

Making the Sweetwater Valley the Best Place to Live

P.O. Box 232, Bonita, CA 91908 [www.sweetwatervalleyca.org](http://www.sweetwatervalleyca.org)



**SWEETWATER VALLEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING  
November 2, 2016**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Michael Seiler at the Bonita Museum and Cultural Center. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mr. Ray Traynor, our guest from SANDAG in his capacity as Operations Manager, SR 125 Toll Road. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of Our Country followed by a moment of silence for armed service personnel, law enforcement and first responders.

Directors present: Mike Seiler, Jim Woodford, Tom Pocklington, Steve Stonehouse, Tony Tieber, Judy Tieber, Ken Pitney,  
Members present: Irene Blacklock, Glen Kopp, Mark Todd, Sharon Clayton, John Taylor, Harriet Taylor, Sheri Todus, Hal Todus,  
Guests present: Michael De La Rosa, Dana Erickson, Connie Ralph, CHP Officer Pete Thepkulchon, San Diego County Sheriff's Dept Julio Garcia

**MINUTES:** Motion by Tony Tieber, second by Ken Pitney to approve minutes of October 5, 2016. Motion passed.

**TREASURER'S NOV. REPORT:** Accepted as written.

Checking Account Balance:	\$ 814.13
County Grant Funds on Deposit:	\$ 7,152.00
Certificate of Deposit Balance:	\$ 3,452.18
Ending Balance:	\$11,418.31

(Previous Balance was \$11,568.26)

Treasurer noted the checking account is getting low so he may have to pull money out of a CD. Mr. Seiler noted that we fund the website maintenance from our Association checking account. He also explained the County Grant Funds are there to fund a new website design, build and deployment. Report accepted as written.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT:**

CHP Officer Pete Thepkulchon reviewed the stats for September and October 2016. Patrol time was reduced due to his attending training sessions during these months. He is still catching speeders on Winnetka, DUIs on our main roads (Bonita, Sweetwater, Valley Vista) are up, and he now has the ability to collect and display collision information. We had discussion about cars ignoring the school crosswalk blinking lights. Others have complained as well. Officer Thepkulchon there several times in the morning, but never caught any violators. Judy Tieber noted that she observed drivers ignoring the lights in the afternoon. Officer Thepkulchon will try later in the day to catch violators.

Sheriff's Dept. Representative, Julio Garcia told us there was not a lot of crime last month in the Bonita area. There was one stolen car, a theft from a car, and crime against a business in our area. One resident was burglarized three times. Tony Tieber described a scam that recently happened in the Bonita Highlands. A tow truck stopped to pick up a parked car on Steeplechase Rd. Luckily a neighbor saw this and challenged the driver because there was no



identifying information on the truck. Mr. Garcia was aware of this, said all they really wanted was the car registration. In fact, the Sheriff's Dept has already picked this guy up, and he is currently in custody. The State may be transitioning our car registration information to bar coded technology as a way to keep our information more safe. This is still a few years away. President Seiler thanked both officers for their informative presentations.

President Seiler changed order of meeting to enable Mr. Traynor to present next.

#### **CONTINUING BUSINESS:**

As background information: A few meetings ago we had a discussion about the detrimental effects of "toll avoidance" traffic on some of our Bonita roads, namely, San Miguel, Proctor Valley, Bonita Rd, Briarwood, Sweetwater, Corral Canyon and Central.

We requested the opportunity to discuss this issue with a representative of SANDAG/toll road management to explore possible ways to mitigate this community impact. Mr. Traynor gave a very informative presentation covering the toll road history, agreements with CALTRANS etc. This presentation is available on our website under the "Minutes" tab in the menu bar. We asked Mr. Traynor to prepare for the following questions:

- What were the financial "drivers" SANDAG used to make the 125 toll road purchase?
- Why can't the toll be removed from San Miguel Ranch Rd to SR 54?
- When will the tolls be completely lifted?
- Why does SANDAG, in role of regional transportation oversight, ignore the negative effects of toll-avoidance drivers on local community streets?

The take-away information from his presentation did nothing to alleviate our concerns. The State and toll road developers agreed that if the developers built the San Miguel Ranch Rd interchange, they could charge a toll on traffic using the road between SR 54 and San Miguel Ranch Road. This is called the Gap Connector. Done deal, not going to change. SANDAG reduced tolls in 2012 from 20-40% in an effort to attract more drivers. This did work and traffic use increased substantially to an average 40,000 trips/day. The toll avoidance traffic volumes were actually projected to impact surface streets way back during the whole toll road permitting process. Mr. Traynor pointed out that, based on his recent discussions with County engineering staff, the planned volume projections for toll avoidance traffic is pretty close to actual experience. The County approved the toll road and knew at that time there would be negative effects on our neighborhoods. Our roads are under County jurisdiction, not SANDAG, so we have to work with County to develop solutions to our traffic problems. The dilemma, of course, is how to handle the traffic without destroying our community character. The engineers would like to widen the road, but the citizens want to maintain a rural 2-lane road.

