



OJAI VALLEY MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING FINAL MEETING MINUTES

18 Valley Road, Oak View Monday,
January 23, 2023 - 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 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.

1. Call to Order of the Meeting

Meeting commenced at 7:06 PM

2. Flag Salute

3. Roll Call

Member Grace Malloy absent. All other members present.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda adopted as presented. Moved by Member Wright and seconded by Chair Cohen. Passes unanimously.

5. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Supervisor LaVere provided feedback on the recent storms. He toured the areas with Congressman Carbajal and Congresswoman Brownley over the last few days to show them the extent of damage to help us obtain additional FEMA funding. The funding for private property is still pending, but we anticipate it being declared within the week. Santa Barbara County and SLO county received their designation already (even before counting of total damage was completed). It's critical that any and all private property damage is reported to vcemergency.com so we can catalog all damage to help our request from FEMA. Please make sure to spread the word.

Public Comment No. 1 – Eileen MacEney Reimers – Lives in Arroyo Mobile Home Park in Casitas Springs. Likes to be involved in civic meetings. Would like to explore a crosswalk across the highway in front of the Mobile Home Park to allow safer access to the bus stop. Eileen later commented that the levees adjacent to the Mobile Home Park held up very well during the storms.

Public Comment No. 2 – Ron Solorzano – Library update. Still have a lot of openings at our libraries with some recent retirements. A youth librarian position is opening in Ojai as well as in Ventura at EP Foster. We are also looking for a Homework Center Coordinator at the Oak View and Meiners Oaks library. See County website for job openings and keep an eye on social media.

Public Comment No. 3 – Steven Weed – Questions of Supervisor LaVere and FEMA Funding – will this help renters? Do we know if there is any assistance out there for renters who suffered damage from the flooding?

Supervisor LaVere responded that yes, with the FEMA funding pending re: private property owners, that renters should be able to qualify for some assistance.

Public Comment No. 4 – Alex Lain – Had questions regarding the pothole repair in the highway around Casitas Springs. Says the repair job is horrible and needs some feathering/finesse on the repair. Its' mostly after the Edison curve.

Member Kennedy commented that she witnessed the work being done in the field and that drivers were not giving him any mercy with distance or speed of vehicles.

6. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of November 21, 2022 – DRAFT MINUTES ATTACHED

Draft November Minutes approved as presented. Moved by Vice Chair Westbury and seconded by Member Kennedy.

7. City of Ojai Planning Commission Update

Executive Officer read an email from Commission Quilici into the record and as noted below:

So, what has the Ojai Planning Commission been doing since the last OVMAC Meeting (Nov 21, 2022)?

The Ojai Planning Commission has been relatively quiet the past two months due to lack of completed applications for Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) and Design Review Permits (DRPs), but we expect activity to increase over the next two to three months. Here's what we have been considering.

- 1. Cleanup (errata) of the Ojai Municipal Code, Title 10 (Planning and Zoning). We are reviewing about 200 instances of incorrect references, spelling and grammar errors, and added clarifications; still to come – consideration of inconsistencies and potential policy questions.*
- 2. Review of progress on updating elements of the City's General Plan, focusing on Housing, Safety, Land Use, Circulation and Environmental Justice*
- 3. Construction: mostly second-story additions (required Planning Commission review in a Public Hearing) and ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units).*
- 4. Re-establishing legal nonconforming residential use on a Business / Professional zoned parcel that had been used as a residence for decades but not lately (failure to exercise a*

nonconforming use for more than 180 days requires reapplying to reestablish that land use).

- 5. Annual Review of a Conditional Use Permit to verify compliance or take corrective actions; there are currently four properties / businesses for which these annual reviews have been required. We hope to be able in a year or two at most to confirm compliance and make the CUPs permanent without additional reviews, which are a resource drain both for the applicants and for City Staff.*
- 6. Overall Planning Commission Work Plan: we have been working on a list of priorities from City Council, but as a result of the 2022 election have three new City Council members, who may have other or additional tasks and issues for the Planning Commission to work on. We look forward to a joint meeting with the City Council to determine member's direction changes, if any.*

Informational Item:

- 8. Receive and File Informational Item** - Receive a brief Informational Presentation regarding the current status of the State Route 33 Pavement Rehabilitation and Multi-Modal Project from Caltrans District 7 representatives.

