

Thousand Palms Community Council Minutes
 Thousand Palms Community Center
 31189 Robert Rd, Thousand Palms, CA 92276
May 26, 2011
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In Attendance:	X	Karen Esposito, Chairman
	X	Christopher Mitchell, Council Member
	X	Patricia Saleh, Secretary
	X	Roy Nokes, Council Member
	X	Bob Alcumbrac, Council Member
	X	Mike Gialdini, Liaison to 4 th District Supervisor John Benoit
Call to Order:		Chairman Esposito called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was taken and all were present. Mitchell moved that the minutes of 4/28/2011 be approved as written; Saleh seconded. Minutes approved as written. Esposito called for Staff Reports
STAFF REPORTS	A.	Fourth District Supervisor Liaison Mike Gialdini
	a.	Fourth District Update
		No updates to speak of.
	b.	Sphere of Influence Update
		Cathedral City is moving forward.
	c.	Rules Concerning Community Council Appointments
		No provision currently exists in the Rules Concerning Council Appointments for protests against Council appointees, but people can complain to Gialdini.
	d.	Additional Multispecies Habit Purchases in Thousand Palms
		There is a habitat area around Thousand Palms and any land in that area pays fees to the Coachella Valley Conservancy. The Conservancy uses those funds to purchase additional land. Since there is not a lot of development right now and land prices are lower the Conservancy is trying to buy up the more highly valued land because the prices are better.
	B.	Riverside County Sheriff's Department
		Reporting: Lt. Bill Sullivan
	a.	Presentation of Lt. Lori Marquette
		Not Present
	b.	Sheriff's Department Update
		Not Present
	C.	Code Enforcement
		Reporting: Riverside County Code Enforcement Supervisor Eddie Delgado
	a.	Update on new phone number: 760-393-3344. New main office number


		Delgado said that Code Enforcement is down a couple of cases from last report, but there are 59 cases still open from before 2011. The Planning Department is kind of backed up so they're still trying to get through those cases. Violations include businesses doing business without permits, including people who added onto their houses to do business and they have to go through the Planning stages before they can be approved. He said that his report also indicates that there are no street vending problems. As to homes that are in foreclosure, they are supposed to be registered with Code Enforcement by the banks but they don't always do that. Business violations are dealt with by Administration citations that continue until the businesses come into compliance. Officer Ruben Diaz is working out by Willits Palms, he said, and there was a verbal altercation over big diesel trucks being parked out there. Esposito asked if any of these cases are going before the Board of Supervisors soon. About nine or ten will soon go before the Board of Supervisors, Delgado answered.
	D.	CalFire/Roy Wilson Fire Station in Thousand Palms
		Reporting: Fire Captain Gretchen Gonzales
	a.	Not present because they were called to an emergency.
	E.	Other County Departments
		None reporting
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	A.	Redevelopment Agency Design Guidelines
		Liza Lizarraga Presenter
	a.	Survey results from workshop after last Council meeting
		Short survey handed out at the last workshop. The purpose of the survey was to determine which area was preferred for a specific design plan. The Design Guidelines are being worked on but are not yet complete.
NEW BUSINESS	A.	SolarChard Research and Development Center: Jeff Brothers, Sol Orchard, LLC
		<p>Brothers said that the Coachella Valley should be the "center of the universe" as to renewable energy but it's not. The object is to put in a center with many types of working technology. It will be a fully functioning and revenue producing entity but it will be working many types of technology in one spot. This will be the advantage of this center in that it will provide the opportunity to observe and test all of the various types of renewable energy. One of the benefits to the community will be that the entrance will be esthetically pleasing from Ramon Road and from Shenandoah/Tri Palms. He feels that the Center will be a good buffer between the habitat area and the community, and it will create sales and marketing jobs and a community solar component. IID is very interested in having this community solar component, he said, where users in the area will get the benefit of lower power costs. This land is so close to the SCE and IID substations it is a good location. "We do anticipate that many people will want to come and see the center. There is very high quality sun here in that it's available in greater abundance than anywhere else in CA. Lastly, it will provide research and training and we are hopeful there will be great community support for the product. It would put the Coachella Valley on the map because there are no other projects like this."</p> <p>Alcumbrac asked if this is a private company and Brothers answered yes. There will be a little visitors center in the front.</p> <p>Nokes asked how many jobs he anticipates will be part of this. He is planning for a little over 60 jobs. They can help IID stabilize the price of power over many years.</p>

