

# **Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization 2004 Annual Meeting**

**Saturday, May 29, 2004 at the Palomar Mountain Lodge**

## **Board Members Present:**

Terri Bailey, Thomas Burton, Robert Carlyle, Tracy Dixon, Donna Dose, Elizabeth Getzoff (alternate), Bruce Graves, Susan Humason, Pat Jones, Elliot Miller, Dale Norton, Jack Norvall, Bonnie Phelps, Michael Pique, Alan Serry.

The annual general PMPO meeting was convened at the Palomar Mountain Lodge 11:02 A.M. Saturday May 29, 2004. The Chair Bruce Graves thanked the Palomar Mountain Lodge owners Dale and Angelique Norton for again hosting the Pancake Breakfast and Annual Meeting, Susan Humason for editing and producing the newsletter, and Donna Dose & crew for organizing the breakfast.

## **Old Business**

### **Secretary's Report (Michael Pique):**

The minutes from the May 24, 2003, annual meeting were distributed and approved.

### **Treasurer's Report (Tracy Dixon):**

As reported in the PMPO spring 2004 annual newsletter, our balance carried forward from December 31, 2002 was \$29,861.92. Our 2004 expenses, totaling \$1,857.35, were \$37.00 for PMPO announcement stamps, \$584.66 for annual newsletter printing, \$259.00 for annual newsletter stamps, \$132.85 for special fire newsletter printing and metal emergency locator signs, \$259.00 for special fire newsletter stamps, \$392.80 for breakfast food, supplies, and grill rental, \$156.04 for PMPO letterhead, and \$36.00 for post office box rental. The total donations from our members came to \$3,510, and we had \$516 receipts from the 2004 breakfast, a total income of \$4,026, giving us an ending balance (Dec 31, 2003) of \$32,030.57. The treasurer's report was approved.

### **Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department (PMVFD):**

Karl Bauer has moved to Colorado to take a job as a professional Fire Chief. The new PMVFD Chief, Jay Ackerman, said the transition has been a busy time but that the community has come together and worked together to make it happen. A good start has been made on improving fire safety - no one likes to see dead trees, but no one can bring them back to life again and the clearing is proceeding. Jay is proud to be from Palomar Mountain, proud to be the Chief, and especially proud of the volunteer firefighters.

### **U.S. Forest Service:**

Carlton Joseph, the Division Chief for the Palomar Ranger District, Cleveland National Forest, reported on the "state of the forest". Our Palomar district is being covered by 9 fire engines, a 20-person hand crew, 3 Fire Protection Technicians, a 14-person helicopter crew, and one heavy heli-tanker operating out of Hemet. The heli-tanker is very important since the government has grounded all the retardant-dropping tanker airplanes.

The USFS is working on a fuels reduction program and this year did 1200 acres of clearing, including on the north slope of the Palomar divide. Plans include thinning and understory clearing of about 860 acres near Fry Creek (about a 2 or 3 year job), Highpoint to the Observatory (has not been cleared for over 10 years), 2000 acres in Mendenhall Valley, and 90 acres along the East Grade Road near mile marker 6.

The Forest Service is meeting with San Diego county about the new brush-clearing regulations and will report back to Jay Ackerman and to the Fire Safe Council.

Key phone numbers: Palomar District station (760) 788-0250, local ranger (760) 782-1930.

## **Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization 2004 Annual Meeting**

### **Palomar Mountain State Park:**

Jeffrey W. Lee, Ranger, said the park this year received funds for brush and dead-tree clearing 100 feet on each side of State Park Road and along the Nate Harrison Grade.

The restoration of the Boucher Hill CDF fire lookout tower, unused since 1986, as a historical structure is underway with a budget of \$325,000. This will be enough to repair the roof, build a new lookout platform deck, and install a handicap-accessible restroom. The park hopes to have the tower open to visitors in a few years and to have it included in the National Historic Fire Tower Registry. A volunteer docent program has started, with retired firefighters.

### **Palomar Observatory:**

Public Affairs Director Scott Kardel highlighted the 2003 discovery at Palomar Mountain of the new planetoid "Sedna" which is so far from the sun it takes 10,000 years to go around once. The museum and gift shop have reopened, and a new all-sky "webcam" is on-line at <http://snoop.palomar.caltech.edu>. He reminded residents to please turn off their unneeded porch lights so the Observatory can have a dark sky for its important work.

### **Fire Safe Council:**

Shana Ackerman says grant funding has been obtained for use of a "masticator" brush-clearing machine, \$154,000 for clearing dead trees along major roads (South and East Grade, Canfield, Crestline), and \$225,000 for fire clearance near residences. The funds may arrive in 3 to 4 weeks; save your receipts for expenses incurred for fire safety clearing during April to December 2004 for possible reimbursement. Another grant might be pursued for a bulk purchase of fire-retardant foam that could be pre-positioned in storage depots near homes for the PMVFD to apply in case of approaching fire.

