

Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization Meeting February 5, 2011

Board Members Present:

Heather Beer, Glenn Borland [Chair], Cecelia Borland (alternate), Mike Chesney, Steve Clark, Donna Dose, George Evangelou, Elizabeth Getzoff, Bruce Graves, George Lucia, Michael Pique, Alan Serry, Linda Thorne, Martha Vargas.

Board Members Absent:

Robert Carlyle (illness).

The PMPO Board Meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM at the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department. Chair Glenn Borland thanked the Fire Department for use of the building. Minutes of the November 13, 2010, board meeting were approved with corrections (9 yes: G Borland, Chesney, Clark, Dose, Evangelou, Graves, Pique, Serry, Thorne; 0 no; 5 abstain: Beer, Getzoff, Lande, Lucia, Vargas). Treasurer Alan Serry reported a balance forward as of November 13, 2010, of \$39,713.60; income of \$19.55 (interest), expenses \$86.99 for a voice recorder, leaving us with a balance as of February 5, 2011, of \$39,646.16. The report was approved unanimously.

Old Business

Communications Update:

Mike Chesney said our www.pmpoinfo.com web site is seeing about 100 unique visitors each month and has received routine updates.

Traffic Safety:

Alan Serry reported that the snow emergency planning meeting was held with participation by the PMVFD, Sheriff, CHP, State Park, Observatory, and Cleveland National Forest (CNF). The basic problem is that Palomar has space for 500 visitors but gets thousands. CHP has no funds to station officers on the mountain and will not "meter" traffic, so the overall plan is to get officers and emergency vehicles up here quickly after snowfalls: after the crowds are here is too late. Road closures are a touchy issue; only done in real emergencies, but portable electric signs could be set up to remind visitors of weather, road, and parking conditions before they start up. The PMVFD will be the official media point of contact, and could issue press releases warning of "intermittant closures" when appropriate. Chief Lucia will prepare a card with a safety message to go along with the "yes, there is snow" responses from (from example) the General Store. It would mention the limited parking.

The PMVFD encouraged the sheriff and CNF to drop in, socially, when up here. The Observatory was very involved and will help any way possible. Jessica Murany, our State Park ranger, is on board. She asks if we can add links to Palomar Mountain web cams to the pmpoinfo.com site. George Evangelou suggests a web cam at the Community Center.

The refrigerator safety magnet project has proceeded as far as verifying current telephone numbers; a draft layout will be ready at the end of February. The magnets will have numbers for 911, the CHP dispatcher, the sheriff, PMVFD non-emergency, SDG&E, AT&T telephone, the Christian Conference Center, the School Camp, the State Park office, Fish & Game agency, Palomar Hospital, Cal Trans highway information, the national poison center, a tow truck operator willing to come up the mountain, the General Store, Mother's Kitchen restaurant, and our PMPOinfo.com web site.

Palomar Observatory's Relations with the Palomar Mountain Community:

Bruce Graves led discussion on frictions arising from the Observatory's recent restrictions on public use of their Recreation Room, as for the Christmas ornament party and the Community Church's weekly service. Dr. Andy Boden, the Deputy Director of Caltech Optical Observatories, spoke informally of the Observatory's absolute committment to keeping excellent relationships with the community. He pledged to redouble their efforts and recommit to representation by attendance at the PMPO Board meetings.

Moreover, the Observatory is committed to its role as a safe refuge for the community in emergency situations - fire, earthquake, power loss, road closures - for periods in the 72-hour

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range. His team, led by Dan McKinna, has made sure that the first responders, including the PMVFD, have access through the Observatory security gate.

Some incursions threatening observatory staff and astronomers led to the security gate, which compromises the Observatory's ability to welcome use by the community. The Observatory has regained the former schoolhouse, now the "Outreach Center", and is open to discussing its use as a meeting venue (it can seat about 50-75 people; Earl Walls says the CCPM meeting room is 15x21 feet and seats 26 max). Currently the Outreach Center is used on weekends as a docent tour staging area and for occasional nighttime star parties. George Lucia suggests asking the Community Center to follow up, which Bruce Graves says he will bring up at their February 20 board meeting.