		<p>The electricity would go through the IID grid. Nokes also asked what the total area of the project would be: 270 acres and they'll give it the necessary setbacks. It will end up being about 240 acres with setbacks, etc. Nokes asked how it would affect smaller companies that are into solar energy. Brothers said it shouldn't affect them at all. It will make solar a bit more popular.</p> <p>Mitchell asked if the business plan is to invest in the land and equipment and recoup their investment by the sale of electricity. He also asked how much would be the cost per Kilowatt. Brothers said he isn't quite sure but it will be competitive, probably at about 11 cents per KW. It will have to be negotiated with IID. SoCal Edison is also negotiating with them on the price. "I love IID so I'd love to make a deal with them," he said. A small portion of the land is also in the Enterprise Zone. Esposito asked if this presentation has been made to the Coachella Valley Water District yet. He said it hasn't. Gialdini announced that the CVWD will take over the Thousand Palms diking system that has been closed for many years and will complete the design work, which is 99 percent finished, and CVWD will build it in the next five to 10 years. It will start on the Washington Street end of Thousand Palms, he said. Alcumbrac asked if Paula Turner and her real estate company were handling the sale and they are. Alcumbrac asked if the site would be secure. Jeff said there would be a patrolman on duty. Saleh asked if there would be any noise or shadow effect that might affect Tri Palms. He said that the plans aren't finished but he would try to make sure there isn't any. Nokes asked why he is planning this on residential property rather than commercial and he said it's largely because of the electric substations that are right across the street from each other. Audience member Alice Tibbet asked about the size of the facility. Will they be two stories? He said that the visitors center will not be a large facility. She asked if there will be a warehouse facility. She said she is asking why they need so many acres. He said the solar panel orchards will take up the acreage. She asked if they are attractive. He said you won't be able to see them from Ramon but there are a few homes in Tri-Palms that would be able to see them and they will try to camouflage them. Paula Williams asked about the setback from Cook Street. He said it is a dedication of land and Cook Street probably won't be put through for quite a while. Another attendee asked how much of the load will come through IID. He said, possibly a Gigawatt. Saleh offered that this is a very exciting project, particularly with the storage component. He said that there's a lot of job creation around energy storage. Saleh brought up the fact that large solar facilities that have to transport energy across many miles are not as good as local facilities because so much of the electricity production is lost, up to 30 to 40%. Brothers said that the solar panels will come from all over the world, not just America. "That's just a fact of life," he said.</p>
PUBLIC COMMENTS		None.
COMMITTEE REPORTS	A.	Thousand Palms Community Center Report
		Reporting: Rob Carson , Thousand Palms Community Center Coordinator
		Desert Recreation Department got a grant from Kaiser Permanente for free use of swimming pools during the summer in Indio, Mecca and Coachella. Summer camp will start in about two weeks, starting June 13 th , and it will run five days a week. Almost all of the participants that are using the programs and lessons are Thousand Palms residents. Della Lindley uses the park for PE and it is missing a

