



LOS OSOS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

June 24, 2021

Zoom meeting 7pm

MIINUTES

The meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** was taken. Present were Trish Bartel Chairperson, Sandra Sarrouf, Sue Morgenthaler, Lynette Tornatzky, Yael Korin, Larry Bender, Jan Harper, Deborah Howe and James Bishop. Tim Carstairs was excused, Jim Stanfill was absent.

ZOOM FEATURES AND MEETING PROTOCOL were outlined by Chairperson Trish Bartel.

COUNTY AND LOCAL AGENCY REPORTS:

Sergeant Langston from the Sheriff's Department reported a high call for service this month.

The Sergeant outlined how the Sheriff's Department is responding to the parked vehicles on Palisades and how specific officers have been assigned to work with the unhoused, helping them while respecting the needs of the community residents as well.

Thinking ahead to the Fourth of July and the extremely dry environment, Sheriffs will be double staffed during the weekend in preparation for the fireworks and disturbance calls.

Yale Korin, Chair of the Unhoused Committee, wanted to point out that the committee is working daily on Palisades, specifically helping the unhoused keep their areas clean. These residents are doing their best to work with the committee. She pointed out that with the presence of officers, there have been a few times when that presence has been inappropriate. Apparently one attempt was made by an officer at 3am in the morning to ask an unhoused resident to keep their area clean. Yael asked if there was a way for the officers to continue to provide support in a way that did not involve threats or fines as she feels the residents are trying to improve. Sergeant Langston said he would speak to his officers, that they all have good hearts.

Please contact the Sergeant if anyone runs into issues that may need his help, they want to work together with all involved.

Station Commander Captain Greg Klingenberg of the CHP reported that May brought us 4 collisions, 2 hit and runs, one DUI. One of the hit and run collisions was near Pecho and Pecho Valley Road, one was on 12th St south of Nipomo.

County Staff Report opened with Kerry Brown from the Planning and Building Department. She reported that the Morro Shores expansion project was approved by the County on June 10th, but an appeal of this project was just made to the California Coastal Commission.

A question arose around the communication between the County and LOCAC regarding the reporting of LOCAC actions, when and how the county receives them. There had been a communication to LUC from the County that raised questions as to whether the present system for this was adequate. Kerry explained what had happened in this instance. The process does work, and we will continue on reporting in the same manner.

County Staff Report continued with Laura Holder, Utilities Division Program Manager from Public Works. Moved to the County Staff Report from the Regular Agenda, Laura updated us on the Staff recommendations for the Board of Supervisors June 22nd meeting to implement the deferred sewer service charge increase.

On July 1, 2020, a sewer rate increase was to go into effect. Because of COVID, this rate increase was postponed until August 1 of this year. The delay cost the county \$774,000. This revenue shortfall has resulted in the inability to build financial reserves and implement capital improvements.

There are financial assistance programs available for property owners. There is also a rent relief program for eligible tenants and landlords called *Housing is Key*. This program will help with unpaid rent and utility bills from April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021. Please see <https://www.recoverslo.org/en/rent-relief.aspx>

Laura will be sending her presentation for LOCAC to post online. Included in this presentation is a chart for the average monthly sewer charges beginning in August of 2021 and the link to financial assistance and rent relief. If you have any questions, Laura Holder can be reached at lholder@co.slo.ca.us Her phone number is (805) 781-5135.

Supervisor Bruce Gibson opened with an appreciation for the service of past Chairperson Tim Carstairs and a congratulations to incoming Chairperson Trish Bartel.

Supervisor Gibson followed up on Laura's presentation by stating the sewer rate increase is a 2-step process. On the 22nd, the Supervisors reinstated the rate increase and at their August 10th meeting they will make the decision to formally put this assessment on property tax bills.

Because the rate increases were deferred for a year, the system lost money. Public Works is applying to use funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to restore these revenues as if they had raised the rates. This can help the system catch up.

Rent and Utility relief for the community is out there, spread the word and please contact the Supervisor's office for help.

The SLO County/Board of Supervisors budget hearings started on June 14th. The \$600M budget for fiscal 2021/2022 was approved. State and Federal aid has helped considerably.

On June 15, the \$55M COVID related relief money from ARPA funds was assigned for projects in unincorporated San Luis Obispo County. This money is for COVID impact related infrastructure relief- water, sewer and broadband. Agencies can apply for this money and are encouraged to do so.

