

Mission Canyon Association
MINUTES
9/1/20, 7:30 p.m.

Minutes by Darby Feldwinn

1. Meeting called to order by Jason Saltoun-Ebin:
 - 1.1 Board Members Present: Alex Feldwinn, Darby Feldwinn, Jason Saltoun-Ebin, Jean Yamamura, Kellum de Forest, Nancy Weiss, Ray Smith, Sandy Robertson, and Seldon Edner
 - 1.2 Board Members Absent: Erika Sharghi, Hugh Twibell, Kevin Snow, and Laurie Guitteau
 - 1.3 Guests: Luke Swetland, Laura Capps (SBUSD board president), Israel Landa, Monique Limon (state assemble member), and Marc Chytilo

2. Minutes of July meeting approved.
 - 1st: Ray Smith
 - 2nd: Nancy Weiss
 - All approved

3. Treasurer's report - N/A

4. Old Business
 - 4.1 Museum of Natural History Update (Luke)
 - Luke questioned Laura (SBUSD board president) on how the museum can help students and his desire to make it more available for school support.
 - Their fire insurance was raised by \$300,000/year.
 - Butterflies alive will be open for three more weeks.
 - Outdoor spaces will be open at the Museum and the Sea Center will have things outside, which will allow them to continue to be available to the community.
 - 4.2 Botanic Garden Update (Steve) –N/A
 - 4.3 Meeting with Das Williams (Jason)
 - Discussed the work that Southern California Edison is trying to do on the trail.
 - 4.4 Efforts to add Verizon Service to the Canyon (Sandra)
 - The Botanical Garden rejected our request to add a cell tower on their property.
 - If we find anywhere else Verizon will still work with us.
 - The cell tower that currently serves the canyon is on De La Vina by Trader Joes.
 - MCA requested that Kadie McShirley ask Das if he would talk to the water district about putting it on the water tower again.
 - 4.5 Historic Bridge/Mission Heritage Trail Association
 - Supporting efforts to get people to slow down on Mission Canyon Rd.
 - This might require changing in the speed limit. Not sure if this is possible with the current laws.
 - There is movement in Sacramento to change how speed limits are determined. We might need to wait to see if this goes through.

5. New Business

5.1 Update on the Reopening of Schools (Laura Capps, President of Santa Barbara Unified School Board)

- Santa Barbara Unified School District (SBUSD) has 21 schools, 13,000 students and their first day of school was August 18.
- SBUSD has a new superintendent, Hilda Maldonado, who came from Los Angeles Unified School District. Capps says she is very community oriented.
- In July Gavin Newsom enacted state level leadership and said if the county is on the watch list they cannot open in person.
- Everyone has lots of anxiety but they are trying to be as data driven in making choices about school openings as possible. Currently the number of cases is still too high to open schools.
- Schools are currently doing distance learning only, but equity is front and center. SBUSD is making sure low-income families have food which can be picked up at 11 or 12 food distribution sites throughout the area.
- SBUSD is facing challenges when families are not online, but have a partnership with Cox to offer free wifi.
- SBUSD is considering applying for a waiver. This is the only way that they would be able to open. The only schools that have applied for this are private schools, Montecito Union, and Cold Springs so far.
- If you have any questions you can e-mail lcaps@usunified.org
- SBUSD has had a small drop in enrollment. Roosevelt had biggest drop ~30 students. This will impact funding because they are basic-aid and get a certain amount of property tax per student.
- Attendance is very high at ~97%. Attendance is required to be taken in each class during the day.
- SBUSD is thinking about allowing K and TK to come back first.

5.2 Update on Effort to Improve Fire Insurance Coverage (Monique Limon, California Assembly Member)

- COVID has caused all problems at the state to be elevated (homeless, schools, housing).
- They are attempting to address insurance issues but there is not one bill for all issues.
- It is going to take a lot of time to solve the problem.
- Limon is partnered with the Insurance Commissioner to pass a bill that would require any insurance company that offers insurance in the state to also offer insurance in the high fire areas. But the bill did not move forward and did not get a hearing in the senate. Deals can still be negotiated with companies but it will not be a law which means it will be voluntary.
- Currently the State does not have a law that will deal with the non-renewals/cancellations of fire policies.
- There is a bill on the governor's desk that will ensure better disclosure but does not solve issue of insurance being offered in high fire areas.
- One problem is that assembly members that do not have a wildfire in their area are not willing to vote for reforms because they do not understand the problem.