		lot of grass because it's used all of the time. Mitchell asked what the TP Wii Night was. Carson said it was cancelled because nobody showed up.
	B.	Art Samson Thousand Palms Library
		Reporting: Alice Tibbets, Friends of the Library
		They're starting a summer reading program and finishing the adult program which will not begin again until the fall,.
	C.	Thousand Palms Chamber News
		Reporting: Patricia Saleh and Roy Nokes
		Nokes talked about this year being the 50 th anniversary of the Thousand Palms Chamber and the Chamber is trying to attract more businesses. He said he feels that after this recession there will be more businesses starting up. He touched on the Small Business Summit with Controller John Chiang. Information from that meeting is available at the Chamber.
	D.	Coachella Valley Energy Summit and IID ECAC Update
		Reporting: Patricia Saleh
		<p>"As a member of the Imperial Irrigation District Energy Consumers Advisory Committee, Saleh said, I attended The Coachella Valley Energy Summit held at the Palm Springs Convention Center on May 12, 2011. Keynote speakers included scientists, mayors from throughout the Coachella Valley, Supervisor Marion Ashley, Supervisor John Benoit, actor and environmentalist Ed Begley Jr., and spokesmen for CVAG, CVEP, IID, SCE and the California Energy Commission. Coachella Valley mayors spoke on the steps their respective cities have taken in helping their respective utilities meet the state's renewable energy goals of 20% by the end of 2013, 25% by 2016, and 30% by 2020. This fall there will be new, more stringent goals of 33% by 2020. City solutions include low-cost loans that Palm Desert has made to those willing to invest in solar panels and other upgrades to their homes and businesses; upgrading their respective city administrative buildings for more energy efficiency, etc. Panel comments indicated that the Coachella Valley is far ahead of most areas in adopting renewable energy solutions. However, Palm Desert Councilwoman Cindy Finerty reported that banks have begun to redline homes with solar energy liens on them and she and others are fighting it. Cathedral City Mayor Kathy DeRosa reported that Cathedral City is the first city in the Valley to reach Gold Status with the Desert Cities Energy Partnership and it was done with inexpensive solutions like replacing compact fluorescent bulbs in traffic signals with LED bulbs. No unincorporated area renewable energy solutions or steps were reported but Supervisor Benoit serves on the South Coast Quality Air Management District and talked about how much the air quality has improved since standards were first implemented. He said that when he was growing up in Anaheim they had 150 unhealthy smog days per year and now there's only one per year. Dr. Peter Gevorkian, CEO of Solar Analytic Solutions, stated that massive solar energy installations are not as good a solution as local solar panels on homes or businesses because 30 to 40% of the solar</p>

		energy is lost when it has to travel from, i.e. 1,000 miles away. Feds must match state grants, etc. He said that oil from algae is 2,000 to 5,000 times more productive than other fuel alternatives and can be produced on a small piece of land. James Boyd of CA Energy Commission said that CA is the third largest user of gasoline in the world, second only to the U.S. and China. This is one reason we need the high speed rail system. Jason Ackerman of Best Best and Krieger said that hundreds of projects have applied for BLM land and only two or three have gone forward. Siting is one of the most tedious aspects of producing alternative energy due to endangered species concerns, etc. Carl Stills of IID said that at 12 cents per KW hour, IID has the lowest rates in CA. Renewables will be 4 cents more expensive. Dave Kolk of IID stated that IID will be reducing its rates, in contrast to most utilities, because they bought better and became more efficient. The reduced rates will help to compensate for the rise in 2014 when renewable requirements kick in. Begley stated that doing an energy audit on your home or business is one of the smartest things you can do and do simple things like sealing your doors and windows and closing your fireplace flew.”
	E.	Supervisor Benoit Breakfast on Coachella Valley Economic Blueprint
		Reporting: Patricia Saleh
		Saleh said, “Supervisor Benoit and Thomas Flavin, new President and CEO of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, held a breakfast hosted by the Coachella Valley Mexican American Chamber of Commerce on May 17, 2011 at the Embassy Suites in Palm Desert. Discussion was on the Coachella Valley Economic Blueprint. Flavin recently came here from the Valley and talked about how they created new jobs in Burbank when three days after he took office as mayor Lockheed closed up shop and moved to Maryland, causing Burbank to lose 15,000 jobs at one fell swoop. He turned to a ‘media district specific plan’ to attract local television and movie studio jobs to Burbank and it worked. He talked about how thermal energy jobs at the Salton Sea could provide as many as 6,000 new jobs and how CVEP is promoting federal Foreign Trade Zone benefits and CA Innovation Hubs for technology, research parks, universities and other benefits to Coachella Valley businesses.” Saleh said, “I asked Flavin who represents the unincorporated areas like Thousand Palms on CVEP and he didn’t know where Thousand Palms was.” CVEP is a joining together of the cities, the County and businesses to finance projects that are needed in the Valley. “I’m hoping to find a way to get representation on the CVEP board from the unincorporated areas,” Saleh said.
	F.	Enterprise Zone Advisory Committee
		Reporting: Patricia Saleh
		Saleh said, “Governor Brown is trying to reformulate Enterprise Zones so they will no longer be able to create a focus in any particular area, like Thousand Palms, for businesses looking to relocate to get state tax credits. He would like to change the available tax credits to cover new jobs only, not jobs that were merely relocated to an Enterprise Zone, and limit tax credits to \$5,000 per business that would be available in all areas. Today’s tax credits are retroactive for 5 years. Under Brown’s proposal these would no longer be retroactive.”