Community Center of Palomar Mountain (CCPM):

Bruce Graves reported the CCPM board met yesterday and discussed construction progress on the rear deck: footings have been poured, framing will start next week, and the deck will be finished by April. Bruce is the designated event scheduler, and he has posted calendars at the store, the PMVFD, and outside the Community Center.

PMPO Annual Newsletter and May 28 Annual General Meeting:

Glen Borland distributed task assignments. The newsletter topics will include most of last years' along with State Park, Yoga Center, 2020 General Plan, Casino update, and Animals/Water/Birds in a "Mountain Health" section (including the Oak Borer). The community tidbits will be incorporated into a CCPM section. Possible advertisers include Bonnie Phelps, the Baileys, Mothers Kitchen, and the General Store. Text deadline to Susan Humason is April 6, Board review April 20, assembly probably May 7. A motion to recognize and thank Susan passed unanimously.

State Park:

Jessica Murany, our Palomar Mountain State Park ranger, says the park is on the closure list but she has no information on when this will happen and to please ignore the many rumors. Libby Getzoff asks how the PMPO can support keeping the park open. Bill Leininger suggests contacting our state assembly representative, Kevin Jeffords. Doug Lande asks if the PMPO could fund travel expenses for a volunteer to go to Sacramento and support the park. Glen Borland moves creation of a subcommittee for "lobbying efforts at the March 22, 2011, Parks Advocacy Day". Seconded by George Evangelou, passed unanimously. Bruce Graves will be the PMPO Board member, with Tracey Chesney the other subcommittee member.

Jessica says Nate Harrison is being regraded after recent slides and should soon be open again. George Lucia noted the 2007 fire burned the signs warning drivers of the rough road and hopes the signs can be replaced, at least the one on top at the State Park boundary. Jessica says Nate Harrison sign vandalism has been a real problem.

This afternoon, Jessica offers to lead PMPO members on a walk through the Park's completed logging project, 350 acres now more fire-safe.

Jessica is looking for 100 volunteers to help the April 16 Earth Day events, and financial donations to support it - to CRSPIA marked "Earth Day Palomar Mountain". She can be reached at (760) 742-3462, JMurany@parks.ca.gov.

Ground Water and Well Level Monitoring:

Linda Thorne said that Mike Probert is monitoring regularly, including Pedley Valley, Graves, and Borlands, and last week completed a full round of monitoring. She has not yet located the correct Yoga Center well logging data.

Goldspotted Oak Borer:

Doug Lande said this invasive bark beetle has advanced north as far the Boy Scout camp by Lake Henshaw. It can kill 90% of mature oaks, all species. Doug says to avoid moving firewood, especially uphill. A representative of the Department of Earth Sciences at University of California, Riverside, will attend the May 28 Annual Meeting and be allocated 20 minutes presentation time.

Construction Permits on Palomar Mountain:

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George Lucia reported that the “fire people” responsible for plan review have been moved to a different agency at the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) resulting in much inconsistency.

Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department (PMVFD):

Chief George Lucia says the department is doing great and is healthy, with much credit going to the founders and volunteers who left us with a paid-for building and professional equipment. Our community service area (CSA) designation has changed from 110 to 135, a somewhat larger region. George is closely watching the County’s consolidation plans to be sure the PMVFD will be able to maintain allegiance to its community.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT):

Bill Leininger says SDG&E offered a \$25,000 unrestricted grant which is being used to outfit an existing truck with a hose reel, water tanks, and Barricade gel supplies. Recently, CERT members helped clear mudslide debris at night.

2020 General Plan Revision:

No report.

La Jolla Indian Reservation New Casino Project:

No report.

New Business:

PMPO Board Election Process:

Mike Chesney led discussion on improving the Annual Meeting’s election process. The policy for this year will be to solicit nominations in the newsletter, then on May 20 to post a list of candidates on the pmpoinfo.com site and also at appropriate local places. Mike Chesney will serve as the election officer during the 2011 annual meeting.

Alan Serry says he will be resigning from the board then since he will be moving off the mountain this spring.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 PM. Next meeting is May 28, 2011, the Annual Meeting and Pancake Breakfast.

Michael Pique, Secretary. Minutes approved by PMPO board September 4, 2011