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**Planning Group votes to deny
EIR/MUP for Saint Vincent de Paul
A Children's Village
homeless and foster child home**

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MERIT - MISSION STATEMENT

“The primary objectives and purposes of MERIT shall be to provide education and information that will 1) protect and maintain the natural resources, 2) promote responsible use of ground water, and 3) preserve the rural character of the community.”

Planning Group Recommends Denial of Major Use Permit and Environmental Impact Report for Saint Vincent de Paul’s Project - A Children’s Village

At the Monday May 22, 2006 meeting the Campo /Lake Morena Planning Group reviewed the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this project. The EIR had been sent out for public review and comment on 20 April 2006. The 45 day comment period ended June 5th. The Planning Group had a month to review the EIR which consisted of a 300+ page summary report and three volumes of exhibits totaling over 1,000 pages. At the meeting SVDP made a 30 minute presentation, A 30 minute question and answer period followed for both the public and the PG. Then a 30 minute comment period gave everyone in attendance an opportunity to give their opinion. There were ample opportunities for everyone in attendance to participate.

After the 90 minute discussion concluded, the Planning Group voted 6-3 to deny this project and to send that recommendation to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. PG members Slaff, Driscoll, Noblitt, Carmody, Kreger and Esry voted to deny and Johnson, Bates and Shea voted to approve.

The PG meeting was recorded in audio and video. A transcript of the meeting was prepared and submitted to DPLU as part of the record of public comment for this project. The EIR document is still on file at the Campo/Morena Village Library and can be found on the DPLU website. The public can still submit comments on this project and you are encouraged to do so. While those comments will not be part of the EIR or the revisions to the EIR, they will become part of the public record and will go to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors if the project goes forward.

A number of written comments were filed by the public. These included the obligatory support letters from SVDP employees. MERIT submitted two very extensive comment letters highlighting the many deficiencies in this project and the many errors and omissions in the EIR. There was a number of letters from our community pointing out the problems with the project and the EIR.

The Planning Group meeting and the written comments from the public on the EIR addressed the land use issues. The review was not to consider issues like foster care but was to deal only with land use issues. The PG meeting did that very well.

The EIR and all the comments have been sent to SVDP which has 45 days to respond to EACH comment. Comments must be submitted by July 24th. Once SVDP responds we go through this process where DPLU replies to the response, SVDP responds, DPLU replies to the response, SVDP responds, and DPLU replies. This can take weeks and DPLU can give SVDP extensions of time even though DPLU would not give MERIT a two week extension for preparing a response to the EIR. Many of the comments detailing deficiencies in the EIR and the project’s design can result in a change to the project. One example of a change to the project could be the elimination of the massive church planned to

accommodate 540 people even though there are only 200 children on site. The current anticipated schedule is that DPLU will receive SVDP's final revision in 3 months (mid September). At that point DPLU undertakes a review of the revised project and the revised EIR. Board of Supervisors Policy I-119 requires a timely and appropriate review of an EIR (in coordination with the County Environmental Coordinator) prior to its submittal to a County decision maker (PC and BOS). This review is to minimize the likelihood of successful legal challenges to projects. Then there would be a final decision to either send a revised EIR and revised MUP to the Planning Commission (mid October) or to send a revised EIR and revised MUP back to the public for re-circulation and further review and public comment. This would happen at the end of November 2006 and MERIT anticipates there will be a re-circulation due to the many deficiencies of the project.

A few of the deficiencies brought up at the Planning Group meeting include 1) the massive size of the various buildings which are 10,000 to 12,000 square foot edifices with 34 foot high roofs compared to adjacent houses of 2,000 square feet with 23 foot high roofs, 2) the clustering of six very large support buildings in a small area of the SVDP parcel when homes in the area are spread out on 8 to 15 acre parcels, 3) the design of the buildings which do not comport with the surrounding ranch homes, 4) the Waste Water Treatment Plan which has no operator, 5) a massive church building set very close to the scenic highway of Lake Morena Drive and dominating the visual landscape, 6) a church seating 540 to serve a foster child population of 200, 7) a very large non denominational church when a new non denominational church is less than two miles away and with St. Adelaides planning to build a new Catholic church, 8) a density of development equivalent to more than 110 homes on 118 acres when County standards require parcel sizes of at least 5 acres and surrounding parcels average 10 acres., 9) the clustering of 5 foster child homes with each home 4,000 to 4,800 square feet into a group making a urban apartment. Many of their problems involve for environmental issues and a total disregard for the rural character of our community.