Childcare is a challenge, we lost over 1000 spots for childcare services in business that one way or another provided these services. One proposal was made by an organization to invest some ARPA money in early childhood initiatives to benefit children with aid for childcare, helping to raise wages for childcare providers and training new childcare workers with mental health support for the young.

The Board of Supervisors meeting last Tuesday was held in person, they are more or less back to pre-COVID normal. The Supervisor will be happy to attend our meetings should we choose to go back to in person meetings. At that time he and Blake will also reinstate their office hours at Sea Pines from 4-5 on our meeting date.

Sandra Sarrouf asked about an option for a hybrid meeting, in-person and online. Would we be able to get support from the county? The Cambria Chamber of Commerce recently held a hybrid meeting that worked reasonably well. Supervisor Gibson said he would work with us, help with the cost of this, and again reminded us that our yearly budget request from the Supervisors is due very soon.

On July 1, his Community Project Funds get replenished and he needs to make his grants to the Community Councils to keep us all going through the next year. Again, we were reminded that we must make this budget request soon.

The CSD Report was made by CSD Director Matthew Fourcroy. The CSD will be going back to In-person meetings in August, their committees will start in July.

The pathway between Ferrell St and 7th St was finished. To celebrate the completion, the Parks and Recreation Committee will be holding their next meeting onsite, 5:30pm on June 20th. Several LOCAC members voiced appreciation for this terrific new trail.

CSD is working on the Program C well engineering documents and expect to discuss them at their August Board meeting. This well is to be built at Bay Oaks and South Bay Blvd.

Also being discussed at the August Board meeting is a letter the CSD is working on. The CSD, along with the other 2 water purveyors, plans to present a coordinated voice on the subject of ADUs.

The Chamber of Commerce, as reported by Lynette Tornatzky, is holding a Festival of Flavor in July. 12 local restaurants are participating in this month-long event. The \$35 passport will be available this weekend at Nardone's.

Due to printing and delivery issues, the Chamber is still waiting for the new directory. It has been completed and should be here soon.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Dave Bowlus, Board of Directors, Friends of the Elfin Forest, spoke about the fire dangers at the Elfin Forest and the frustration in getting help to cut this fuel ahead of a disaster. They have an adopt a park agreement with the county to preserve and protect the Elfin Forest.

Volunteers work to remove all weeds, mostly velt grass, within the forest and the border on the south side of South Bay Blvd. We are all aware of the drought caused disasters in our state and we are merely one strike away from this happening to us here in Los Osos. Dave has called County Public Works and Cal Fire to ask about more weed clearance along South Bay Blvd but is not hearing back with solutions.

Cal Fire will certainly do its job if a fire were to happen, but if all this fuel could be cut beforehand, that could make a big difference.

Would a volunteer day of weed whacking with local residents be a solution? We all need to be aware of this concern.

MINUTES APPROVED

Minutes were approved from the Regular LOCAC meeting May 27, 2021 and from the Emergency LOCAC meeting that was held by email on June 9, 2021 regarding a letter to the Board of Supervisors supporting a request to earmark ARPA money for help with the Los Osos Water Basin Infrastructure. These minutes are both available on the LOCAC website locac.info

LOCAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Land Use Committee, Larry Bender reported the next LUC meeting will be held on July 6 due to the 4th of July holiday. He also noted Dave Bowlus' statement during Public Comment, citing that the Elfin Forest is taken care of by local residents. If anyone is interested in helping out, please volunteer. They are always looking for more people to get involved.

Traffic and Circulation, Jan Harper is uncertain as to whether there will be a meeting of the committee in July. Meanwhile if anyone comes across an issue; potholes, pavement, traffic, or otherwise, please call the county and report (805) 781-5252.

Trees and Landscaping, Yael Korin again stated their attention is centered on the El Morro Bicycle Trail but are still trying to get permits from the county. To educate all regarding the scope of the project, they are cataloging plants to find out what native plants need what kind of help. Committee member Lisa Denker has been talking to the fire chief, discussing the overgrown and dry, dead velt grasses. The Fire Chief has said he would contact the Parks Department to find out what can be done.

Outreach Committee, Sandra Sarrouf keeps our Newsletter published twice a month. She will also put together data from the survey that polled residents as to how they feel about going back to in-person meetings.

