about the green waste facility at Baldwin Road. 11 ½ acres of 120 acre parcel that is County owned. 40 truck trips (dump trucks) worth per day. Does not count towards trips buying mulch; small truck trips do not contribute to that trip threshold. Hours of the grinder operation were discussed and staff related that APCD (Air Pollution Control District) does look at exhaust and noise generation from equipment and they were under the thresholds of their allotment and below significant thresholds.

**Public Comment No. 1:** Julie Lovejoy - I live on Woodland Ave. just off the bluff from Baldwin. When previous waste business was there, and I'm in support of and purchased from them many times, however the noise of those vehicles that are backing up is piercing; it echoes off of the Honor Farm and over through the bluff due to the backup noise of the trucks. So I have major reservation of the backup noise. The second thing is the chipper noise/grinder. I know you said it's been tested and under a certain threshold, but is that acceptable to the people who live near it? That's my objection to it. I would like to support, but that really kills the deal for me.

**Public Comment No. 2:** Judy Hohman - My questions are pretty general; With the term of green waste - "organic plant materials" - Then is it compost? No we do not believe there is any food grade waste? No just plant and yard waste. And the hours would be adjusted with dusk.

**Public Comment No. 3:** Karen Colman - We are also on Bonmark right near woodland – our concerns are the same; right now we hear hawks and wildlife and we hear nothing on the bluff anymore. We don't hear wood chippers; I'm very concerned that this is 7 days a week... can we have the weekends off? I'm a retired person, I don't get up until 9am... I don't think our neighbors understand the extent of how this will be.

**Planning Staff:** The grinder sites on the northern side of the 33 in the former location of the former business.

**Public Comment No. 4:** Charles Heck - I live on Woodland Ave. My house is directly above the Raptor Center - So from my living room I can see that farm. I've watched that farm being built. There is nothing that I deal with worse than that bell of the back up trucks. We've all hear that chipper. It's only 15-20 minutes, but could you imagine it 7 days? No noise no nothing; we already lived through it; OSHA requires that bell to ring; so what we are going to do? Are you doing to put a muffler on that grinder?

Public Comment Period Closed.

OVMAC Deliberations:

**Chair Cohen** – is there a way to minimize the back up bell or the amount of trucks? Or do concentrate the hours during which the higher noise concentration hours could occur.

**Member Malloy** – most of the people they are dealing with are residential? Commercial? Could the hours be shortened for the grinding or drop off?

**Member Wright** - do we have a layout of the how it would work - Could we do a sound wall?

**STAFF** - We had never received any complaints on the prior operation as that was factored in as we are modifying the former permit?

**Vice Chair Westbury** - part of the mitigation is ... they have to grind it once a day. You can't let it sit for longer b/c if its infested it will spread. One big grind a day would prevent that spread. And it also depends on how much is brought to the site on the day.

**STAFF** - Bulk of clientele would be small landscape companies and residents. Right now they have to drive to Hueneme or Santa Paula for this type of facility. This will reduce VMTs for sure. People are also concerned about illegal dumping; this will bring this service closer. We will look into additional sound attenuation measures with the applicant.

**Chair Cohen** - there are some really good benefits that this project will bring us. It would behoove us to look for different sound attenuation items we can explore.

**Vice Chair Westbury** – Could we limit grinder operations on Sunday till after noon? The truth is they aren't going to be grinding all day every day; The equipment is impressive;

**STAFF:** This operator has an operation in Santa Barbara and they are familiar with this type of capacity and know how to make it run.

**Motion made by Member Kennedy to approve the project**, but limiting grinding operations on Sundays 10 - 3pm, and look into further sound attenuation measures on the back-up vehicles and the grinder/chipper

machinery to help address noise impact to adjacent residences.

**Motion was Seconded by Vice Chair Westbury. Approved Unanimously 5-0.**

**9. Review of a Modification to Conditional Use Permit application for Krishnamurti Camp (Case No. PL17-0012)**

The applicant, Krishnamurti Foundation of America, request a major modification to Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 3697 for the continued operation and maintenance of a camp for a 25-year term. The request also includes the expansion of the CUP boundary, change of use from a retreat to a camp and the construction of accessory structures, which total 10,931 sq. ft. The project site is addressed at 1098 McAndrew Road, in the community of Ojai. The nearest cross streets are McAndrew Road and Grand Avenue. The subject project site is comprised of approximately 11.06 acres. The property is zoned Rural Exclusive, with a land use designation of Rural and Rural Institutional.

**County Planner:**      **Kristina Boero**      [Kristina.boero@ventura.org](mailto:Kristina.boero@ventura.org)      **805-654-2467**

Staff gave presentation re: refinements since the May 25, 2022 Meeting.

