

CASA CONEJO MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES
September 24, 2020

**The Casa Conejo MAC held a Meeting Thursday, September 24, 2020,
at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom Online/Teleconference**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chair Scott Horn** at 4:02 pm. MAC members **Richard Gaz, Edward Villa, Sr.** and **Wendy Zimmerman** were present.

2. Flag Salute

Scott Horn led the flag salute.

3. Approval of Minutes from January 15, 2020

Richard Gaz moved to approve the minutes from January 15, 2020 with no changes. **Ed Villa, Sr.** seconded the motion and it passed 4/0.

4. Agenda Review

There were no changes to the agenda.

5. Public Safety Reports (CHP, Sheriff's Department)

Ventura County Sheriff Senior Deputy John Chiaramonte said COVID has reduced the number of residential burglaries because most people are home, but there has been an increase in catalytic converter thefts. He said residents should call the Sheriff's Office if they see two or three people surrounding a car with one person under the car. **Mr. Villa** expressed appreciation the Sheriff's Office for patrolling Borchard Park by the Gerald Drive cul-de-sac because it has greatly reduced the drug problem there.

California Highway Patrol Officer Bryon Decker reported that COVID has reduced traffic but it's starting to increase to normal levels. He reported three traffic collisions in the area to date in 2020, one non-injury on Jenny Drive north of Lesser Drive, and two minor injury collisions on Wendy Drive north of Gerald Drive. He addressed a report of a high-speed vehicle not stopping at Alice Drive and Bella Drive saying officers were sent at different times of the day to observe the area that did result in some traffic stops. He mentioned a second concern related to a parking complaint on Gerald Drive, and was able to speak to the resident and employees of a nearby convalescent home to remedy any parking obstruction issues. He announced that it is wildfire season and urged residents to be prepared. He also said September is Suicide Awareness Month and asked residents to stay aware and help those in need. Lastly, he reminded residents to drive safe and not distracted by devices. **Ms. Zimmerman** expressed concern about children playing in the intersection off Alice Drive.

6. COVID-19 Update from Ventura County Public Health Director Rigoberto Vargas

Mr. Vargas provided an update on latest numbers of positive cases of COVID-19, testing and hospitalizations in Ventura County. He discussed the metrics related to the State's tiers and said currently Ventura County is in the most restricted purple tier, but is poised to move into the red tier, which would allow more businesses, restaurants and schools to open in the coming weeks. He said the main concern is the case rate, where the goal is seven cases per 100,000 residents, or 60 cases per day. He said the County is trending to meet that number and hold it for another week in order to move to the next tier. The County must stay in each tier and meet the required metrics for three weeks before being allowed to move to the next tier. He said the 91320-area has a very low case rate with an average of two, below the County average. Once in the red tier, schools can start to reopen two weeks later following both the State and Ventura County Office of Education guidelines for safe opening. He said some waivers have been granted to schools for early opening, but the red tier will allow all schools to reopen without the waiver process. He concluded with a reminder about Halloween guidance from

the County and CDC that door-to-door trick-or-treating is not recommended, and if done to do so safely and with as much distance as possible, also recognizing some homes will not want to participate.

Ms. Zimmerman asked if door-to-door sales were allowed. **Mr. Vargas** said census workers and those seeking elected offices can go door-to-door while wearing masks and maintaining social distance, but others, such as salespeople, are not allowed to make direct contact and should be reported to COVID Compliance. **Mr. Horn** asked if outdoor activities and gatherings can resume, such as a garden club touring botanical gardens. **Mr. Vargas** said the State is coming up with new guidelines for small groups to gather outdoors safely.

