



County of San Diego

FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMISSION

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MINUTES

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMISSION THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2004

Commissioners Present: Harriet Acton, Mary Allison, Joe Gerry, Hadley Johnson, Mike Sholders, Kent Trimble and Kenneth Wood

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Rand Allan, Chandra Wallar, Cid Tesoro, and Jiljean Walther

Guests: Irene J. Cunningham, Jeanne Cunningham, Alana Klepper, Stephanie Rudd and Patricia Sellers

The regular meeting of the San Diego County Flood Control District Advisory Commission was called to order by Chairman Joe Gerry at 9:35 a.m. on Thursday, March 4, 2004, at 9325 Hazard Way.

1. Minutes of January 8, 2004 Meeting

ACTION: Commissioner Allison moved to approve the Minutes of January 8, 2004; Commissioner Wood seconded; Commissioner Acton Abstained; Motion carried 5-0-1.

2. Other Business

Chairman Gerry stated that the Commissioners are under the Brown Act and cannot discuss or act on the proponent's presentation, but can certainly hear it and recommend to the County that they follow-up and bring advice to the next meeting and the presentation can be discussed at that time. Chairman Gerry then asked that the proponents introduce themselves, as above.

A presentation was given by the five guests regarding Irene Cunningham as being a flood victim due to the recent fires.

The home is located at 8580 Vista Del Verde in El Cajon. Mrs. Cunningham bought the property in 1974. During this time it has flooded on four different occasions. In the past 60 days, it has flooded three times. The fires have left the surrounding hills without vegetation and the excess flood waters cascade down the hills into a natural waterway that leads into an 8-foot by 5-foot reinforced concrete box culvert under Interstate 8 and continues into a 5-foot ditch extending 130 feet, flowing into a small 18-inch pipe. It is evident that this 8-foot culvert is flowing into the 18" pipe. Once the capacity of the 18-inch pipe is exceeded, the overflow flow is directed into Mrs. Cunningham's home, which is no longer safe to inhabit. Mrs. Cunningham has suffered loss of property and personal items each time the rains come and constantly deals with concerns about relocating and expenses, as her insurance does not cover this type of loss. The mental anguish has been extremely stressful.

The process of providing building permits to individuals involved in building the culvert was questioned. It seems apparent there was little to no consideration for the ultimate consequences when issuing the permits. Building an 8-foot by 5-foot culvert to divert water under the freeway to lead to nowhere (and without grates); building an 18-inch pipe under a public roadway downstream from an 8-foot by 5-foot pipe; building permit provided to build a dwelling directly in the pathway of a natural waterway.

Mrs. Cunningham has contacted approximately 22 people over the years, from Dianne Jacob to the Director of Public Works. The Army Corps of Engineers conducted a study in the 1980s and proposed that channels be built on both sides of the freeway to resolve this issue; it was only completed on the west side and partially completed on the east side because it was deemed too costly.

The presenters offered three feasible ideas:

- A. Buy out the property, tear down the dwelling, and put in a continuation ditch to handle the water.
- B. Construct a culvert by connecting to an existing 2-foot pipe that terminates at the cul-de-sac. This 2-foot pipe connects to an existing street drainage outlet that is directly across the street from the dwelling. This would require approximately 150 feet of 2-foot pipe.
- C. Build a culvert box approximately the same size as the one under the freeway to extend past the dwelling.

The Irene J. Cunningham Summary¹ was distributed, along with the original documents².

Commissioner Acton asked when the home was constructed. Mrs. Cunningham responded that the home was built in 1961 and that the two homes closer to the freeway were built later.

Chairman Gerry requested that County staff investigate the situation and relay that information to the Commission at the next meeting.

3. Expenditure and Status Report

Chandra Wallar stated that the Expenditure Report had been updated; the last Report was confusing in how the encumbrances had been added. This problem has been corrected.

FC3020 – Waterway Maintenance. Chairman Gerry stated that 45% of the budget has been expended as of December 31, 2003, and the emergency period after the firestorm is here.

Ms. Wallar stated that we have expended approximately what had been anticipated. Jim Torres' crew spent part of their time on some of the capital projects, so there has been a little less expenditure in this account. However, some of the charges associated with post-fire flood maintenance are not included and could potentially increase expenditures. Some of those charges maybe billed to FEMA for reimbursement. There is a plan to expend all of the funds and possibly even a little bit more before the end of the year. If that is the case, other portions of the budget may have to be moved into this category.