OVMAC gave question about how can we restrict this to just the religious component; Could the CUP expire with the sale of the property rather than becoming a hotel in the future? No- the permit stays with the land.

Staff gave information regarding that there is an overlay that prohibits short term rentals like Air BnB; its only allowed to have 6 overnight guests.

The Project Description is the Number 1 condition. If KFA were to sell or if they wanted to do a new business plan, they would have to come back and do a new plan and be subject to the same scrutiny.

Westbury – what about the zone change? Staff- It wasn't changed since the 1980s - in the 80s it was RA (Rural Ag); Under the new CUP the MAX is 69 and that's for the annual conference for ONE time a year. 18 resident scholars at 30 days and they get transported to the site (no vehicles). 6 of the overnight guests and the onsite residents - 109 throughout one day, but morning and evening shifts and people are staying there.

Francisco of the Center - Retreating is for purposes of the philosophy of Krishnamurti. We will have screening, no more online bookings so we can ensure they are interested in the studies.

**Public Comment:**

**Public Comment No. 1:** Keith Nightingale – Against and on behalf of the East End neighborhood. We look upon you as the last gate guard – we see this as Encino – yes there has been a lot of mitigations, but this suggested CUP is dramatically different than the environment we have to today. What do you want Ojai to be, or be now. Looking at the language of the Map and the goals of the Ojai Area Plan and the need to protect the Ojai valley. Maintain the existing rural and town character of the Ojai Valley. What the map says is significantly different than what the PD says it will be. Please look at the policies and programs and make sure its preserving Ojai what we wanted to be as compared to what we want it

**Public Comment No. 2:** Pam Melone – seated her time to Mike Weaver.

**Public Comment No. 3:** Mike Weaver – 6 minutes - Discussed Camp definition and Retreat definitions and the change in Zoning from RA to RE. The zoning was changed with the Ventura General Plan which was adopted in 2020. We weren't notified there was a zoning change. Suggest we simplify bc it will be the neighbors that will police this. The daily activities is a real issue; depending on what is happening at Thacher or anywhere else. Still confused on the maximums with this project – going to major traffic on McAndrew road. If we can establish a set number this would go a long way with the neighborhood. Concerned about scope creep. And based on past practice, it will take years before any expansions or out of scope things are addressed.

**Public Comment No. 4:** Nancy Pepper – Seated time to Bob Bonewitz.

**Public Comment No. 5:** Bob Bonewitz – 6 minutes – referred to prior orchard that was removed but then was replanted; now we have a change with the Pepper Tree Inn, which looks great, and now there is a form they have to fill out... I think it should be that the people are required to be registered into a program on the campus when they register. Still have major concerns – how long it took to effectuate the changes we just talked about. Continuing concern about intrusion of staff on property and neighboring properties. No effective management of over property intrusion. Whatever the number is a substantial increase over what they have now. The pepper tree retreat was advertised as 20+ beds, not just 6. Change of Zoning came out of nowhere... based on past performance and the extension of this definition raises a red flag. Which means we have to monitor it. I think the campus designation is going to affect the neighborhood.

**Public Comment No. 6:** Nancy Kent – Closest residential neighbor – on the east property line. And their northern line is our southern property line. Concern about the CUP timeframe of 20 years. Going to change the character of the neighborhood dramatically. Have not been good neighbors and have violated their prior CUP. Now they are shielding the KFA Library from McAndrew road until this new application. Put in some immature trees when an example came up of their poor stewardship. Have almost no enforcement – County does not have the people power to deal with these issues. KFA has made a few attempts such as changing the names and taking down their internet advertising rentals. Wants to be 10 years.

**Public Comment No. 7:** Claude Kent – Our two acres is surrounded by them on 2 sides. We have been there for 15 years. We have had constant contact with their guests. People walk by our windows – find wine bottles and cigarette butts on our side of the fence bc they can't have it on the property. There is one man who sits on the property line daily and smokes whatever I don't know. The other property owner had to put up fence to protect people from stealing her food. We are worried about the expansion. No security no accountability. The gathering spot runs right along our property line.

**Public Comment No. 8:** Ruth Lassell – No one has talked about traffic with this expansion. We were assured there would be traffic studies undertaken and we have seen no results. Was a study conducted? When? During lockdown? If so that would be meaningless. We need a traffic study. All the myriad of events means that there will be a lot of people coming and going and using their own cars. Went through the programs and scheduling.