The Outreach Committee is looking for someone, perhaps a student, who could help LOCAC with a social media presence.

Unhoused Residents, Yael Korin. Short term the committee is working on providing basic services to the unhoused. People Helping People, Supervisor Gibson and Blake Fixler are working together to provide showers for the residents.

Long term, the group is attempting to apply for a tiny house project.

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

Catalina Hubbard from SLOCOG "Engaging with the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments for its long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)."

SLOCOG works together with local governments, agencies, and the Board of Supervisors to fund and work on larger projects that are regional (cross individual jurisdiction boundaries) and require help from more than just the cities. The projects that are funded include all types of local transportation systems, systems for walkers, cars, bicycles, busses, etc. They have worked with employers to establish safe routes to school, they have worked with seniors on transit and shuttle services. They work on bridges, bike lanes; everything transportation related.

Some of their local projects have included the Quintana Roundabout in Morro Bay, the Santa Ysabel Pathway, and Elfin Forest seed money.

Every four years their Regional Transportation Plan, which directs federal and state dollars towards transportation investments, needs to be updated. They are presently looking for input for the present update due in 2023. Public comments are needed to determine what should be proposed. If we feel LOVR is unsafe, they must hear from us. They do not move to advocate without comments from a community.

Catalina was asked how they make decisions as to what projects to start. She said they want to hear all concerns and comments, but as to where the money goes, that will be decided by their directors. They do a lot of outreach, but from her comments it sounds like outreach to unincorporated areas for some reason is difficult. We are benefiting from this introduction because Catalina is from Los Osos and she cared to reach out.

Bottom line, if there is anything you want to see done, speak out!

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Election of Treasurer, both Tim Carstairs and Deborah Howe were nominated. Tim will be asked if he is willing to serve, we can vote by email to select. Blake has again said we need to get our request in soon, but he assured us he would set aside money for us should we be late with our request.

The discussion as to whether or not to go back to in-person meetings found we are split. Participation has been much higher since we've been holding zoom meetings, we are averaging over 40 participants. Hybrid meetings were discussed, questions of comfort and the unknown future of COVID were raised.

Trish Bartel and Sandra Sarrouf will do research on all this and report back to us next meeting with their findings.

The LOCAC Committees were discussed regarding their adherence to the guidelines as listed in the LOCAC Bylaws and Policies and Procedures.

We were reminded that every LOCAC member must serve on a committee and be actively involved in the workings of that committee.

We ended up at still requiring 2 LOCAC members and at least 1 member of the public per committee, but it seems that each committee has different issues and successfully runs in different manners from the others. As to the question "do we need to amend the bylaws",

perhaps we can word things so as to allow each committee to set its own procedures while at least owning 2 LOCAC members and 1 from the public.

New LOCAC members James Bishop and Deborah Howe each volunteered for a committee. James will serve on the Unhoused Residents Committee, Deborah on the Traffic Committee. When Deborah was running for her seat on LOCAC, she heard many comments about unsafe conditions on our roads and would like to work on forwarding community concerns and see things through.

We voted to create a new, non-political Ad hoc Water Committee. Deborah Howe and James Bishop will anchor this committee. They will research and educate us, keeping in touch and coordinating information with the BMC and the CSD. They will report on any actions the BMC makes that will affect us. They will look into state policies and opportunities. Their presentation will be unbiased.

Lynette suggested she would make a page/link for this new committee on the LOCAC website.

Their first project has been to try to get the Department of Water Resources to include Los Osos in their statewide flyover geophysical survey. Supervisor Gibson has been working with Senator Laird to arrange this. The Senator was the Secretary of California Natural Resources from 2011-2019 and is currently our representative at the California State Senate.

A motion was made and LOCAC unanimously voted to create a new Ad Hoc Water Committee.

LOCAC also unanimously voted to send a letter from LOCAC in support of Supervisor Gibson's request to Senator John Laird and Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham with regards to the addition of the extension of a geo physical aerial mapping to include Los Osos (with copies to the BMC and the other water purveyors) This letter will be prepared by Deborah Howe and James Bishop.

Sandra Sarrouf announced the creation of a private Google Doc page for us to store all our internal documents. She also announced the **replacement of our general email to a gmail** address, she and Lynette will work together on getting a new public contact system up onto our website.

Business items will stay on the agenda every month for whatever may come up that needs to be discussed.

Meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 9:02pm.