	G.	Date Palm Overpass Groundbreaking followed by Small Business Conference with State Controller John Chiang
		Reporting: Roy Nokes and Patricia Saleh
		<p>Nokes reported on the groundbreaking ceremony for the I-10 Date Palm overpass in Cathedral City that will help eliminate traffic jams in Desert Hot Springs as well. He said that he and Saleh then attended the Small Business Conference in Desert Hot Springs held by the DHS Chamber of Commerce and co-sponsored in part by the Thousand Palms Chamber of Commerce. Saleh reported that Chiang began by saying that he has coordinated the return of \$1 billion in private property to its rightful owners and uncovered \$1.5 billion in overcharged and underpaid taxes, aided by Manuel Perez. He said that to find out if you have any money due you from any past business venture, stocks, insurance, etc. go to www.claimit.ca.gov. He got the names of many people in attendance and found that they all had money coming, so he suggested everyone go in and check their own name. Even Patricia Saleh had money coming from stocks she had in Palm Springs Savings & Loan.</p> <p>He said that although reports say that we are 7 quarters out of the recession, California has 12% unemployment so we don't feel it. He said that imports and agriculture are doing well but construction and real estate aren't going to recover for a "long, long time." He said that we have a skills mismatch here in that what people know how to do and the jobs that are available don't match. We have an expensive state to live in so we cannot retain low-paying jobs like manufacturing. The lower paying manufacturing jobs are going to Asia. California currently produces 20% of the U.S. gross domestic product. We used to produce 40%. He said that the problem in Sacramento with overcoming this that they look at everything politically and jobs are not political. They just need fixing. We need our low-income workers to get trained up so they can find higher skilled jobs.</p> <p>Saleh also reported that Joel Ayala of the Economic Development Department said that he's been traveling around the state talking about how they handle everything from starting a business to multi-national corporations, including other countries who want to partner with California. EDA wants to sell your products and there's \$5 billion that's been facilitated for future development. For the 7th year running <i>CEO Magazine</i> has named CA as the worst place to do business. He said that Texas does a good job of marketing their state but our governor won't let tax dollars go for marketing. Texas was rated #1 to do business with. We have more in product and highly educated workers and we should use the resources we have in place.</p> <p>Saleh continued that Valerie Martinez represented the California High Speed Rail Project, saying that our state will have 450,000 jobs added by 2035 and we cannot support the infrastructure to accommodate more freeways and the increase in traffic. If we don't do this by 2055 we'll have 50 million people and we don't have the space to build enough freeways. It costs a lot less to pay for high speed rail. Currently it will start in the Central Valley and the first leg will either go to San Francisco or San Diego and through lots of small towns. We'll be able to go from Union Station in L.A. to Anaheim in 10 minutes and travel at 220 miles per hour. It will be faster than any other high speed rail in the world, which is why they have to test it in the Central Valley first. It will be mostly a passenger rail and will haul only small products like Fed-eEx packages.</p> <p>Jill Andrews of the Small Business Administration, Saleh reported, said that the SBA has 69 offices across the U.S. If 20 people sign up they will bring an import-export seminar to the desert. There's an online training program on exports available 24 hours a day. She said that there are two Federal loans offered in CA</p>

		<p>and the SBA is there to help businesses get them.</p> <p>Nokes added that when he was stationed in Japan n 1957 they had the rapid rail. This is 2011 and we still don't have a rapid rail system.</p>
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS		None
Agenda Items for Next Meeting		<p>a) Design guidelines workshop.</p> <p>b) Community Council going dark for the summer.</p>
ADJOURN MEETING		Saleh moved to adjourn. Nokes seconded. Adjourned at 7:15 PM.
NEXT MEETING		June 30, 2011, 6:00 PM
		<p>Respectfully submitted,</p> <p> Patricia Saleh, Thousand Palms Community Council Secretary, 760-343-2440</p>