

Winchester-Homeland Municipal Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 10, 2023

Place: Winchester Community Center, 32655 Haddock Street, Winchester

Attendees:

Winchester-Homeland MAC: Andy Domenigoni, Chairman; James Horecka, Secretary; Thomas Laury; Jimmy Sheldrake. Absent: Kim Wortman.

Members of the Public.

Call to Order: Call to order by Andy Domenigoni at 6:30 PM.

Flag Salute. Introductions.

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion JH; seconded JS: Unanimous.

Approval of the Minutes from June 8, 2023:

Motion TL; seconded JH: Unanimous.

Staff Reports:

- A. Supervisor Chuck Washington's Office; Robyn Brock, Chief of Staff, introduced Melissa Morfin, direct assistant to Robyn Brock, and is Supervisor Washington's liaison to Public Works & Community Services.
 - Great news! Our "Welcome to Winchester" signs are all installed! Thanks to the MAC for design & locations. All were totally stoked to hear this wonderful news. (The original idea predates the formation of the MAC!)
 - In August, there will be a County Health and Safety Resource Forum ahead of the MAC meeting. Many departments will be present. Juan Perez is slated to appear, as well as other representatives for health and safety, etc. The Expo will start at 6:00 PM, before the MAC.
 - There will be a "State of the District" address on October 18th, at Pechanga Resort Casino, 7:00 - 10:00 AM.
 - Q: Who is in charge of the speed limit? A: Traffic Dept. R.B. will check when the last study was done.
 - Q: What is the status of our Community Plan? A: R.B. will get back to us.
 - C: Grateful for Supervisor Washington's contribution to Winchester Days (coming up on October 7th.)
 - Q: Regarding the proposed Industrial project: Was there a follow-up? A: Yes. County will set up a meeting with the applicant. It is the County's intent to follow the desires of our community.
- B. Sheriff Department update; Deputy Holtkamp:
 - Stats: June: 335 calls, 6 arrests. July: 359 calls, 4 arrests.
- C. California Highway Patrol; no representative present; no report.
- D. Cal Fire Winchester Station #34; no representative present; no report.
- E. EMWD Updates; Alma Ramirez (Phil Paule also present):
 - School is back in session. Alma noted that all the district's schools that are in EMWD's service area are now equipped with drinking fountains featuring bottle fillers.
 - EMWD will be present at Winchester Days.
 - Q (AD): Rate increases? A: Public hearing on this matter was June 21st. Issues discussed. Passed, unanimous.
 - Coming up, a new state bill regarding renters: In 2024, if you're a landlord, a tenant's unpaid water bill would be bumped to the property owner's tax bill.
 - Q: Construction sometimes closes streets for months; what can be done? A: Street closures are limited by County policies. EMWD works closely with the County. Alma reminded us that were still just 40% built-out; there is much construction yet to come. They're also trying to catch up, in the wake of the Pandemic.
- F. Code Enforcement; no representative present; no report.
- G. Emergency Management Department; no representative present; no report.
- H. 36th District Assembly member Eduardo Garcia; no representative present; no report.
- I. Senator Kelly Seyarto's Office; Joe Fuentes:
 - Mentioned various bills in process.

- Left flyers for the Veteran's Expo, slated for November.
- J. Valley Wide Park & Recreation District; represented by Craig Shultz:
 - Diamond Valley Aquatics is down to being open on weekends only, as school is back in session.
 - "Oldlympics" is slated for September 15th thru October 3rd.
 - Dog Days: October 7th, in Menifee.
 - Autumn Elegance: November 4th. Left flyers.
- K. Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians; no representative present; no report.
- L. Winchester Land Use Committee update; Cindy Domenigoni:
 - Cindy, LUC Chair, stated that she's taking the summer off. Next LUC meeting: Sept 6, 3:00 PM, her office.
- M. City of Menifee update; no representative present; no report.
- N. Other Departments and Public Agencies; None.

New Business:

- A. Guest Presentation: CalTrans, represented by Andrea Harlin, Government Affairs Liaison, & Moe Bhuyian, Chief Traffic Operations Surveillance.
 - Thanks for prepared list of questions to guide them.
 - Q: What is the time line for the beacon at SH 79 at Haddock Street? A: CalTrans engineers and school district leaders met. CalTrans initiated a project for a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB). CalTrans did a study, finding that the intersection met sufficient warrants. Examples include numbers, timing, accidents, sight distance, etc. The project is expected to start in 2024. They must complete studies, engineering plans, bidding, etc.
 - Q (Angela D.): Would the PHB be functional by the start of school in the fall of 2024? A: Harlin will check. The current schedule shows the completion date to be November 15, 2024.
 - C: Northbound drivers often pass right of cars queued turn left onto Haddock, driving on the dirt shoulder, beyond which there's no curb or sidewalk protecting children. A: Moe expressed that this is a driver behavior issue. Quoted figures that 94% of traffic incidents are caused by human behavior; 3% road, 3% vehicle issue.
 - Q: Is this just a flashing light? A: Horecka briefly explained a PHB. Also mentioned nearby examples to see.
 - C (Cowdery): Some places set lights in the pavement. R: CalTrans follows established standards.
 - Q (JS): This has been going on for ages; is there a way to accelerate the process? A: Steps must be followed.
 - C: Adding a sidewalk at the east side of SH 79 would offer a big boost to safety for our children.
 - Q: Could cones be used? A: Again, driver behavior is the biggest challenge. (Also: Cones are often out there.) Remember: Pedestrians always have the right-of-way.
 - C: The wait to cross the highway is often very long, due to traffic.
 - C: Northbound Winchester Road lacks a dedicated left-turn lane to Haddock Street. This is a big safety issue!
 - Q (RB): Did CalTrans look into a left turn lane? A: Unclear. However, may be looking into a rumble strip.
 - Q: Stop sign at SH 79 & Stowe Rd.? A: Not likely. Complicating matters, Stowe Rd offsets about 40 feet.
 - Q: Left turn lane on SH 79 for Patterson? A: Not likely: Very sharp angle, narrow road. Patterson would have to be realigned, widened, and greatly improved to standards, plus significant drainage improvements.
 - Q: What is the status of the Realignment of State Highway 79? A: Funding....
 - Q: Does CalTrans do sound walls? A: Yes. Contact CalTrans via the CalTrans Customer Service Portal. You may also report issues, ask questions and more. You'll get a response, with a ticket number to track updates.
 - Q: How about a stop sign at Sultana & SH 74? Dangerous! Four corners unimproved; three deaths recently. A: File a request via CalTrans Customer Service Portal.
 - Q: The medians were built along SH 74, from the 215 into Hemet. Did they help? The process of building them damaged the highway. A: Moe would have to look into this.
 - Q: Examples of warrants required for a signal? A: Number of vehicles, volume, accidents, speed, school, etc. Moe noted that there's no shortage of funding for safety-related improvements, when warranted. Partners championing a location can help; e.g. our school district, RCTC, etc.
 - Moe Bhuyian offered his personal observations and opinions: Every two hours we lose a life on California roads. Alas, the death rate is going UP, not down. We all share responsibility. CalTrans does all they can, by design and engineering, to avoid and mitigate incidents. "We must work together, in partnership, to improve." He cited DUI billboards, which he helped set up, finding new ways to rapidly deploy public safety notices. He closed by asking all present to, "Do YOUR job as my partner!"
 - C (AD): "Realign 79!"
 - All thanked the presenters for an informative presentation.

- B. Guest Presentation & One-Time Staff Report: RCTC – Italia Gracia, Community Engagement Manager.
- Ms. Gracia told all that she is here to help! She also lives locally.
 - There will be an update on the status of the realignment of SH 79 as information become available.
 - RCTC Staff was given direction to develop a realistic timeline for the project. Also scope & costs. The work is still on-going.
 - They will also study the potential strategy of phasing the project.
 - Q (AD): The SH 79 Realignment project has been running ~40 years. He noted measures in 1988 & 2004. The north part was completed; the south part was, too. The middle remains. We'd like a timeline! Locals, especially affected property owners, are anxious. The uncertainty is affecting lives. A: She'll take to RCTC.
 - Q (JS): Does the EIR have an expiration date? A: It won't expire.
 - Q (JS): What is the current ridership of the Metrolink train at the South Perris station? A: She'll get answer.
 - Q (Angela): When can RCTC present their info to us? A: First, Staff must do their study, etc. RCTC Staff is set to report to County by the end of this year.
 - C (JS): There are properties affected by the realignment. The specter of condemnation clouds the title of a lot.
 - C (Brock): When RCTC presents to the Commission, it will be open to the public.
 - All thanked Ms. Gracia for listening.

Public Comments:

- None.

Councilmember Reports and Comments:

- Tom Laury: As a 'new' person on the Board, he expressed dismay to hear "Not in our lifetime," (re SH 79).
- Andy Domenigoni: Thanks again for our wonderful new "Welcome to Winchester" signs!
- Andy Domenigoni: "Build SH 79!"

Agenda Items for next meeting:

- Riverside County Third District Supervisor Chuck Washington will be our special guest.
- There will be an EXPO, beginning at 6:00 PM, before our MAC meeting.

Adjourn Meeting:

- The next WHMAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 14, 2023, 6:30 PM, at the Community Center.
- The WHMAC adjourned at 8:01 PM. M:JS / S:TL