

Thousand Palms Community Council Minutes
 Thousand Palms Community Center
 31189 Robert Rd, Thousand Palms, CA 92276
January 20, 2011
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In Attendance:	X	Karen Esposito, Chairman
	X	Greg Pinney, Vice Chairman
	X	Patricia Saleh, Secretary
	X	Roy Nokes, Council Member
	X	Bob Alcumbrac, Council Member
	X	Michael Gialdini, Liaison to 4 th District Supervisor John Benoit
Call to Order:		<p>Chairman Karen Esposito called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She conducted the roll call and after the Pledge of Allegiance the minutes of 12/16/2010 were approved as corrected with the word Willis Palms instead of Willits Palms.</p> <p>Cathedral City Sphere of Influence Esposito said she once again misunderstood what we voted on at the last meeting concerning the Cathedral City sphere of influence request. Gialdini responded that he's decided we should rescind the two former Council votes on this issue and take a new vote since this vote only represents Council opinion and Supervisor Benoit would like clarity on it. Patricia Saleh moved to rescind the November motion to support the CC sphere of influence as long as it's over all of Thousand Palms. Roy Nokes seconded. Motion carried with Alumbrac, Esposito, Nokes and Saleh voting yea and Greg Pinney voting nay. Saleh then moved to rescind the December sphere motion as well to clear the slate. Motion carried with Alumbrac, Esposito, Nokes and Saleh voting yea and Greg Pinney voting nay. Saleh then moved to support the Cathedral City sphere of influence as long as it is over all of Thousand Palms. Saleh, Roy Nokes and Pinney voted yes. Bob Alcumbrac and Esposito voted no. The motion carried three to two.</p> <p>The Chairman called for Staff Reports.</p> <p>Mike Gialdini explained that the Supervisor has written a letter to LAFCO supporting the Cathedral City sphere as long as it is over Thousand Palms.</p> <p>Audience member Mike Ascani asked for the floor to state his thoughts on saying that Tri-Palms HOA, Ivey Ranch HOA and Thousand Palms are for the sphere is not correct. Ascani said that he believes the "vast majority" of people in Thousand Palms are against it. He said he feels it's a misrepresentation to say that these boards represent the will of the people. Gialdini said that whether they do or don't they were elected to represent the people and the people will be given a chance to vote. Saleh corrected this to say that the people will be able to protest and if enough protests come in then a vote will be held. Gialdini agreed and explained that the Community Council will continue after the sphere is granted but that Cathedral City will have a chance to comment on issues affecting their sphere area as well.</p>
STAFF REPORTS	A.	Fourth District Supervisor Liaison Mike Gialdini
		Storm Cleanup
		Gialdini said that the Riverside County Transportation Department is trying to get to all the streets that have sand buildup and clean them up.

		Medical Marijuana Dispensaries
		Gialdini said that all dispensaries that are operating are operating at risk. The Sheriff is currently working with the dispensaries to avoid problems while all of the governmental agencies work out how to handle this since it could throw the County into a lawsuit to try and close them down before the courts rule about their legality.
		Street Lights Out
		DRD has been notified that there are streetlights out in Thousand Palms and that Roy Nokes as a part of COPS went around and got a count of how many are out. Gialdini will make sure that it's kept straight who is supposed to keep them lit.
	B.	Riverside County Sheriff's Department
		Reporting: Lt. Bill Sullivan
		Bad News; One assault, seven residential burglaries, petty theft and one grand theft. Dec. crime is up
		<p>Good News: Sullivan reported that although the Sheriff has a \$14 million budget deficit Sullivan has been given an enforcement team to handle what is going on in this part of the county. He said that he has always felt that his deputies were one step behind the criminals but now he has been assigned two deputies to work in advance of the time an issue becomes a major criminal problem. He said that with a \$14 million deficit, Supervisor John Benoit and Sheriff Stan Sniff gave them extra resources because they believe Sullivan's team is trying to do the right thing for the right reasons.</p> <p>He also reported that his team has been given a police dog for this area. The dog's name is Rado. Sullivan said that his disposition is so great that he can be petted and will be a lover until he is given a command to attack someone. He has already helped capture a burglar at the Agua Caliente Casino. Councilman Nokes commented that it is his understanding that Thousand Palms will have three deputies on patrol during a given time plus these three new guys to answer 911 calls for service. Previously, he said, we had only three total.</p>
	C.	Code Enforcement
		Reporting: Riverside County Code Enforcement Supervisor II Dave Lawless
		No one present
	D.	CalFire/Roy Wilson Fire Station in Thousand Palms
		Reporting: Fire Captain Gretchen Gonzales
		<p>Gonzales reported that the Roy Wilson Fire Station has no budget issues and they're going to maintain the current staff of three persons – one being a paramedic at this station at all times, 24/7. They also are allowed to keep the resuscitation unit. That's good, she said, because we have a two in and two out rule that covers inside and outside the burning building. That rule means they cannot send a fire truck out without four people to cover the fire.</p> <p>We always want to be prompt, she said. She said that this month 911 calls were 70% medical issues, 3% fires and other types of public service assists and traffic collisions, etc. "So glad we have the staff to keep up the service," she said. Roy Nokes commended them for doing a good job.</p> <p>Nancy Gentry, a member of the audience, said that Santa Claus came into Thousand Palms on the fire truck and it was most appreciated. Rufus Cassadas, a</p>

