



OJAI VALLEY MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

18 Valley Road, Oak View
Monday, January 22, 2024 - 7:00PM

Chair: Chris Cohen, **Vice Chair:** Joseph Westbury

Council Members: Barbara Kennedy, Grace Malloy, Terry Wright

Public Comments FOR IN PERSON MEETINGS may be provided using the following **TWO options:**

Option 1: E-MAIL PUBLIC COMMENT- If you wish to make a comment on a specific agenda item, please submit your comment to the Executive Officer at ovmac@ventura.org for that item via email by 3:30 p.m. the day of the meeting to ensure your letter is received and entered into the record. PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN YOUR EMAIL: (A) MEETING DATE, (B) AGENDA ITEM NUMBER, (C) SUBJECT OR TITLE OF THE ITEM, (D) YOUR FULL NAME. DURING PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE AGENDA ITEM SPECIFIED IN YOUR EMAIL, YOUR COMMENT WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD. Please limit your written correspondence to 300 words or less.

Option 2 – IN PERSON PUBLIC COMMENT - If you wish to make a comment in-person, you must be present at the meeting location and provide your comment prior to the close of the public comment period for the item you wish to speak on. Each meeting will have sign-in sheets to participate in Public Comment at the meeting location for in-person comments.

1. Call to Order of the Meeting

Meeting commenced at 7:04 PM

2. Flag Salute

3. Roll Call

*Vice-Chair Westbury, Member Kennedy, Member Malloy and Member Wright present.
Chair Cohen Absent.*

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Moved to approve as presented by Member Wright. Seconded by Member Kennedy. Approved unanimously.

5. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Public Comment No. 1 – Ron Solorzano

Regional librarian for Ojai Valley. January 28th, at the Ojai Library, will be local author Joseph Puglia to discuss his new book at 2pm.

*Oak View and Ojai Libraries are serving as a distribution site for post-Covid Surveys that are being conducted for the County. You can pick up there and drop off. There is also a QR code for those that prefer to submit their survey online. These will be available till January 27th.
Piru and Ojai Libraries are working with "VC Works" to have collaborative space provided for job*

coaching at these two locations. These will be held on the second Thursdays of the month from 2-4pm.

Public Comment No. 2 – Beth Gilbert

Along Old Grade Road., there is an old thrift shop that has become unsightly. Would like to know who to contact regarding the property and how to get it cleaned up. [Executive Officer provided contact information to connect thereafter and provide Code Compliance information]

Public Comment No. 3 – Karen Larsen

Same concern as Beth Gilbert's.

6. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of November 27, 2023 (TO BE PROVIDED AT 2/26/24 MEETING)

7. City of Ojai Planning Commission Update

Planning Commissioner in attendance updated the OVMAC that the Becker Agreement has been updated. It will provide affordable units and the ones that will be rehabilitated will be landmarked. Tenants can stay as long as they like at their current rate. There are 73 new units in total. At 307 S. Montgomery, there will be 50 new deed restricted units. At 510 E. Ojai Ave., we will have 13 deed restricted units. These projects all now make the City of Ojai compliant with their RHNA numbers. There is also a project on Bryant St. (the Cabrillo project) that will provide the 49 transitional housing units with 1 manager unit.

Informational Items:

8. Presentation from Ventura County Clerk-Recorder & Registrar of Voters regarding the upcoming Statewide Presidential Primary Election.

Receive information about voting in the upcoming March 5th, 2024 Presidential Primary Election from County Clerk-Recorder & Registrar of Voters, Michelle Ascencion.

Ms. Ascencion presented information about the upcoming Primary Election; There are 43 days until the Primary [as of 1/22/24]. Voter Centers will open on February 24, 2024. They will be open from 9-5pm every day. Visit venturavote.org for results on March 5, 2024 after 8pm, but will take a time after to finalize count.

