

Board Members Present:

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

The PMPO Board meeting was convened 10:02 A.M. July 19, 2003, at the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department. The minutes of the April 5 and May 24, 2003, board meetings were distributed. After the correction of "McGinnes" to "McInnes" the minutes were approved. The treasurer, Tracy Dixon, reported income of \$3410 from donations, \$516 from the breakfast; expenses of \$259 for newsletter stamps, \$584.66 for newsletter, \$156.04 for PMPO letterhead, \$25 for breakfast grill rental, \$260.51 for breakfast meat, \$47.88 for breakfast strawberries, \$59.41 for breakfast supplies, total expenses \$1,392.50. Our ending bank balance was \$32,408.42. The report was approved.

OLD BUSINESS:**Dual Government Survey Problem**

Jack Norvall outlined the history of the multiple federal government surveys.

The first survey, by Washburn in 1855, has left few identifiable monuments. The second, by Minto in 1885, is the most important and is the one we are wrestling with the government to get back to. We have found some Minto rock monuments and are still hunting others. Certain county road surveys (RS11, RS213) have crucial clues that were uncovered by the PMPO research: landmarks indicated therein tie to key corners for sections 14 and 13. Robert Haase has drafted a letter to the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service that describes these points in some detail; he is soliciting comments and suggestions on it.

County of San Diego Year 2020 General Plan Update

Tom Burton reported on a May 2003 hearing by the county Board of Supervisors on the county 2020 General Plan Update. The supervisors met to discuss and approve the direction the plan was going - a conceptual approval, pre-EIR (environmental impact report). Bruce Graves, Jerry McLees, Tom Burton, and Martha Stover from the Summit spoke. The board acted on June 25. Jerry McLees summarized that Jacobs and Horne, the two back-country supervisors, had directed staff to have maps re-drawn to indicate no downzoning in the back-country (east of Interstate 15, generally).

Terri Bailey asked to know the locations where the PMPO is asking for preservation of existing commercial parcels. Tom Burton said it was a total of 10 acres: 6 acres for the summit, of which 1.6 acres are the existing commercial buildings there, and 4 acres for the helipad zone. Next, the county staff will redraw the maps; Jerry McLees will monitor. For more information, see www.yahoo.com, search groups for "PMPO 2020".

Community Center

Bruce Graves said October is the next deadline to apply for county Community Development grant funding, but Wendy Craig, who heads the Community Center Project Group, is unable to put much time into it now. Robert Carlyle offered to help. Tom Burton again pointed out that a not-for-profit community association corporation needed to be formed first. The PMPO board approved the advancing of \$1,500 for costs (Franchise Tax Board fees, corporate seal, minutes book, etc.) for the formation of the Palomar Mountain Community Association, or other name to be determined, with the understanding that its community center mission statement would include disaster preparedness, school functions, and private functions.

NEW BUSINESS:**Wildland Fire Threat and Emergency Escape Roads**

Karl Bauer, PMVFD Chief, said the long-term drought has caused a severe problem on Palomar Mountain: everything is aligned for a catastrophic fire that would "replace the forest,

and everything in it". He identified three steps to action: (1) recognizing the problem, (2) recognizing that we have influence on the problem, and (3) recognizing that we can solve the problem.

He said, community-wide, we're only at step 1. The latest "red sheet" California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection alert identified Palomar Mountain as one of four area in southern California as critical hazards for fire fighters. The 2002 winter was the dryest in recorded history (from about 1850). Palomar Mountain fuel (tree) moisture is at record lows, with a 100% chance of crown fires in dead standing trees.

What do we do? The key for this 2003 season is *response*. The key for next season is *mitigation*. We have a community fire plan almost complete: mitigation of the hazard is, of course, important but takes time - months to years, not weeks. The urgency is such that our first priority is a response plan, how to respond to a "campaign fire" in which firefighters from distant areas arrive to help. How do we deal with the out-of-town crews needing to navigate? The incident management team and crews will *not* know Palomar Mountain except what we hand them as a plan. They have to be able to find the roads, for example. We've now mapped all the houses, but not all of them have addresses.

How to evacuate residents? How to even get word to them in the event of fire? We can try knocking on doors; eventually the sheriffs will get up here to help on that. Probably we need to recruit guides and volunteer notifiers. On the PMPO escape road plans, Bonnie Phelps and Elliot Miller have been contacting owners. This is good, however, the dramatic recent tree and brush mortality has changed the situation. Fires can "spot" a mile or more ahead of the main blaze making escape impossible regardless of emergency roads. Getting safe refuge areas and signage is more urgent for this season. Where can residents find safe refuge until they can get to the main refuge site, the Observatory grounds? Current proposed refuges are: the Lodge, the General Store, the county road station on State Park Road, Bailey Meadow pond, State Park Silver Crest campground, the Christian Conference Center, and the school camp.

The PMVFD needs PMPO's help to contact and educate people about clearing and mitigation. We need volunteer block captains who encourage clearing of brush and dead trees, obtaining permission from absentee owners. The PMVFD would like the block captains' phone numbers so residents could be alerted in case of fire. The PMVFD needs PMPO support for marking properties and roads for emergencies and PMPO commitment to community education.

Karl will write a letter to all property owners, whether residents or not, explaining the urgency and importance of clearing dead trees and brush on both occupied and vacant parcels. The PMPO board approved co-signing and paying for the mailing. The PMPO board also approved funding purchase and construction of about 30 steel-plate signs on rebar posts, to mark road easements and locations to be designated by the PMVFD.

Tree Clearing Update

Bonnie Phelps said that the San Diego Gas & Electric (SDGE) tree-clearers have been shocked by how many more trees had died in the past few weeks. They are bringing additional contractors to expedite the cutting and clearing, and setting up a motorhome headquarters here on the mountain for their supervisor, Greg Peck.

Kathy Lande asked whether SDGE's tree-clearing was going to include collection or chipping of the remaining slash (branches and downed trunks). Bonnie said their new policy is to cut down to the ground, where possible, but the time pressure is severe to get safe clearance around the high-voltage lines. Bonnie said many owners near Pedley Valley are now contracted with Palomar Timber and are working hard on clearing dead trees.

Pat Jones believes much tree death is due to a mold, similar to Chestnut Blight in the early 20th century. It has been identified in northern California and suspected to be root element in loss of redwoods and other softwoods. Look for 3/4 inch bore in cedar centers, he says.

Next Meetings:

The next scheduled board meetings are October 4, 2003, and January 10, 2004.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 A.M.

Minutes of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization Meeting

July 19, 2003

Michael E. Pique, Secretary.

Minutes approved by PMPO Board October 4, 2003.