### **Community Center of Palomar Mountain (CCPM):**

The CCPM now has a board of directors and last week filed the articles of incorporation and by-laws with the California Secretary of State. The board is Earl Walls, Tom Burton, Bruce Graves, Terri Bailey, and Scott Kardel. Now that the not-for-profit corporation is established, they will apply for construction grant funding.

### **Dual Government Survey Problem:**

Jack Norvall is in charge of office and field research, with Palomar Mountain resident and attorney Bob Haase coordinating the PMPO's legal and technical discussions. Jack showed a slide overlaying county Road Survey #213 (1903) with the 1985 US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resurvey which disrupted the boundaries of many parcels in Section 14, which includes Crestline and Birch Hill. Jack explained the PMPO's efforts to find remains of this road, and of old stone survey monuments from the 1890-1903 period, to persuade the BLM to restore the original boundaries. The PMPO still needs old maps, particularly of Crestline, and field notes that might show where the section corners and quarter-corners were located and marked during the 1885-1930 period. If you can help, call Jack Norvall (760) 747-1320.

### **County 2020 General Plan Update:**

A PMPO sub-committee led by Tom Burton is representing the "North Mountain Area" in the San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use comprehensive year-2020 update of the general plan. The PMPO believes that Palomar Mountain fulfills the requirements to be deemed a "Country Town" that would be exempt from some of the most harmful aspects of the "Forest Conservation Initiative" passed a few years ago, but the county staff disagrees. Under the FCI, our small commercial zone (Mother's Kitchen, the General Store, the Yoga Center, and the "helipad") is removed so that even if they burned down in a forest fire, the buildings there could only be rebuilt on the same "footprint". The sub-committee is trying to overcome the county objections, but we are small in numbers.

## **Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization 2004 Annual Meeting**

### **Motorcycle Safety:**

Alan Serry got the Palomar Mountain Motorcycle Safety committee going and Tamara Davis is now carrying it forward; if you want to help, contact Tamara. Diane Serry reported that the unsafe motorcyclists continue to be a problem on both the East Grade and South Grade roads. Recently, California Highway Patrol Sergeant Griffith came up to see our concerns first-hand, and he has agreed to work with our committee. Grant money will be used to fund a Palomar Mountain enforcement task force. Sgt. Griffith suggests the committee request speed limit signs be posted on the grades, which now have an implicit speed limit of 55 mph. He proposes unmarked cars to patrol the grade; officers at the top and bottom would issue citations. He also suggests compiling a database of offenders, sending letters to the vehicle owners and to insurance agencies. This has worked, he says, on the Ortega Highway.

### **Greenfield Property Development:**

Donna Dose says that clearing is beginning on 13 home sites on a 191-acre parcel at the far north end of Conifer Road, the former "Greenfield" property. She says the project was begun in 1985, and was approved in final form by the county Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) in 1996, subject to improvements for fire safety and access along the length of Conifer Road. Donna is opposed to the development and met with the DPLU; however, the DPLU said that as long as the work is being performed as had been approved, it is completely legal.

### **Dead Tree Removal and Brush Clearing:**

Bonnie Phelps reported that Bruce Taylor and Greg Peck, coordinators of San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) Company's dead and dying tree removal program, said that starting on June 1 they will begin removing the downed tree trunks. They will start at the northern end of Birch Hill and work south; also removing any trees that have died in this past year.

The Forest Service requirements for brush clearing around residences are still not completely spelled out, but it seems likely a 100-foot space will be required. Some property owners are planning to sell their vacant parcels to their neighbors or donate them to a charity to avoid the expenses of the required clearing.

### **Historical Publications:**

Bonnie Phelps said the editing of the Aster manuscript discovered last year has been taken on by Kathy Rios. The work includes 46 Palomar Mountain photographs taken in the early 1900's.

Bonnie further noted that three families who have given so much to Palomar Mountain have left in the past year: Doug and Wendy Craig, Bill and Elizabeth Pepper, Karl and Debbie Bauer.

### **Election of PMPO Board Members:**

The Chair announced that there are five open seats on the PMPO Board. Alan Serry is leaving the Board with the expiration of his term of office today; the four incumbents running for re-election are Tom Burton, Donna Dose, Bruce Graves, and Susan Humason. A nomination was received from the floor for Scott Kardel. After statements by the candidates, an election was conducted by Robert Carlyle. Tom Burton, Donna Dose, Bruce Graves, Susan Humason, and Scott Kardel were elected for three year terms expiring in 2007.

The Board roster is:

(terms expiring May 2005):

Robert Carlyle, Pat Jones, Jack Norvall, Bonnie Phelps, and John Tainer/Elizabeth Getzoff

(terms expiring May 2006):

Terri Bailey, Tracy Dixon, Elliot Miller, Dale Norton, and Michael Pique

(terms expiring May 2007):

Tom Burton, Donna Dose, Bruce Graves, Susan Humason, and Scott Kardel.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

Michael E. Pique, Secretary