7. Updates

a. California American Water New Rate Case Briefing with Wes Owens, Director, Rates and Regulatory, and Brian Barreto, External Affairs, Southern California

Mr. Barreto provided background on the general rate case that Cal Am filed in 2019 for the years 2021 to 2023, which is currently under review by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). **Mr. Owens** said Cal Am Water conducted three public participation hearings in Ventura County pre-COVID, but experienced delays once the pandemic shut down hearings. In July they received a notice from their assigned judge suspending the procedural schedule, so the rate case application has been postponed with no set date. They have continued mediation and settlement discussions, including with the City of Thousand Oaks and it's likely a final decision will be given in spring or mid-2021. **Mr. Horn** mentioned concerns and confusion about the rate case that were discussed at the last MAC meeting on January 15th. **Mr. Owens** acknowledged that the process and many documents in a rate case are daunting but believes the current proposal will be beneficial to Ventura County customers. **Jay Spurgin**, who provided the rate case update in January, said that the CPUC did not approve the previous rate case but this current proposal is different, which includes a partial consolidation that would result in rates lower than in the previous stand-alone proposal. He said the City of Thousand Oaks does not oppose this proposal and has tentatively reached a settlement with Cal Am, but it has yet to be approved due to COVID delays. He said while he cannot discuss the details at this time, he hopes to share the settlement proposal by the fall.

Ms. Zimmerman asked if the settlement would be retroactive due to all the delays affecting water bills.

Mr. Owens said there is nothing referring to that in the settlement, but the Commission does allow rates to be retroactive to when they become effective. **Mr. Barreto** said they would be happy to return with updates and Vanise Terry will email their contact information if there are any questions.

Mr. Horn asked about the consolidation aspect of the rate case.

b. Graffiti Removal Intervention Team

Ed Villa, Sr. reported two recent graffiti incidents last month, one at Wendy Drive bridge on both sides, and another on Jenny Drive bridge also on both sides. He said the kids also graffitied an Instagram tag so the Sheriff's Office was easily able to identify the tagger.

8. Comments of Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks

Supervisor Linda Parks announced there is an open seat on the MAC and anyone interested can email Vanise Terry. She provided Election Day information, including ballot drop box and in-person polling locations near Casa Conejo. She said the Board of Supervisors approved the General Plan, which allows Wendy Drive to have Level of Service F so it won't ever have to be widened to a 4-lane road. She said that Community Beautification Events remain cancelled, but the County is looking at ways to resume safely. She announced the November ballot will include ballot initiative Measure O that allows for growing cannabis in greenhouses on up to 600 acres in unincorporated Ventura County. Supervisor Parks announced a ribbon cutting event for new bike lanes on Potrero Road and said the Board of Supervisors also approved naming them in honor of Mike Nosco, a veteran who served in Iraq killed in a traffic accident and whose brother started the Mike Nosco Memorial Ride helping families with illnesses in need. She said there is still the possibility of power shut-offs by Southern California

Edison and potential for evacuations. Due to COVID, large evacuation centers will not be available and how it's all the more important to be prepared with your own evacuation kits, food, water, masks, and more.

Wendy Zimmerman asked about cooling centers available since COVID has shut down many areas people would normally go. **Supervisor Parks** said the County will have them available if needed and they're generally at the teen center or parks. **Vanise Terry** will send notification of cooling centers.

Scott Horn asked if areas doing well with COVID numbers could open sooner than other areas that are not doing as well. **Supervisor Parks** said she asked a similar question and the County is considered one unit and cannot be split up.

9. Council Comments on Items not on the Agenda

Scott Horn commented on the Highway 101 expansion issue and the possible inclusion of an HOV lane. He is interested in the idea of adding a fourth lane from Moorpark Road to Wendy Drive and over the Conejo Grade rather than adding an HOV lane. **Supervisor Parks** said the Transportation Commission is looking at using auxiliary lanes and other options. She suggested sending his comments and suggestions to the Transportation Commission.

10. Public Comments on Items not on the Agenda

There were no public comments.

11. Suggestions for Future Agenda Items

a. Cal Am Water Company Rate Case Update

12. Adjournment at 5:50 pm.