**Public Comment No. 9:** Katherine Winn - Seated time to whomever

**Public Comment No. 10 and 11:** Deborah Kerner Waxberg and Richard Waxberg – Gave joint feedback/comment – hold lectures series there; 30 years ago we came to Ojai. Because of Krishnamurti's teachings. There was a small center there (the library at that time). We stayed there for a year and it changed our lives. Two programs a year. Gave up our successful lives in NY and Connecticut to do these programs. There is another dimension to all this – the world needs a certain amount of guidance to how to discover within ourselves what is really going on in our lives. And to bring a freshness, newness and to wake up to new possibilities. And that's what Krishnamurti is all about. The KFA is a light to world that in which darkness seems to be gathering. People come to our programs from all over the world and have freedom to explore. It's all about education and service.

**Public Comment No. 12:** Darrell Jones – withdrew comment.

**Public Comment No. 13** Suzanne Harvey - Took 3 minutes from Katherine Winn for 6 minutes total; Against KFA CUP project; over the years KFA consistently violated the terms of its former CUP and there is no reason to think that this would change. Monitoring and reporting will fall to all of us in the neighborhood. Ojai Valley is shaped like an amphitheater and amplifies sound; traffic will be increased with the explosion of people to be now at the site; shuttling will help but will not alleviate the problems. No sidewalks, hard for pedestrians and Cyclists, along with conference attendees presents problems. Event clean up, waste, etc. seems like it would be pretty overwhelming with our existing infrastructure. Any good intentions are not transferable. If the property sells it would bring unwanted commercial development to the area. Some people have been forced to install fences to

prevent trespassing. The aesthetics will also negatively affect the community. Thinks this is contradictory to mission of Krishnamurti.

**Public Comment No. 14:** Alasdair Coyne – Hosted the tour this afternoon for the MAC; sat in the same place the evening talks/dialogues. Indoors. Quiet. I do not have an understanding as to why someone would state that we would go to right next to the property line to do outdoor events. Current screening is handling all buildings as viewed from McAndrew Rd. Wanted to speak to the impact of Krishnamurti and his time here nearly 100 years ago. Mentioned schools and other that were established via individuals who trained and studied with Krishnamurti.

**Public Comment No. 15:** Carol Wade - Glad everyone is here and how our valley will remain how it is right now; people have spoken to the idea of why Ojai is the way it is, is because of Krishnamurti. Want to speak to how our land has been addressing and working with the drought and it behooves us to use water well and have a variety of things planted on the land so we will have food but so the wildlife that was here before all of us will have access. The wild

**Public Comment No. 16:** Matt Sommer – has been on McAndrew for 21 years as of December - they want to be a beacon of light to all of the world; we got a nice brochure in our mail and want to have influence with lots of people, not just six people. So whatever the max numbers are, that is what they want. We learned from the Camp Ramah item that when there was a problem with noise, and they called the County, nothing happened. That someone had to put headphones on... do we need to have your cell phone numbers when they don't work? Further, they have already shown they cannot stick with the rules; what happens? Who is going to count them? No one can go on their property and count them. And we need to assume they are going to tell the truth, but they haven't done so in the past.

**Public Comment No. 17:** Jan Sommer - Spoke about wanting to have this first on the agenda if next time.

**Public Comment No. 1 (Additional Comment):** Keith Nightingale - Forgot to say that my family and I visited Krishnamurti and this would not be his desire to have this project done at this site. Cortona Hill was the site that was where he had those events; this location was his retreat, for himself;

**KFA Applicant** - It's all a misunderstanding - I think what I'm hearing is that its pretty quiet and we don't want it to be noisy - I can tell you that these events are happening right now (every weekend we have 45 people coming – there is no change in what is already happening). We are obliged to provide logs and we do not want to falsify logs.

**Chair Cohen** – had some questions for staff prior to deliberations - How many day use visitors allowed currently and will this increase or decrease that Red dot location? And also the change to the camp? Zone Change?

**STAFF** - Appendix A shows what will typically happen at KFA – this provides more information to the neighborhood – this now provide the detail that we see in the PD. We will revisit the red dot locations for accuracy. The camp vs. retreat definition is due to the amount of constructed square footage and that there is over 2,000 SF so it's a "camp" as compared to a "retreat". They are not asking for a zone change. The zone change happened in the 1980s. We do not know the origin as to why, but its something we could look into. The CUP did NOT expire. They came in before the CUP expires to modify their CUP. They came in before they expired. If they just wanted to ask for a 20 -year term limit and we would have to evaluate that. We encourage the level of detail b/c the older permits are very broad.

Public Comment Period Closed.

## OVMAC Deliberations:

**Member Malloy** – had questions regarding timeframe of CUP; it sounds like visitors may not be aware of neighbors or if there could be training of employees/resident scholars; etc. Concerning red dots and shade with this graphic and perhaps shift the outdoor locations to closer to the center of the campus. Would it be possible to train?

