

Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization 2000 Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 27, 2000 at the Palomar Mountain Lodge

Board Members Present:

Debbie Bauer, Karl Bauer (alternate), Jim Billups, Steve Clark (alternate), Russ Day, Donna Dose, Bruce Graves, Susan Humason, Michael Pique, Robert Sterner, Robert Thicksten, Joseph Weeks.

The annual general PMPO meeting was convened at 11:03 A.M. Saturday May 27, 2000, with about 56 in attendance. The Chair Bruce Graves thanked the Palomar Mountain Lodge and Joe Weeks for hosting the Pancake Breakfast and Annual Meeting, Donna Dose for organizing the breakfast, and Susan Humason for editing and producing the newsletter.

Old Business

Secretary's Report (Michael Pique):

The minutes from the May 29, 1999, annual meeting were distributed and approved.

Treasurer's Report (Debbie Bauer):

As reported in the PMPO spring 2000 annual newsletter, our expenses were \$430.00 for the newsletter, \$231.00 for a special news mailing, \$2000.00 for the BLM/USFS resurvey work, \$24.00 for post office box rental, and \$66.00 for stamps. Breakfast expenses were \$246; we served 116 adults and 16 children. The \$5000.00 we had deposited for a retainer with water-rights attorneys Hatch and Parent has been returned to us. The total donations from our members came to \$9267.50 and \$250.00 receipts from the 1998 breakfast, giving us a balance of \$15,315.00. The treasurer's report was approved.

Palomar Observatory:

Superintendent Bob Thicksten showed an aerial photo of the Observatory and reminded us that it is about one square mile in size - much more than just the 200-inch telescope. The multi-mirror interferometer telescope has now been operating for five years. A new adaptive optics telescope will correct for air turbulence by sensing the wavefront of the incoming light and adjusting a silicone rubber mirror 1000 times per second to yield images even sharper than those from the Hubble Space Telescope. As the Palomar 48-inch Schmidt telescope finishes its 3-color "Sky Survey 2" jobs, it will be used for asteroid searches: even the small asteroid "Ida" is the size of Palomar Mountain and would make a catastrophic impact if it hit the earth. The 48-inch is being adapted for filmless automatic operation with the goal of detecting asteroids at least ten years before possible impact.

The Observatory welcomed 110,000 visitors last year. Unfortunately, the Observatory museum remains closed. Remodeling it would cost about \$500,000 and operating it as an astronomical science center would cost about \$1,500,000 per year for staff and maintenance.

Light pollution from the several new casinos will hurt the observatory but no funds are at hand to oppose them. The Observatory hopes the casinos will follow the county nighttime lighting ordinance and use shielded low-pressure sodium bulbs. Mr. Thicksten pleaded with residents to turn their unneeded porch lights off so the Observatory can have a dark sky for its important work - each 60-watt light on the mountain, even three miles from the Observatory, is as bad as 100 bulbs down in San Diego. If you don't need it on, please, turn off your outdoor lighting.

Palomar Christian Conference Center:

Steve Ewert of the PCCC said 14,000 people in 190 groups from churches and public schools met at the PCCC this year. The PCCC is on the northwest side of Palomar Mountain, was founded the same year at the State Park (1933), and now has 17 full-time staff. They are now updating their master use plan toward a hearing in late summer. They want to replace old buildings, build a new gym, and construct staff housing. The Center has put in a new 47-foot waterslide into the pool and invite residents to call them at (760) 742-3438 if they would like to come over and take a dip.

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Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department (PMVFD):

Chief Karl Bauer said the PMVFD has built on the past twenty years of good work to receive \$300,000 in grant funds over the past three years. We now have a new rescue vehicle, new breathing apparatus, and a brand new fire engine on order - our first ever. All this helps in our goal of better, faster, more professional service to the community. Three years ago they began a 5-year plan to provide the best possible service. Manpower and staffing are now up to averaging 3.8 fire fighters on the mountain. Want to get staffing up to be able to have a full engine crew in 8 minutes. The new Ford 4WD rescue vehicle will greatly improve providing medical aid, the number one emergency call, especially getting patients to an ambulance over bad roads in bad weather. We want to get trauma victims to a hospital in one hour, get heart attack victims defibrillation and CPR within eight minutes.

Efforts of the community are still needed, especially for a water tender, essentially a "water truck with red lights", important in meeting the goal of making residents' fire insurance less expensive. The area had previously had an Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating of 10 on a scale of 1 to 10: i.e., effectively no protection. This was recently raised to ISO 9, which may make it easier to get insurance, even if at same cost. The goal now is ISO 8, which could yield a 10% to 30% drop in rates. ISO 8 would require being able to "first roll" with 4400 gallons of water.