The tolls will continue until 2036. During the interim, the financial commitments to the bond holders will result in ever increasing annual costs to pay down the debt. So either the traffic volumes increase with the current rates to keep toll costs sufficient to cover the debt or toll rates will have to increase in order to stay current with the debt structure. His recommendation is that we go back to the County and ask for help, especially along San Miguel Road where so many homes are impacted. County has never bothered to come up with a viable solution, so we will remain in this untenable situation for many years. Mike Seiler asked if Mr. Traynor knew the level of service on San Miguel Road. He didn't know. Mr. Seiler explained the level of service is about how well a road tolerates the amount of traffic experienced. Level of service "A"

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means traffic flows right through. However Level of service "F" means traffic is bumper-to-bumper congestion. The question was asked about any opportunity to modify debt structure by having a district-wide tax. No, but SANDAG is looking at a debt restructure option. From the slide presentation several attendees realized that the toll between San Miguel Ranch Rd and highway 54 is proportionately larger than the toll between other toll road interchanges, even though much of that highway portion was built by CALTRANS. President Seiler encouraged Mr. Traynor to look at that discrepancy with an eye to reducing the toll. The association plan is to have Mr. Traynor and a County traffic/roads engineer back to meet with us at a future meeting date, possibly during the first part of 2017.

### **ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES REPORT:**

Office of Supervisor Greg Cox: Michael De La Rosa reviewed the previous evening's meeting of the Sweetwater Community Planning Group held at the Sweetwater Community Church basement where several residents attended to voice their dissatisfaction with a pending plan to build a large ACE Storage facility just to the east of the Bonita-Sunnyside Fire Station. It was a great opportunity for the community to come together, review the plans, talk to the developer and County officials and express their concerns.

We also heard that Supervisor Cox has authorized \$50,000 to help fund a bike skills park feasibility study. Two areas under consideration are a section of the Pinery leased space within Summit Park and space at the Summit Park. Willow Street bridge construction will get underway again in November-December. And we were reminded of the Sweetwater District plan to begin the water pipeline replacement project. That is on the horizon for us.

### **COMMUNITY FORUM:**

Fire Department: Tom Pocklington encouraged everyone to have SDG&E come and perform home safety inspections before we start using our heaters.

Roads: Tony Tieber had nothing new to report.

Website: Tony Tieber announced that the current website maintenance agreement has been awarded to a local company, Keep-It-Growing. The new system design is also getting started. Mr. Tieber is working with Keep-It-Growing on this project as well.

Planning Group: Steve Stonehouse told us the Community Planning Group meet November 1<sup>st</sup> in the basement of the Sweetwater Community Church to provide additional seating capacity for the community members interested in the proposed ACE storage facility just east of the Fire Station. The facility developer and his team was present to answer questions and give a short presentation to the group. New elevation drawings were posted to show the facility buildings relocated more to the north and the east of the property in an effort to provide more open space for neighbors to the south. Community members expressed concerns about crime, traffic increases, explosions, reduced property values etc. Most citizens are against building the facility. County staff from Planning and Development was present to lay out/explain the formal process and what goes into a scoping letter.

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Membership: Sharon Coleman was not present.

Senior Volunteer Patrol (SVP): Jim Woodford was on vacation for the month and did not have a report. He did suggest that perhaps he could get some volunteers to start their shifts earlier in the day so they could be a presence at the corner of Belle Bonnie Brae and Central. Perhaps a volunteer patrol car will make drivers think twice about ignoring the blinking crosswalk lights.

October 2016 Sheriff Senior Volunteer Activities:

Hours on patrol	212	Number of patrols	18
Number of miles driven	989	Vacation checks	100
YANA visits	3	YANA calls	18
Citizen Assists	7	Traffic control	1
Number of volunteers	19		

Michael De La Rosa mentioned that County will be canvassing our open spaces on November 8<sup>th</sup> related to the “Project One for All” interdiction effort to help the homeless living in the Sweetwater Riverbed. We all look forward to a “numbers-driven” report at our December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Michael Seiler expressed concern that, based on the Bonita community unrest over the storage facility, it appears evident that few residents actually know we have a community planning group and understand the rules/limitations under which it functions. Since the Civic Association has a website, it seems appropriate to start including Planning Group agendas and minutes on our website where residents are used to looking for information and community events. Tony Tieber will connect with Harriet Taylor and start working out the process to give her access to her own Facebook page and, later, her own section of the new website. Mr. Seiler suggested using a Facebook page because that will “push” the information out to all who have “friended” the Facebook page owner. Hyperlinks to County website notices/information would then be easier.

Tony Tieber moved to adjourn, Steven Stonehouse 2<sup>nd</sup>. President Seiler adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Judith A. Tieber, Secretary