***Caltrans Project Manager Joseph Kibe** gave a presentation regarding the status of the Highway 33 – Multi Modal project and had a power point presentation [ATTACHMENT]. The project includes a combination of multi-modal improvements and pavement project. It will start at Parkview to the Foothill Trail. The Project Initiation Stage is complete - The project is currently in Stage 2 “Environmental Phase” which is looking at installation parameters and high-level design elements - this Stage will continue until December 2023. After Stage 2 will be Stage 3 “Design Phase” which will occur from March 2024-October 2026. Then the Construction Stage 4 which will be from January 2027 – February 2028.*

The reason behind the length of these timeframes is due to survey work required to determine what the current Caltrans property boundaries are, and if any adjustments to property lines and/or design plans need to occur at any location in this scope of work. Sidewalks and ADA access requirements will require some private property acquisition which takes considerable amount of time. We will have a better sense of what this looks like after the completion of Stage 2. The addition of a Demonstration project also increases the project duration due to the time needed to evaluate the impact and include the learned lessons onto the permanent project.

The “Demonstration Project” will take place this coming Summer 2023. This will install the lane reduction portion of the multi-modal improvements project to test and see what works and what doesn't. This is a way to garner true community feedback and confirm what the community wants prior to constructing the permanent improvements. We also want to see how the traffic reacts to this demonstration project, how businesses and residents may be impacted, etc.

There will be a Public Scoping Meeting in March or April 2023 to discuss the Demonstration and the Permanent Project. We will more than likely leave the Demonstration Project through the Summer and the Fall to see how school traffic is affected.

Public Comment No. 1 – Teena Broumand -

I have been present at all or most of the previous planning meetings for the multi-modal study. During those meetings the estimated time delay in the morning and afternoon commute period almost doubled and we questioned then the validity of the data used to model this change to Highway 33.

We have significant swings in traffic volume on certain weekends like when festivals or large summer crowds are visiting the Ojai Valley. The traffic volumes at the last estimate (more than 4-5 years old)

were already showing that the road design and reduction of lanes was very close to not being able to accommodate the average daily traffic numbers (copy of referenced notes transmitted via email post-meeting and attached as requested). The data provided only looked at morning commute and evening commute times and delays that would be caused. There was no study of impacts during festival weekends.

As traffic is slowed (or perceived to be slowed), drivers will look for a way to circumvent the back up. This will further increase the use of Creek Road and Santa Ana Road as a bypass to the highway. These roads do not provide a safe alternative route and subjects these residential neighborhoods to unsafe speeding drivers as an unintended consequence of the change to the highway. There was no inclusion of study data to include this analysis and we were promised it would be included prior to the implementation of the change - this has not taken place.

Public Comment No. 2 – John Guelcher – Was following this item on the Agenda and happy to be here. Recently moved to Oak View. My daughter’s friend was killed crossing by Dahl’s market. I understand the demonstration at Maricopa Highway has caused some uproar in the community, but no matter your political stripe, people will resist. We need to look at what happened with Maricopa and how reactive people were. We need to make sure we are proactive and engage/educate residents about what is happening with this future project.

Public Comment No. 3 – Chris Anacker – The Maricopa project was received how it was because the City of Ojai didn’t do enough outreach. Can we incorporate elements within the demonstration project that can add more grooming elements to establish more pride within the community as part of that effort? Such as cleaning up debris along the roadways during the installation process? This will increase the sense of pride and people will start to pay more attention.

But then I asked our Caltrans rep if regardless of the multi-modal project coming in the years ahead, I asked whether they can at least devote some resources now to cleaning up the highway, such as weeds and debris and other such stuff, to 'groom' the highway ... to increase a sense of pride, and then perhaps people will start to pay more attention to what's going on as they drive along.

Public Comment No. 4 – Claudia Laurie – As far as outreach goes, libraries, banks, markets, message boards, etc. While my kids were growing up, everyone was more interested in going down the hill. Need to engage the community as much as possible as part of demonstration project.

Public Comment No. 5 – Brian Aikens -The demonstration project and future permanent improvements will back up to Santa Ana, Creek Rd., Burnham Rd. Participated in ATP meetings, and noted that there is a lot of detail that goes into these efforts, and that this presentation highlights the main points. Spoke about Maricopa Highway and the “zebra planters” that didn’t work. And it is still not smooth going through that area. The former City [of Ojai] Manager was fired because he didn’t get the property owners buy-in. They are still stuck in Phase 2 for the Maricopa Project in the City of Ojai. Hundreds of people went before City Council to share their thoughts and the Council did what they wanted.

[CONTINUED] Public Comment No. 1 – Teena Broumand - I think Miramonte works [for a Demonstration Project site] it has a center merge lane as our saving grace. Problem with Nordhoff and Hospital is no one wants to take out the center median. Things that need to be looked at are these medians and center lanes can help with two lanes leaving the Valley.

Public Comment No. 6 – Steven Weed - I haven’t spent the time others have spent on this project as I’ve lived in Oak View for only three years. Will there be an environmental document for this project available?

Caltrans Response – We are working on a general website that will have all this information.