- They will continue to work with the insurance commissioner to see what they can do. Nothing will happen this year.
- CA Fair Plan did get an increase in coverage but it is still an expensive option. They are trying to do more so that more individuals can be covered.
- COVID has impacted the budget.
- One issues we asked her to consider is, how to adjust insurance for communities that are working as a whole to do fire prevention. Mission Canyon has spent multiple millions of dollars in grants to clear the top of Tunnel Rd several times, therefore, it would be nice if insurance companies would take this into account. The bill that got killed required insurance company to look at this but that bill is dead.
- This is going to take big policy changes because it is seen by the insurance industry as aggressive. Therefore, it will take time. Legislators that do not have to deal with fires do not see a need to support policy change and we will have to move them to get anything to change.
- Every time there is a fire, 6 to 8 month later, these issues come up.
- This is not just a home owner problem. The Museum of Natural History had their insurance raised by \$300,000 dollars a year. The Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens had a huge rate increase as well. These institutions do not have anywhere to turn.
- The focus of bills so far has been on individual homes but COVID has shown the need for insurance for non-profits and small businesses.
- The argument the insurance companies are making is that the cost has gone up because of global warming and they have to spread the cost. The insurance commissioner has the ability to look at the cost and see if they are being reasonable and fair.
- Individual cases can be discussed with the insurance commissioner's office.
- There is a virtual town hall this Friday with the insurance commissioner.
- Assemble Woman Limon will keep trying to raise the issues.

6. Additional Committee Reports

6.1 Mission Canyon Brush Cleanup and Chipping (Ray)

- Brush cleanup was successful and got a lot of brush out of the canyon.
- Lots of our county firefighters are up north helping out on other fires.
- The fire safe council had a meeting and SCE gave a PowerPoint on all the wonderful things they are doing and the info is on the fire safe council website.

6.2 Newsletter (Jean)

- We should do something on the SCE project and maybe Nancy Weise can help write it.
- We might want to wait until we know the time line for Edison before we send it out. But we might not have enough time so we may have to do an e-blast instead. E-blast reaches only 1/3 people that the newsletter does.
- Jason also has some items to contribute.

- We might include an article about what they are doing on the water tank. (rebuilding pump equipment, emptying the tank, sandblasting inside, putting a new coat on the inside, and painting the outside).

6.9 Tunnel Trail (Nancy)

- MCA has been working with the CA Fish and Wildlife and they have educated us and are backing us up.
- The working group was reviewing all of the plans. Southern California Edison's (SCE) security and parking plans are much better. But the working group feels that SCE is drowning them in paper but not hearing them on important issues.
- It is not enough for SCE to put up rock drapery and remove berms but do minimal restoration work.
- Had a meeting where SCE talked about narrowing the scope of the project so that they do not address the side cast or the berms, just the drapery. The reason for this change is that they are not sure that they would be able to store the dirt and would just be moving it around. SCE is not supposed to be doing any trucking of dirt with the reduced scope of work. They will crush the material (dirt and rocks) together and lay it around Tunnel Trail. They will need to leave the biggest pile at the three way fork. We have asked them not to do anything bigger than they can store and make sure that it cannot possibly go into the creek. They will then try to get a permit to lay the material on the Edison Road.
- We need to make sure that the whole area that was damaged is included in a comprehensive environmental review. Das and his office have helped get the planning department to talk with us and listen to our concerns. We think we have assurances from the county that a comprehensive environmental review will be done.
- Our relentless approach of giving input to the county is what is helping us and making sure that they and Fish and Game are on board.
- Most likely they will need to do some mitigation projects because they will not be able to fix everything. They have already offered \$100,000 for a circulation study of traffic. They are also looking at undergrounding wires. The wires that start at the gate and go up to the bridge will be coming out because they are not being used.
- SCE wants to complete the project quickly to mitigate the public safety issues. Which means that we need to be on top of things because there is limited time for public comment.
- SCE is still waiting on the county to approve. The permit will not be issued until at least September. The trail will be closed on weekdays and on a few weekends.
- We will want to see all of the rocks out of the creek but this will take a few years.
- There will be a lot of heavy equipment and cars during the project.
- The Urban Creeks Council will help us monitor the project.

Next Board Meeting: October 6, 2020