The issues considered in the EIR are land use issues. If this project goes to the Planning Commission only then will the other issues be considered. Those include expansion of the project to include homeless children, the problems SVDP had with foster children they brought to Campo in a pilot program three years ago, the failure to look at alternatives to the project, the distance to support facilities a project like this needs (El Cajon and San Diego), conflicts with County priorities and mandates, the need for this project to be in an urban area, etc.

The community will again have an opportunity to comment on all the issue when the project is considered by the Planning Commission. MERIT will keep you informed as the project is analyzed by DPLU.

Campo Volunteer Fire Department

The Department is having a Pancake Breakfast on July 4th from 7 AM to 10 AM at the Fire Department. The cost is \$4 for adults and \$3 for children. This event is an excellent opportunity for a good breakfast and to see the new living quarters for the volunteers and the new equipment the Department has obtained which helps protect us for medical and fire emergencies. You can also meet the volunteers and thank them for their service to the community. Special accolades are due to Chief Mitchell Sanchez who has done an outstanding job managing the department and effecting continual improvements in the departments readiness and training. The department has an excellent website which can be accessed at www.campofire.org And special thanks are due to the Campo Fire Auxiliary which is raising money to support the volunteers and the department.

Elections for directors of the Campo Fire Board were held in June. Janette Mills, Roger Challberg and Dudley Mills were reelected to new terms. Robert Hume, a Campo Hills resident, was elected to fill the fourth position on the Board

County Ordinance Banning Storage Containers

The Planning Commission heard the proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance POD 06-002 to ban ocean going containers as accessory structures in residential and agricultural areas. There were

numerous complaints about the ordinance. There were also numerous complaints about the lack of public notice and that Planning Groups were not consulted. The first the public knew this Zoning Ordinance Amendment was to be considered May 19th was when we received the Planning Commission agenda on May 13th. The proposed ordinance had not even been finalized so we had nothing to review. This is an important issue affecting dozens of residents in this area and throughout the Back Country. Despite its importance we could not even have the opportunity for the Planning Group and the community to comment. Because of the complaints the Planning Commission rescheduled the case for July 14th so DPLU can collect public comments and, if necessary, amend the proposed amendment.

MERIT testified at the Planning Commission about the lack of notice and about the problems with the proposed ordinance and its impact on Back Country residents. We are submitting a written statement and will testify on July 14th. We strongly recommend that anyone who has a sea going container on their property should read the ordinance, submit their comments and testify on July 14th if possible.

You should also send your comments to Supervisor Jacob who asked for this ordinance in response to questions about containers used legally for storage in Julian. We recognize that containers are growing in popularity for storage because they are relatively inexpensive and are very secure and stand up to our weather and winds. Many residents have been told there was no need to obtain a permit of any kind; however, that is not true. And that is why the enactment of the ordinance as presently written will mean Code Enforcement can cite you. You will have to remove the containers immediately once the ordinance is effective.

MERIT strongly recommends you comment to DPLU and/or you attend the PC meeting and any subsequent PC meetings that discuss this and that you communicate to the Board of Supervisors who will make the final decision.

This ordinance will prohibit all containers in residential areas - period. Even those few containers that are legal (most are not legal) will have to be removed in two years. Illegal ones would need to be removed immediately. The only places where these containers will be legal is in Agricultural Zones (A70 and A72) and in some zones with Special Purpose Use Regulations (S80, S87, S88, S90 and S92). But all legal containers must be modified to look like a normal frame or stucco building with siding and a pitched roof.

This proposed ordinance will be a hardship on many of us. You need to take action.