**STAFF** – we will add a COA that entails training, and acknowledges security concerns; perhaps have an employee do an online check that they could be trained on how to do that (i.e.. remove the item from any online sources/websites or articles that may conflate the use of the property with an Air BnB)

**Vice Chair Westbury** – feels this isn't preserving the character of the valley; and that there are issues with the neighbors - I know they don't want to see Krishamurti go away but they need to tap it down. It's a lot of people in a residential neighborhood. For me, go back to the original CUP, and really limit the amount of people that can be there and the construction. And then you have water usage and to me it's a commercial type of thing. I think what they are doing is neat, but it's not preserving and or protecting the people of the East End. I enjoyed the tour and it's a special thing. His last words were to save this valley. Its not protecting or preserving the specialness of this area.

**Chair Cohen** – If we go back, I hear that the old one doesn't have any limits;

**Vice Chair Westbury** – well then scale back the scope of the project.

**STAFF** – spoke to construction noise mitigations that are across the board County wide; it is considered temporary;

**Vice Chair Westbury** – I'm just saying that this needs to be scaled back and to look out for the people in the neighborhood. How do you get there? I don't have an answer for that...

**Member Wright** - I'd like to make a comment on the numbers. The chart is hard to deal with – it says maximum 34 on most of the columns, but typical has been only 15. [Notes various inconsistencies in the chart] is the historical number. There currently Under are no numbers of limiting the events now, so they could have even more events tomorrow.

**Member Malloy** - Noise travels so weird at this place in town; I'm also a teacher and I understand that an hour on a local farm and understand how an hour on a farm can change someone's life. We have heard a lot of support from letters; Believes the first CUP should be 10 years, just due to the neighborhood concern. And then look at 20 years. I feel my concerns have been addressed.

**Member Wright** - Our job is to have the public have a chance to come and hear the comment and to make a recommendation or not; We can make a recommendation to the Staff that isn't yes or no; its only a recommendation.

**Member Kennedy** – had question about Thacher complaints vs KFA complaints. Property owners have rights to develop them as they need and see fit. They have the right to do what they want in their property lines. Its unfortunate that the County rezoned this property in the 1980s.

**Chair Cohen** – Helpful to hear from everybody; I'm thinking about this in a similar way, I see this is a restriction from what is currently allowed under the current CUP. It does not allow the expansion, it actually restricts them. I think the applicant put in a real good faith effort responding to the concerns that we expressed. I'm satisfied with the compromise of what is allowed now. Trespassing is definitely an issue that needs to be dealt with. The development of the property is expanding too, but I also think that there are a possible ranges of things that can happen in the neighborhood, like the grinder and trucks backing up; like gas facilities, like oil wells that are regulated some of that can happen easier than this.

**Chair Cohen made a Motion to Recommend Approval** to the Planning Commission, accepting proposed changes made since the prior OVMAC May 25, 2022 meeting, with the following requirements: address trespassing concerns on adjacent private property via signage and instruction, and/or other; confirm maximum and minimum daytime event attendees and/or overnight guests; prohibition of any scheduled activities within 20 feet from all exterior property boundaries; consider additional sound attenuation measures to help maintain the surrounding quiet atmosphere, require KFA to monitor online erroneous advertising on certain travel websites, and confirm with legal counsel if KFA can require that any overnight guests must be registered for KFA curriculum.

Member Kennedy seconded the Motion. Approved 4-1, with Vice Chair Westbury dissenting.

#### **Announcements and Updates:**

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- CHP Officer Rangel Update – Was not in attendance and did not provide emailed update.
- Congressman Carbajal Meet-n-Greet – October 17, 2022
- Hwy 33 Intermodal Study – Cal Trans Update – December 21, 2022

#### **10. Councilmember Comments**

Member Kennedy announced that on October 9<sup>th</sup> Women's' Club 70 year birthday party at the Parks and Rec Center in Oak View.

Also on October 28<sup>th</sup> – Trunk or Treat at the Parks and Rec Center.

#### **11. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:14PM**

Next Meeting will be held on **Monday, October 17th at 7:00PM IN PERSON at the Oak View Community Center**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, and for persons who require accommodation for any audio, visual or other disability in order to review an agenda, or to participate in a meeting of the Municipal Advisory Council per the American Disabilities Act (ADA), may obtain information or assistance by Supervisor Matt LaVere's Office at 805-654-2703 or e-mail [ovmac@ventura.org](mailto:ovmac@ventura.org). Any such request for disability accommodation must be received at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting for which assistance is requested. Additional Ojai Valley MAC information is available online at: <https://www.ventura.org/board-of-supervisors/district-1/ovmac/>



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