

Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization 1997 Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 24, 1997 at the Palomar Mountain Lodge

Board Members Present: Robert Carlyle, Russ Day, Donna Dose, Elizabeth Getzoff (alternate), Bruce Graves, Susan Humason, Jack Norvall, Michael Pique, Carol Ravenscroft, John Tainer, Robert Thicksten, Joseph Weeks.

The annual public PMPO meeting was convened at 11:07 A.M. Saturday May 24, 1997. The Chair Bruce Graves thanked the Palomar Mountain Lodge and Joe Weeks for hosting the Pancake Breakfast and Annual Meeting.

Secretary's Report: The minutes from the 1996 annual meeting were distributed and approved.

Treasurer's Report: We began the fiscal year with \$8,759.93. As reported in the PMPO spring 1997 annual newsletter, our expenses were \$4,279.32 for consulting fees and postal charges, and \$5000.00 deposited for a retainer with water-right attorneys Hatch and Parent. The total donations from our members came to \$6,070.30, \$3209.02 short of meeting our expenses, leaving us with a balance of \$5,550.91. The treasurer's report was approved.

Antennas on Crestline: Bruce Graves considered the PMPO's actions on the Crestline tower expansion to be one of the PMPO's major successes. Relay Engineering had intended to increase the height of their 35-foot existing antenna by 100 feet. The county planning commission has ruled that an Environmental Impact Report is required and Relay Engineering is understood to have withdrawn their permit application.

Cedar Creek Water Project: Jerry McLees reported on the status of William Yale's proposed commercial development along the East Grade Road to pump and sell well water. Mr. Yale proposes to pump, from his 7 acre parcel, between 25 and 100 acre-feet per year accumulated by the 570-acre Jeff Valley watershed, with normal use for a 7-acre parcel being one-half acre-foot per year. Mr. McLees said Mr. Yale is moving toward his Major Use Permit application but is still in an informal pre-application process, working out pumping amounts with the county. The PMPO believes an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required to address the biological and long-term hydrological consequences of Cedar Creek drawdown, the traffic safety issues, the pollution and noise from the planned diesel generator, as well as the possibly precedent-setting taking of water resources. The PMPO's water attorneys, Hatch and Parent, have written a letter supporting the PMPO's request for an EIR.

John Tainer pointed out three reasons the project causes concern to the PMPO: one, the scale of the operation, larger than any existing water project on Palomar; two, the method of extraction being forced pumping rather than natural spring discharge; and three, the small parcel extracting much more than its water recharge by draining an upland valley. According to SDSU's Dr. David Huntley, the granite rock on the mountain has water-carrying fractures that extend long distances, so the effect of pumping a well can be felt far away in unpredictable directions. Mr. Tainer pointed out this meant it could be difficult for residents to prove their water supply was drawn down specifically by Mr. Yale's pumping.

Dual Government Survey Problem: Jack Norvall reported that a recent US Forest Service resurvey of Palomar Mountain sections 14 and 15 has resulted in the Forest Service gaining 18 acres at the expense of residents, and may have disrupted the boundaries of all parcels in those sections. Mr. Norvall said the PMPO hopes to help resolve the issue with the Forest Service as it would be very expensive to take the matter to the courts.

Palomar Mountain State Park: Susan Grove, Chief Ranger, rejoiced that the loop road to the spectacular Boucher Point lookout is again open, and she hopes to begin repairs on the historic fire tower there so it too can be re-opened to visitors. A goal for this year is restoring an old apple orchard and completing a butterfly garden near Doane Pond - volunteers to help cultivate are needed. She reported 31 campsites open, with hot showers and flushing toilets, and credited colleagues David Roberts and Jeff Madison with keeping it all going for the 65,000 visitors last year. She reminded residents of the Interpretive Programs from Memorial Day until Labor Day,

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the Saturday evening campfire talks, and the Junior Ranger program weekend mornings. Finally, she invited visitors who simply want to taste the wonders of the park to ask at the gate for a free 20-minute drivethrough pass.

U.S. Forest Service: Norm Noyes reported that Palomar Mountain has 4 Forest Service fire engines; all of Cleveland National Forest is being covered by 12 engines, normally 27. The Service has done a few prescribed burns with one more planned. They have funds to buy property for recreation along Boulder Creek Road, southwest of Julian. In 1996 they bought 928 acres and expect to buy 400 in 1997. Mr. Noyes announced a new tax called the "Recreation Fee Pass" which costs \$5 per day or \$30 per year and will be required for parking on southern California's four National Forests. 80% of the funds will go to the local area and the pass will be sold by stores and at the Forest Service district offices. Mr. Noyes said the Service was aware of the resurvey and recommended talking to the Forest Service surveyor, Kent Whittaker, who knows the history. All Forest Service surveys are done under direction of the Bureau of Land Management. Finally, Mr. Noyes reminded us we should feel free to call our on-mountain ranger, Milt Williamson.

Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department (PMVFD): PMVFD Board President Cliff Ellerby announced two upcoming fund-raising events, the June 14 Flag Day dinner and square dance, and the August 30 Barbecue and raffle. They hope to earn enough to finish the 10,000 gallon reservoir (needs \$2,300) and buy a foam-making machine (needs \$2,500). The foam machine expands each gallon of water into 80 gallons of wet sticky foam that repels heat; a borrowed foam unit saved the dance hall during the disastrous Bailey House fire. This year, the PMVFD received donations of a flag pole (the Clark family), and a generator and space heaters for the fire station. Fire Chief Scott Drieschman reported the PMVFD currently has 2 rescue vehicles, 2 pumpers, 1 2000-gallon water tender, and 1 3000-gallon portable tank. Three firefighters including Assistant Fire Chief Karl Bauer, a former El Cajon police officer and deputy sheriff, have received advanced training at the National Firefighter Academy. Scott asked homeowners to clear brush around their houses, pick up and read a wildfire brochure, install both smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and buy a \$12 chimney fire extinguisher. He urged residents needing help to call **911** and ask for the PMVFD, they are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Palomar Observatory: Superintendent Bob Thicksten said Palomar is wrapping up a complete "Sky Survey" that began in 1986. The interferometer telescope described last year is proceeding well, and with new involvement by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory will be used to observe planets in our solar system as well as distant stars. The instrument combines light from two, soon to be three, separate mirrors and will eventually lead to large space-based telescopes. Mr. Thicksten asked residents to please turn their porchlights off so the Observatory can have a dark sky for its important work - each light on the mountain is as bad as 1000 lights down in San Diego.

New Business

Fire Insurance Rates: Huey Spratley asked why his fire insurance has gone up 500%, from \$380 to \$2200. Mr. Drieschman suggested the California Fair Plan for about \$1100 per year.

Election of PMPO Board Members: The Chair announced that there are five open seats on the PMPO Board, with Tom Fortney declining to run for re-election. A nomination was made from the floor for Debbie and Karl Bauer, who accepted. The four incumbents running for re-election were Joseph Weeks, Michael Pique, Terri Bailey, and Carol Ravenscroft. After statements by these nominees, the motion to elect them to terms extending to May 2000 was accepted by acclamation. The other board members' terms are: Bruce Graves, Donna Dose, Tom Burton, Russ Day, and Susan Humason (terms expiring May 1998), and Jack Norvall, Bob Thicksten, Robert Carlyle, Halcie Clark, and John Tainer (terms expiring May 1999).

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 P.M.

Michael E. Pique, Secretary