[CONTINUED] Public Comment No. 6 – Steven Weed – This is one of the main reasons I've been attending the OVMAC meetings. I noted the overflow concerns, and I hope that it will be worked out. With this trail, will have a significant stretch of Oak View, are there any sketches available of what this demonstration project would look like? There are concerns as it relates to tourism and other seasonal travelers.

Caltrans Response - We have concept plans, but these are not public yet. We should have plans to share in April 2023 and will have them available on our website. We will provide information about the demonstration project to the public. Motorists are able to adapt to changes in roadway design if sufficient signing and advance warning are provided. There was one project along PCH that we were concerned about people reacting negatively but we were surprised at how many people adapted without too much concern. There will be opportunities for people to share their concerns.

[CONTINUED] Public Comment No. 5 – Brian Aikens – Not to be contrary but restriping Maricopa Highway has not prevented accidents. People aren't sure what lane to go in. Painting alone didn't cut it. And the traffic on the highway is nowhere near the amount of traffic on Highway 33.

CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENT. COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS:

Member Wright - You know, you'll always have the individuals who won't appreciate it and may go and destroy some of the improvements. It's unfortunate.

Member Kennedy – Speaking about the Maricopa Highway project, the paint is faded – so it begs the question of whether or not it is still active? Are they still doing the project?

Caltrans Comment – The Maricopa Demonstration Project is being administered by the City of Ojai. The Demonstration Project will be removed when the permanent project is ready for construction. Caltrans will contact the City of Ojai regarding the maintenance of the Demonstration Project.

Member Kennedy – I love the temporary demonstration idea for the Highway 33 project. Think it's a great tool. Want to offer the Oak View Park and Resource Center for any future meetings regarding the demonstration project. When I started to participate in the highway multi modal study efforts, I really wasn't for it in the beginning, but am for it now. I love the bike lands. I don't really like the idea of keeping the center lane/median open without improvements because people will use it to pass. Maybe an occasional median in the middle? Also, not one person completes a full stop at Mahoney. People go through red lights all the time, it's a free for all. Everyone is in such a hurry all the time. People need to slow down, need to visit our businesses. I'm looking forward to this.

Member Wright - I hope I'm still alive once this is completed.

REOPENED PUBLIC COMMENT:

Caltrans Response - Point of the demonstration project is to test the data and traffic flow. These mentioned points will be addressed during that time.

Public Comment No. 7 – Claudia Lurie - Who creates the signage along the highway into the Valley? Perhaps some new signage could be installed ahead of the Demonstration Project to let visitors and residents alike know about the forthcoming installation?

Caltrans Response - It's Caltrans jurisdiction and we will put up the signage informing of the demonstration project.

[CONTINUED] Public Comment No. 3 – Chris Anacker – *Who will do the outreach efforts? [District 1 staff in conjunction with Caltrans and a variety of other agencies]*

[CONTINUED] Public Comment No. 1 – Teena Broumand – *I'm going to pull my file. But I think that at that time with the flow rates, this may not work. What alternatives do we have to solve any problems that arise? How about the timing of the lights? We have very long straight aways, and you can hit all the green lights sometimes. Think we are at capacity and this may not fly. We have a lot of time invested in this and maybe in the interim we can do some serious patrol with CHP for a long time, like a month of serious enforcement.*

[CONTINUED] Public Comment No. 7 – Claudia Laurie - *Live on Burnham Rd. and during rush hour there is always speeding along that road. Maybe just park an empty black/white car and that would work.*

Supervisor Matt LaVere – *Note that we only have one beat officer for the entire area from SB County line, up to Rose Valley and back down to Santa Paula. They are developing a task force, but we are unfortunately dealing with some staff shortages.*

Close of Item. Received and Filed.

- 9. Announcements and Updates** – Future Bed and Breakfast vs. Temporary Rental Units – Planning Presentation and Discussion – March or April 2023 Meeting.

10. Councilmember Comments

Member Kennedy - *Thanked the County and Public Works for their assistance with the storm and road closures.*

- 11. Adjournment:** Next Meeting will be held on **Monday, February 27th at 7:00PM IN PERSON at the Oak View Community Center**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:34PM

Told initially "Reducing lanes from 5 lanes to 3 lanes will increase travel time, But only 25 seconds in the am & 10 seconds in the ~~evening~~.

• Now traffic delays estimated to be 65 seconds in the am & 30 seconds in afternoon/evening.

• OK for Roads up to ~~25,000~~ 25,000 ADT
Oak View is currently at 22,700 (not much room for future growth OR emergencies)

• Taxes would need to be levied to pay for this - NO Feasibility study done to assess support.

• Private business owners also need to pay for sidewalk improvements & are unlikely to support.

- Lastly, Creek Rd already used as a bypass