Public Comment No. 1 – Steven Weed

Shared how much fun he had as a volunteer during the election. Noted there are many checks and balances in the system and encourages all to participate and volunteer in this year's elections.

Action Items:

9. Request for a Permit Adjustment to existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP No. 3883) for the addition of four pickleball courts to the Oak View Community Center.

Barbara Kennedy Enterprises on behalf of the Ojai Valley Lions Club, requests a permit adjustment to Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 3883 for the installation of four pickleball courts, with fencing, at the Oak View Community Center. The courts would be located next to the playground area near the overflow parking. No exterior lighting or grading is proposed. The pickleball courts will be restricted to daytime use that coincides with park hours (8:00 am to dusk). The project site is

addressed as 18 Valley Road in the community of Oak View. The subject property is approximately 2.44 acres and is zoned RE 2-AC (Rural Exclusive – 2 acre minimum lot size), with a Temporary Rental Unit Overlay Zone and Dark Sky Overlay Zone. The property has a General Plan Designation of Very Low Density Residential.

Please note that Member Kennedy will be required to recuse herself from this item and will have an alternative Lions Club representative present this item on behalf of the applicant.

Staff Contacts: Kristina Boero, Senior Planner Kristina.boero@ventura.org
805-654-2467

Planning staff Kristina Boero, Senior Planner, and Jennifer Trunk, Planning Manager presented information about the proposed project which would include two exterior pickleball courts at the northeast corner of the Oak View Community Center. [Power Point Attached] The project application would be processed as a Permit Adjustment to the underlying Conditional Use Permit associated with the Oak View Community Center. Staff presented data regarding community surveys that were done in adjacent residential neighborhood showing a majority support of the project. County Parks provided commentary that they are in support of the project, but typically see a 500 foot buffer from residential buildings. The proposed project is approximately 115 feet away from the nearest residence.

OVMAC Question of Applicant - *Is there any other site that the pickleball could be located on that is further away from the residences? Did we look at a sound study?*

Applicant and Staff Response – *Yes, we could use the Casitas Water Municipal Property which would provide an approximately 150 foot buffer from the nearest residence. The project application is a Permit Adjustment, and because of its minimal entitlement process, staff didn't feel it necessary to require additional sound studies in light of the survey feedback. It would also be very costly, which was another reason why the County has not required it yet.*

OVMAC Member Wright - The Community Survey shows the majority of the people supported pickleball, I think I only saw one against. Also is this for four courts or two courts? There is some conflicting data in the materials.

Staff Response – It is 2 courts – that was an error.

Applicant Representative – Brian Burg, Lions Club, was there on behalf of authorized agent Barbara Kennedy.

Vice Chair Westbury opened up the public meeting for public comment.

Public Comment No. 1 – *Velma Lomax*

Chair of the Oak View Advisory Committee. The pickleball project has been in the works for a year with the neighborhood surveys and now County review. The neighborhood needs more things to do. This is a recreational facility that could use more activities. There have been a lot of studies on seniors needing more activities to do and this is something that could really benefit our community.

Public Comment No. 2 - *Jeff Hall*

Lives in the tract adjacent to the community center. He knows there is a lot of support in the community

for this type of facility and he in general supports it but is concerned about the sound. There can be solutions that help mitigate the sound like soundwalls, maybe 4 feet tall, some other sound attenuation elements. He would like the request to be denied at this point until more studies could be conducted and mitigation can be looked at. I just want to make sure it's done right.

Public Comment No. 3 - Cathi Stalling

Been a resident or 64 years. Involved in many organizations in the community. Oak View is her home. Pickleball can include many generations. We need activities, and I love pickleball. There have been many improvements done to the noise concerns with pickleball equipment. There is a paddle called the "owl paddle" which will reduce sound by 50%. This is the right place for pickleball.