FC4100 – Ferry Ranch. Ms Wallar stated that this is paid off.

Commissioner Trimble stated that Sacramento does a re-write of their budget in June. If there is a substantial difference in the budget (even as much as 5% different) than what has been predicted, then there will be a special session.

FC4010 – District Master Plan. Cid Tesoro stated that SDA 1 and 8 should be completed later this year (consultant is Rick Engineering). SDA 5 and 6 should be finalized in approximately one month (consultant is Nolte Engineering).

Mr. Tesoro stated that a progress report presentation by Nolte would be on the Agenda for next meeting.

Commissioner Allison stated that she would like FEMA maps of Lakeside provided to her showing properties designated commercial and industrial and where the floodways and setbacks are located.

4. Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson Election

ACTION: Commissioner Acton moved to nominate Commissioner Mike Sholders as Chairperson; Commissioner Allison seconded; Motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Johnson moved to nominate Commissioner Kenneth Wood as Vice-Chairperson; Commissioner Allison seconded; Motion carried 7-0.

5. SDA 5 and SDA 6 Master Plan

Mr. Tesoro stated that he would like to reschedule this Item for the next meeting when there will be an informative presentation by Nolte Engineering.

6. Review Projects Presentation Matrix

Mr. Tesoro distributed "Current Flood Control Projects – March 3, 2004"³. The highlighted projects are completed. There is a substantial increase in completed projects this season. The other highlight indicates that Woodside Avenue Detention Basin received the \$1 million grant from the State to begin work. This is the Bron property whose owners have agreed to settle on a purchase price.

7. ALERT System

Rand Allan distributed "County ALERT Flood Warning System Pager"⁴, which was handed out to residents and "Sheriff's Flood ALERT Procedure"⁵, which was provided to the Sheriff's Watch Commander. Mr. Allan stated that there are several regions where the time between the beginning of the heavy rainfall to the start of the flooding is normally less than 30 minutes. Since, the emergency response time is typically much longer than 30 minutes a faster warning process was needed for certain areas affected by the recent fires. Due to the fires burning 20% of the county, the number parcels that are now high risk has risen drastically.

One way to get the emergency message out rapidly was to employ the use of a pager system for high risk residence and flood warning staff. Defined alarms for each one of the stations will be synchronized with the pagers. The software system now has the capability to assemble messages and send them out to staff via the pagers.

In the 2003 fires, the County assessed the flood threat on a parcel-by-parcel basis throughout the burn areas. Pagers were assigned to property owners whose parcels were deemed most at risk from severe flooding and debris flows. Currently there are 26 pagers on the system that include Flood Control staff (four) and Sheriff's Watch Commander (two), and high-risk county residents (20).

Each week a test message is sent to each resident who has a pager to let them know that the system is working. Prior to a storm, a pager message is sent out indicating the expected severity of the storm. During a storm, the flood warning system takes over, observing each one of the stations, looking for the three different severity levels, being ¼" an hour rainfall rate, ¼" in fifteen minutes, or greater than ¼" in fifteen minutes.

8. Other Business

Commissioner Allison stated that there is going to be a Rebuilding Fair in Lakeside on March 27, 2004, at the VFW Hall from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. There is a database in Lakeside of 500 families so far and there are more being added; each family has been given \$2,000. When there is an exempt status, San Diego Foundation will give an additional \$26,000.

Cid Tesoro stated that the County is spraying for the prevention of arundo re-growth in Harbison Canyon; there will be re-spraying conducted from time to time until the arundo is completely eliminated.

Chairman Sholders stated that there should be a "send-off" for Commissioner Gerry after the next meeting.

Chairman Sholders adjourned the meeting at 11:03 am.

ATTEST:

MIKE SHOLDERS, Chairman
San Diego County Flood Control
District Advisory Commission

CHANDRA WALLAR, Secretary
San Diego County Flood Control
District Advisory Commission

Minutes prepared by Jiljean Walther

1. Irene J. Cunningham Summary
2. Irene J. Cunningham Original Documents
3. Current Flood Control Projects
4. County ALERT Flood Warning System Pagers
5. Sheriff's Flood ALERT Procedure