		volunteer fireman, and Engineer Ken Coulson passed out candy canes donated by Walmart to the kids in Thousand Palms.
		Laurie Holk announced that the Environmental Health Dept. is combining two permits in the recycling transfer station so it will be a 3,500 ton facility. The recycling material will then go up to Cal Recycling. If anyone sees roadside dumping in Thousand Palms, she said, they can call Environmental Health in Indio and report it. For anything along Ramon Road all the way out to Thousand Palms Canyon, call 760-393-3390.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	A.	Architectural Theme for Thousand Palms
		Reporting: Liza Lizarraga
		<p>Lizarraga introduced Camille Acton from STK Architecture who reported that her organization was hired to create the architectural guidelines for Thousand Palms. She said that her company's job is not to impose any guidelines on the community but to help TP define what the people's vision is and try to help the community form its own unique vision. She said that there may not be a lot of development in the community right now but that the forecast is that the community will develop. The guidelines will not affect any current structures but it will affect new construction as it comes in. STK has devised a two-sided survey to get started on what the people would like to see in the guidelines. They will then work with the community to see how this survey will be distributed with the help of the EDA. They will tally them and organize the results. Gialdini asked if this survey is about residential or retail guidelines. She said it is more general, the overall visual effect of the community. There are architectural styles represented and whether or not they should be strict or general is still to be determined. Either way can be successful, she said. Street improvements and walkways are usually handled in 'Riverside but they can be handled according to these guidelines. She said that typically this can take a few months and they usually hold several meetings to decide how the ultimate guidelines are formed. The total process can take a few months, depending on what is being discussed. Gialdini asked Esposito if she'd like to form an architectural theme subcommittee and she asked for volunteers. Saleh volunteered and Roy Nokes asked Alcumbrac, being an architect, to serve. Alcumbrac agreed and Nokes said he'd also volunteer. Since only two Council members can meet, per the Brown Act, on an issues that will eventually have to come to a vote Saleh said Esposito would have to decide between the three volunteers. She appointed Alcumbrac and Nokes to be the subcommittee.</p> <p>Esposito then asked if Redevelopment funds will be continued per the news that Gov. Brown is asking to discontinue them. Lizarraga said that certain funds have already been allocated and will be retained. The Riverside County Board of Supervisors, she said, went ahead and voted to allocate additional funds to protect them for use in our county. Esposito then asked if Redevelopment funds are still remaining for a Thousand Palms monument sign at Monterey and Varner. Lizarraga said that RDA funds cannot be used to maintain a sign so there have been no fund requests acted upon to build one. Alcumbrac said that is was his understanding that the Desert Recreation District was to maintain these signs through the community's property tax assessment. Lizarraga didn't respond. But Gialdini said that since a vote to assess Tri-Palm Estates and landowners along Monterey for maintaining the sign and landscaping along Monterey lost, no vote can be taken to revisit the vote until 2012. Audience member John Stephens asked why the fence on Monterey is not solid block but part wood. Gialdini said it is a protection against the 100-year flood and that the team of engineers decided it would be best to have an area that could be broken down in case of a flood.</p>