Public Comment No. 4 – Brian Aikens

Lives on Rio Via up the street and has lived there for many years. Very involved in youth sports. This is a community center and should have community amenities. I was involved with the update of the Smith Hobson courts and met with Tim Krout. I've attended every City Council (Ojai) meeting that involved pickleball. Just recently attended a special meeting at City Council with the pickleball courts nearby and the utilization of the quiet equipment. I couldn't hear the typical "pop pop pop" – it really was much quieter than before.

Public Comment No. 5 – Skippy

Used to be a P.E. teacher at De Anza school. Retired now, and found pickleball and it saved my life. Please consider these courts. Listen to the new quiet paddles. The only new complaining you'll hear is about laughter.

Public Comment No. 6 – Christina Pacheco

Owns house next door and agrees that this is a recreational center. But she is concerned about the noise. Would like a noise study to be done or walls to be put up. I don't want to hear it and that's a real concern for me.

Public Comment No. 7 – Barbara Soohoo

Park hosts at Oak View Park and Resource Center. I'm about 50 feet from the courts at that location. Humans are adaptable and can get adjusted to new sounds. Basketball used to bother me at first but now I'm okay with the "new noise". This is a good community project and there has been good outreach with it. Let's get the people outside.

Public Comment No. 8 – Jay Campbell

Lives on Monte Via. He is an instructor. I'm for the project but would like the noise mitigated. The second location [the Casitas Water Mutual District property] would be good, as well as enforcement of the quiet paddles and equipment. Perhaps the fencing could have a wind screen to help with the noise may be a good thing to do.

Public Comment No. 9 – Julia Bruns

Lives in Meiners Oaks. I have had the joy of playing at the Ojai courts. The players take care of the courts. They keep it clean, and a lot of people bike to the courts. I look forward to playing here.

Public Comment No. 10 – Robin Godfry

Live in Monte Via. PIO for Ojai during the whole pickleball fiasco. Watched how it impacted the community in ways that were so sad. And it really is the pop of the ball. I can hear nature sounds now as I work from home and I love it. I ask for the County to look at potential impacts to residents adjacent to the community center like myself that work from home. Quiet paddles may be hard to enforce and typical standard is 500 feet from residents. Hope the quiet equipment can be utilized and enforced.

Public Comment No. 11 – Roger Hartman

In favor and support the project.

Public Comment No. 12 – Beth Gilbert

The new quiet paddles make a world of difference. And I do think we should demand that.

Public Comment No. 13 – Tim Krout

Ojai Valley ambassador for pickleball and am an instructor. Spoke about the history of pickleball in the valley. Created community there and we had 7 or 8 sound tests conducted with the City of Ojai. Hired PSM engineering for around \$12K. It took 13 months to review another study and then the City Council didn't use any of the recommendations. There is new equipment [provides materials to OVMAC regarding said equipment which is attached to this packet] and this equipment is about 20 octaves less or about a 50% reduction in noise levels than other equipment. There are also quieter balls too in addition to the paddles. Now the only complaint we receive is about laughter.

Public Comment No. 14 – Karin Larson

I've played for a bit. It's fun, healthy activity. I'm in support of it for those reasons. I know a lot of the complaints are about the noise, but it doesn't bother me. There is a lot of good synergy with this request. Perhaps consider other places too in case the distance becomes an issue? Maybe the Lion's club can do that.

Lions Club President, Brian Burg – We really need to keep this on this side of town. There is a spot that is owned by Casitas Water that we can use that is right next to the community center. Its close to the Ojai Valley Trail too which will help bring participation. We would need to depend on the signage. Can't have paddle police.

Public Comment No. 15 – Trisha Clegy

Has lived in Monte Via. Very active in recreation. Has had two knee replacements, and lost 50 lbs. as a result of pickleball. Is 1000% supportive of the project.

Public Comment No. 16 – Kathie Moore

Lives on Riverside Dr. Next door to many commercial properties. Lived in Oak View since she was 17. Was part of the creation of the Oak View Community Center. We need to find more activities for kids. People will get used to the noise. It becomes part of the background, and adjustment happens. This is

needed for community fitness; it is a community building activity.

