

Ocotillo Community Park
266 Imperial Hwy.
Ocotillo, CA 92259
Monday, December 4, 2023
6:00 P.M.



Committee Members:
Michael Cuff, Chair
Darren A. Apedaile, Vice Chair
Ava M. Mead, Secretary
Frank Vrettas
Patricia Thompson

November 6, 2023, meeting minutes

Ocotillo Area Community Advisory Committee

The meeting was called to order by Michael Cuff, Chair.

Roll call, members present: Michael Cuff, Darren Apedaile, Ava Mead, Frank Vrettas, Patricia Thompson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Michael Cuff.

Meeting open for public comment:

Fernanda Vega, Community Organizer for the Imperial Valley Equity and Justice Coalition, spoke on the upcoming meeting for the Lithium Valley project. Michael Cuff asks, "how does the Lithium Valley Project benefit our community?"

Daniela Flores, Executive Organizer, for the Imperial Valley Equity and Justice Coalition, answered the question. There will be a tax of which a percentage (money) will be available to the surrounding communities.

Classes have been set up at Imperial Valley College to certify and prepare job seekers for the positions which will be available.

Planned improvements to the affected areas. Daniela Flores invites all to come to the meeting on November 18 for a more informative presentation.

Darren Apedaile says he has attended at least two other meetings and feels the program has many benefits for our community and county.

Approval of the order of the agenda; Patricia Thompson made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Ava Mead seconded; we will continue with the agenda as presented.

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Meeting minutes for October/September were presented for approval. Frank Vrettas makes a motion to accept the meeting minutes. Darren Apedaile seconded, the motion passes. Minutes will be filed as presented.

Michael Cuff covers discussion and action items of the agenda including update of the bylaws. He reads and accepts the OCAC mission statement and purpose. Michael Cuff requests an update of term dates to reflect our current terms. He requests changing the posting position of the Firehouse to the Post Office.

Current terms:

- Michael Cuff, Chair, 2 years; September 2024
- Darren Apedaile, Vice Chair, 3 years; September 2025
- Ava Mead, Secretary, 3 years; September 2025
- Frank Vrettas, 2 years; September 2024
- Patricia Thompson, 2 years; May 2025

Michael Cuff requests Ava Mead have agenda and meeting minutes ready and posted by 5pm the Wednesday prior to the meeting. Ava Mead has agreed to the request.

Blanca Acosta, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, will present our suggestions to the Board of Supervisors, we will receive the results of the BOS vote via email from Blanca Acosta.

Michael Cuff asks for a vote on the OCAC Logo created by Ava Mead. Luis Plancarte presents the logo to the board and attendees. Patricia Thompson makes a motion to accept the logo. Darren Apedaile seconded the motion. Logo vote passes and is approved.

Michael Cuff asks for an update on the Board of Supervisors website regarding the posting of agenda, meeting minutes and audio. Ava Mead reported that the postings are nearly complete. There was no meeting in July, this needs to be added to say, (no meeting). Ava Mead also reported that the meeting minutes for September were not posted as she was not yet finished at that time.

Blanca Acosta, Clerk of the BOS and/or Cynthia Medina Asst. to the Clerk of the BOS will update and change the post location of the Fire department to the new location of the Post Office.

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Discussion of a new meeting location was considered and denied. We will keep the current location of the Ocotillo Community Park.

Bureau of Land Management Ranger Daniel Baca, reports that BLM covers 1.4 million acres and has a unique mission. The Bureau of Land Management's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

To Protect the land and the safety of the public above all, is their focus.

The BLM consists of:

- The Field office
- The Administration Staff
- Visitor and public services
- The Recreation Branch

The Environmental Resource Plant consists of Biologists and Law Enforcement.

BLM has a budget allocated for 15 Rangers; they currently have nine. Nationwide it has 250 Rangers.

The Glamis Recreation area takes up most of the winter months due to the large recreation population.

In the summer months they change focus, to education and training the Staff and visitors on safety, law enforcement.

To do anything in the city limits requires a nexus. Without a report or concern the BLM has no jurisdiction.

Daniel Baca explains there is a memorandum of understanding between the county and BLM, regarding ticketing and laws.

Ava Mead asked can BLM help with a designated OHV area.

Michael Cuff asks what are their major concerns?