		Stephens also asked who's supposed to maintain those walls if the wood deteriorates. Gialdini said he didn't know but he'll find out.
	B.	Report on Cathedral City Council Request before LAFCO January 27, 2011
		Reporting: Patricia Saleh
		Report not needed since it was discussed earlier.
NEW BUSINESS		None
PUBLIC COMMENTS		Crossing Guard for Della Lindley School
		Reporting: Bill Senso, Della S. Lindley Elementary School PTG President
		<p>Senso said that there have been no changes toward getting a crossing guard for Della Lindley School or abating the problem in any way. He said that from 3:00 PM to 3:25 PM the school has a problem. He said that the school has a problem because the majority of kids walk and that means hundreds of kids. He said it's parents' fault as well because they call their children from the other side of the street and the kids have to run across the road to get to their parents' cars. Parents who pick up their children are talking to them and at times almost run over the other children who are walking, he said. He explained that he was formerly in a wheelchair and almost got hit. He said that the battle is between the School District and the County and he doesn't see any progress. He just wants to let everyone know that we are at a standstill on that situation. He would like to see one crossing guard for one-half an hour before school and one-half hour at the end of the day. He would also like to see a crosswalk at Robert and El Centro. He said that the ice cream vendors are still coming out and because it's not on school grounds they cannot stop them.</p> <p>Lt. Sullivan asked how many volunteers are lined up to serve as crossing guards. Senso said there are 10 volunteers right now. Sullivan said that he'd like to get permission for COPS to get involved. They need more members of COPS. COPS are trained to serve on traffic control and they are already insured under the Sheriffs. He'd be willing to explore this. He would need the volunteers to be somewhat involved in the COPS operation and help cover other community necessities as well to qualify them. Sullivan said that he can't continue on with COPS if he doesn't have at least 10 people patrolling. Nokes asked who would stop him if he wanted to volunteer to be a crossing guard. Sullivan said that the Sheriffs wouldn't let citizens volunteer to be crossing guards because the School District and the County could be sued. Senso said that when children leave the school the School is still responsible for the kids until they get home. Nokes said that he'd like to see the PTG members join COPS and then they'd all be covered under Sheriffs insurance. Sullivan said he would look into the possibility.</p>
COMMITTEE REPORTS	A.	Desert Recreation District Report
		Reporting: Rob Carson

		<p>Carson announced that Stan Ford is no longer the director of the Desert Recreation District but that he is temporarily being replaced by another staff member. He said 23 kids are still enrolled in afterschool program. Karate is going well with 20 some kids enrolled and soccer has 40 kids. Youth Baseball League may move here next year.</p> <p>Roy Nokes said that he's been talking to a lot of kids and they said that they would really like to play baseball and basketball. Carson said he will try to get on Facebook and Twitter to reach the pre-20-year-old bracket to communicate their interests and get the word out. He's been out ill but will do it as soon as he can.</p>
	B.	Thousand Palms Library
		Reporting: Nancy Gentry
		Nancy Gentry reported that the Library funds budget will be cut for buying books, etc. However, the Friends of the TP Library will be taking new memberships and raising funds to help the Library. She pointed out all the programs and items that can be checked out at the Library for free.
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS		John Stephens said that he and Pauline Pearson started this sphere of influence battle and he wanted to clarify that if a protest is made, would it be registered voters or landowners. Saleh responded that it will have to be one or the other, per a percentage determined by LAFCO and that she can fill him in after the meeting.
		<p>Mark Weber, Manager of CVEZA, took the podium to make sure that people know that Gov. Brown has proposed eliminating Enterprise Zones. He said he wants to make sure that the Council understands how this benefits our community. He explained how someone unemployed who was on public assistance can become employed because the business employing him or her will get a tax credit as part of an Enterprise Zone. If the bakery, for example, invests in equipment they can also get tax credits from the State if they're in an Enterprise Zone. So far, he said, 2,054 people have been vouchered for tax credits in the CVEZ and 1,800 were hired for new positions. These are not replacement jobs but new jobs, reported by employers, he said. In the coming debates on the Governor's budget he hopes that removal of Enterprise Zones will not be permitted. Esposito asked how the Enterprise Zones were established. He explained that they cover portions of the cities of Coachella, Indio and the Unincorporated areas of Riverside County. Esposito asked him to clarify whether or not he wants our community to support the zones and does the Governor decide whether or not to stop these on his own or do the people get a vote on it. He said that Representative Manuel Perez is trying to put some sort of law into effect that will stop this from happening. Nokes commented that we have to fight to get these Enterprise Zones and if we lose these we will probably not get them back. Audience member Pam McKay said that she thinks the cities submit their own applications. Weber said that it's a competitive designation and they look at demographics and they look at communities in need.</p>
		Mr. Mitchell, an attendee, asked Weber to explain how the Cathedral City sphere of influence would affect the EZ designation. Weber said that a sphere won't affect it but if Cathedral City annexes TP it will go away unless CC achieves an Enterprise Zone on its own.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING		LAFCO Hearing on first Cathedral City sphere request set for Jan. 27, 2010. Nokes suggested that we put the crossing guard solution on the Agenda. Pinney asked to have Board terms discussed
ADJOURN MEETING		Nokes moved to adjourn. Alcumbrac seconded. Adjourned at 7:40 PM.
NEXT MEETING		February 24, 2011, 6:00 PM
		<p>Respectfully submitted,</p>  <p>Patricia Saleh, Thousand Palms Community Council Secretary, 760-343-2440</p>