Lions Club President, Brian Burg – Will potentially plant trees to assist with sound mitigation, as well as the new sound paddles will have better sound attenuation.

Vice Chair Westbury closed Public Comment.

Member Kennedy left the room to allow open discussion since she is working on the Permit Adjustment project for the pickleball item.

Vice Chair Westbury opened deliberations about the project.

Member Malloy applauded the group and commented on the general attitude of the group and the council.

Vice Chair Westbury commented that if you can't have pickleball at a community center, where can you have it? I understand there are certain balls and paddles that produce less noise. Sounds like most people are using silent/quiet equipment already. What about other sound attenuation elements?

Comment from Audience (believe it was Mr. Krout) – Stated that the City of Ojai had other sound walls installed but would have had to have had a really tall fence to block it out completely.

Member Malloy – Can we fund paddles that can be left for the community so that we can have them available for public use?

Comment from Audience – they would disappear, but perhaps with signage we can enforce the need for quiet equipment.

Planning Staff - There is a question circulating regarding enforcement; there may individuals who don't comply with the quiet equipment requirements and who can enforce that during all hours? Noise studies are very expensive; if the County were to require such analysis it may kill the project. What else can we do? Planting trees? Dusk can be at 8:30 during the Summer months which may become a nuisance to some. The County will need to work with Barbara Kennedy and the Lion's Club to find actual measures that can be implemented as we need to be mindful of residents.

Vice Chair Westbury – If someone shows up with an unregulated paddle, people will self regulate. There are many players who want this and want it done right who will help regulate the practice of the right equipment.

Member Malloy noted that if that one noncompliant paddle were to come in during a baby's nap time, that wouldn't be desired.

Comment from Audience – The sign could have a phone number to call to allow people to issue complaints if needed.

Comment from Audience Member, Kirby Harvey - I'm new to the community and even newer to pickleball, but I've lived in Ventura County for 65 years. This community is very special. There has been a mutual loss of respect within the City of Ojai and the pickleball issues that have surfaced over the past year. It doesn't have to be litigious. We have a unique opportunity here and there is much need for that. Pickleball is one of the only sports that you can mix generations and learn mutual respect.

Member Wright – Are there signs in Ojai? (Answer – yes, they were made by members of the community)

Member Malloy – could we buy/reuse that equipment since they are closing those courts? (Answer – it belongs to the City, so they would have to be asked).

Member Malloy – Could we have potentially shorter hours? 9am – 6pm?

Comment from Audience - It gets hot in the Sumer, and wouldn't get cool enough until later in the day to play. The City of Ojai had hours of operation that were decided on by the impacted neighbors.

Member Malloy - Thank you – I'm being thorough with my questions because I want to make sure we address all potential concerns. I would like to make a recommendation that we require "Community Agreements" sign that spells out the rules and requirements, whatever equipment needs there are, potentially reduced hours and the second site location. I don't know if there could be an informal sound study, because sound travels strangely in this valley; or perhaps other sound attenuation measures will be appreciated.

Planning Staff – We will ask the applicant to see if some measures that have been suggested can be implemented and if they are feasible. But I want to acknowledge that this is on a shoestring budget. Perhaps the Park Host could be involved with enforcement, we will need to look into that.

Vice Chair Westbury moved to support the installation of the two pickleball courts at the adjacent and newly confirmed location [Casitas Water property], the installation of signage indicating Community Agreement for Quiet Equipment Only, hours of operation, and with phone number for any concerns/questions. Seconded by Member Malloy. Approved unanimously 3-0.

10.Announcements and Updates - N/A

11.Councilmember Comments – N/A

Adjournment: Member Westbury then adjourned the meeting at 9:12PM.

Next Meeting will be held on **Monday, February 26, 2024** at 7:00PM IN PERSON at the Oak View Community Center