The accomplishments have been due to tremendous volunteer work by the community, from helping on long range planning to training for the response team. Each of you can help.

Karl reminded residents needing help to call **911** and ask for the PMVFD, they are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Palomar Mountain State Park:

Dave Roberts said new funding has allowed reduction of fees for camping and annual passes. In the past few years, the park has completed a new water line to the campground, automated a well system for the picnic area, paved roads and parking lots for Doane Pond and Silvercrest, put up new signage, and restored the 1934-era Silvercrest tables. Upcoming work will improve and restore historic residences, re-roof the ranger house, restore old CCC-era rock stoves, put new food lockers in the campgrounds, and repair & re-align trails. Employees are needed for the 9-month season, pay is about \$9.85 per hour, must be 18 or older.

The park has two new vehicles, including a snowplow. An apple orchard is being restored by grafting new buds onto 100-year old rootstocks, and the Nate Harrison entrance is being repaved. A plan to build a butterfly garden did not work out and has been abandoned. The ponds have been stocked with trout, native bass, and catfish. Long range projects are to dredge the ponds, and make the Boucher Hill area into an observation point. Joe Weeks suggested the possibility of building a bed & breakfast inn there.

Cedar Creek Water Project:

Michael Pique reported on the status of William Yale's proposed commercial development along the East Grade Road to pump and sell well water. Mr. Yale applied in August 1999 for a Major Use Permit (P99-021) to pump, from his 7 acre parcel, between 25 and 50 acre-feet per year accumulated by the 570-acre Jeff Valley watershed. Normal use for a 7-acre residential parcel would be one-half acre-foot per year. A September 1993 48-hour pump test on the well showed direct impacts on both Cedar Creek and on neighboring wells.

Although Mr. Yale has moved forward toward a Major Use Permit, no studies on the environmental and biological consequences of the proposed pumping have yet been done. The PMPO requested in September 1999, and the County agreed, that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) be 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 consultant Jerry McLees has been monitoring the county offices. He says the next event, probably sometime this summer, will be the county issuing a "notice of preparation" of the EIR, detailing what the EIR must include, to which the PMPO and Palomar Mountain residents may respond.

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Dual Government Survey Problem:

Bruce Graves explained how the recent US Bureau of Land Management and 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, which includes Crestline and Birch Hill.

The PMPO has met with the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, and discussed with Congressman Packard's staff the idea of a special bill restoring the boundaries to the long-established lines of actual occupation. This has not made much headway but we plan more meetings with the BLM. Palomar Mountain resident and attorney Bob Haase is coordinating our legal and technical discussions.

A new survey by local surveyor Bob Wallace is in progress, funded by special contributions to the PMPO. The PMPO still needs old maps, particularly of Crestline, and field notes that might help clarify survey issues. If you can help, call Jack Norvall, the PMPO board member in charge of office and field research, at (760) 742-8749.

County 2020 General Plan Update:

The PMPO is representing the "North Mountain Area" in the San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use comprehensive update of their year 2020 general plan. This effort includes remedying the unfortunate and little-known effect of the 1993 "Forest Conservation Initiative" that down-zoned "The Summit" (general store, Mother's Kitchen restaurant, Yoga Center) from General Commercial to Residential Commercial. If, for example, a fire should destroy the store, it could not be rebuilt and we would have no store for residents and guests.

Michael Pique, PMPO secretary, is receiving the notices of the DPLU 2020 meetings and will post them on his web site at www.palomarmountain.com/upcoming.html.

New Business

Election of PMPO Board Members:

The Chair announced that there are five open seats on the PMPO Board, The five incumbents running for re-election were Joseph Weeks, Debbie Bauer/Karl Bauer, Michael Pique, Terri Bailey, and Robert Sterner. Nominations from the floor were received for Elliott Miller and Tracy Dixon. After statements by the nominees, ballots were distributed, collected, and counted by Russ Day.

The following were elected to terms expiring May 2003: Debbie Bauer/Karl Bauer, Terri Bailey, Elliot Miller, Michael Pique, and Robert Sterner. The other board members' terms are: Bruce Graves, Donna Dose, Tom Burton, Russ Day, and Susan Humason (terms expiring May 2001); and Jack Norvall, Bob Thicksten, Robert Carlyle, Jim Billups/Steve Clark (alternate), and John Tainer/Elizabeth Getzoff; (terms expiring May 2002);

The meeting was adjourned at 12:44 P.M.

Michael E. Pique, Secretary