Daniel Baca lists the Top three problems BLM has:

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- Cross country travel out of the desert
- Target shooting, no Steele core ammo and littering, not picking up after shooting.
- Public safety, dui's, alcohol, driving recklessly etc.

Michael Cuff asks if BLM allows for a public ride along. “Yes, they do”, said Daniel Baca.

Darren Apedaile asks who has jurisdiction on private land regarding OHV, Daniel Baca says the way around that would be under the (off route travel) rule. (Mica Davies route name)

Daniel Baca says the Rangers have no jurisdiction on private property.

Beverly Kelly would like a stop sign or light on 98 at the railway crossing as it is dangerous.

Luis Plancarte speaks on AB119 and the vacancy to the Imperial Valley Healthcare District Board of Directors, the goal is to pull all hospitals together as one Group. One Group but will be separated by districts. The Imperial Valley Healthcare District Board of Directors is currently taking applications for a committee member to represent the Ocotillo and Seeley areas. The deadline for applying to the IVHD Board is Nov 16, 2023.

Cynthia Medina, creator of The Imperial Valley Post Card contest, presented the winning post cards.

Michael Cuff thanks Luis Plancarte for his service and acknowledges Luis Plancarte's term ends in 14 months. Michael Cuff and Luis Plancarte agree they both hope to accomplish much more before the term ends.

Luis Plancarte spoke for John Gay, as per the standard operating procedures it is a priority to clear roads and water drainage paths to lessen the chances of flooding.

Ava Mead asked Luis Plancarte for copy of his notes from John Gay. Luis Plancarte will have Blanca Acosta send them to me.

Michael Cuff asked Beverly Kelly and Darren Apedaile if there had been improvements to the area since our last meeting?

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Darren Apedaile said Moltar Road has improved but still needs work, there is still work to be done on the surrounding areas and a berm which needs to be moved.

In a previous meeting the Sheriff's Department said they would need a letter from John Gay stating approval for vehicles to pass through the wash below the Coyote Wash Bridge for them to not ticket.

Regarding the letter, Luis Plancarte says the Sheriffs will not provide a letter as requested. (this is a miss communication)

Luis Plancarte says there is a County Organization; The Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC), they meet every three months. John Gay will speak with them and will communicate with us for the specifics necessary to have designated OHV areas.

Grading and repairs are complete, the mile of Evan Hewes Highway and Frontage Road.

Michael Cuff asked for documentation for the cost on the mile of Evan Hewes which was repaired. Luis Plancarte will investigate and report when available.

Imperial Valley Community Foundation CEO Bobby Brock explained they have "been growing its wings" as regionalism takes hold and people start to view themselves as one community. There are several concerns in the area, and the IVCF ensures funds are directed to where they can be put to best use.

Ocotillo Wind (OW) takes its commitments to communities seriously. Ocotillo Wind saw a way to make a large impact and donated \$3 million to the IVCF to administer via three funds: OW Community Fund, OW Education Fund and the OW Imperial Valley Fund.

Bobby Brock will try to attend our meetings regularly to stay informed on issues affecting our community. He says let's work together, The IVCF Advisory Committee and ours.

From 2008 to 2009 the project was revamped to create more opportunities for the community. They are trying to work more in our area.

Ava Mead asked how we can get earlier notice for grant openings?

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February 1, 2023, the next grant opportunity opens, it will close March 18, 2024

Bobby Brock says there are Funding endowments available now through 2034.

January 13, 2024, will be the next Ocotillo neighborhood clean-up project.

Andy Renfro is permitted to have all metal for recycling.

A few local people on the IVCF Advisory Committee are Terry Atkins, John Wood, Frank Vrettas, and Andy Renfro.

The foundation has grant writing training opportunities for nonprofits.

Michael Cuff asks if Bobby Brock knows about the new state requirement for all residents to have curbside pickup? Bobby Brock explains this was put in effect in January of last year. He says the Imperial County Board of Directors had filed a stay on the requirement to allow for planning in areas where curbside is not feasible.

Member Reports:

- Thursday November 18, 2023, will be the Lithium Valley Project Community meeting.
- Friday November 19, 2023, will be Movie Night at the Ocotillo Bible Church.
- Thursday November 23, 2023, will be the Annual Ocotillo Thanksgiving Meal at the OCC.
- Saturday November 25, 2023, will be the Testicle Festival at The Lazy Lizard Saloon.

The next meeting date will be December 4, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.

Recorded and Submitted by Ava Mead Secretary

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