Campo Hills

We wish we could tell you something about Campo Hill. The Planning Group has requested that the Planner, Matthew Wright, come to a PG meeting to update us. He says he can not do that without approval of his superiors and that has not happened. Phone calls to Mr. Wright have not been returned and he has not called the PG Chairman.

KB Home has not come back to the Planning Group with more information on the commercial building they must put up. It has been five months since KB Home promised to return to the PG with details on the building so they PG could vote on the plan. There has been no communication from KB Home and the file at Department of Planning and Land Use has nothing other than their December 8, 2005 initial application for the building.

There are confusing reports about the status of building homes at Campo Hills. They can not build more than homes without the commercial building. The question is how many homes can they build without the commercial building - and the number varies from 100 to 125 to 150 depending on which document you see in the DPLU files and with whom you talk.. We are trying to get more information about home building and about the commercial building.

Planning Group Meeting June 26th at 7 PM Community Center

The agenda includes Committee reports from the Camp Lockett Park (Jean Bates), Regional Airport Review - (Co-chairs S. Driscoll, R. Kreger), County Trails – Shirley Driscoll, Disaster Preparedness Meeting – L. Johnson, Liaison, Comprehensive Ground Water Study - (Co-chairs L.

Johnson & J. Carmody), Wireless Communications – Bob Shea, Liaison, Jacumba Crossing – Bob Shea and Transportation – Bob Shea, Liaison

Old Business - a) Tom Parry – Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) will give a power point presentation on setting up speed limits and will discuss other concerns our community has with traffic on Buckman Springs Rd. (45 min.) This item will be heard out of order following approval of minutes. b) Discussion and comments to TAC regarding their guidelines for Prohibition of Long-term Parking at Recreational Vehicles on Certain County Roadways. (15 min) This item will be heard out of order following item (a) above, c) Discussion regarding possible changes to Standing Rules. d) Discussion regarding adopting standing rules for membership on sub-committees, e) Harvest Glen project has been brought back to this Planning Group for a vote. The project has now been increased from 38 lots to 40. It is located on the east side of Buckman Springs Road near Lake Morena Drive. (Presentation and possible vote – 15 min) f) Department of Parks and Recreation has asked for comments on their proposed amendment of the Park Land Dedication Ordinance – increasing residential developing fees from \$400 to \$3,446 per dwelling unit, g) The Heald project (a 4-lot split on Hartfell Road) has been notified by county that their AEIS is not complete per CEQA and they will need to submit additional information. We had voted to continue this project in May until the owner could return to us with more information – basically is it considered a minor (4-lot split) or a major (5-lot split) sub-division, h) Graves Cellular tower – still awaiting word from Tom Graves

New Business - None

Next meetings - July 10, 2006 - Star Ranch and July 24, 2006 - Regular Planning Group Meeting

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2080

The Ladies Auxiliary of VFW Post 2080 continues to provide delicious meals for the community. On the First Friday of every month they offer a Rib dinner with all the trimmings, and the Third Saturday is their famous Steak Fry. Start time 5:00 P.M., until the food runs out.

Both the Auxiliary and the Post membership are always looking for new members to help serve the community and our Veterans by conducting fund raisers such as the Hog Wild celebration each October, lots of bake sales and raffles, in addition to the dinners. They provide scholarships for our local youth, donate to the VFW National Home for Children, and provide fun and entertainment to local youth each Spring through the Easter Egg Hunt and Bike Rodeo. To become a member, one must have served in a foreign war, or be a relative such as spouse or child. For further information as to how you can serve your community call Jane at 478-5417.

Mountain Empire Thrift Shop

You can always find a good bargain at our local Thrift Shop located on Sheridan Road adjacent to the Campo Community Center. Even better bargains can be found at their annual anniversary sale on July 13th and 15th, with 50% off all items at check out. The Thrift shop also accepts donations during the open hours between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. each Thursday and Saturday.

Support of our local thrift shop helps provide scholarships to our local youth as well as providing funds for many local activities such as Little League and Cheer.

Proposed Freedom Ranch Expansion

At the May 22nd Planning Group meeting Glen Webber, Executive Director of Freedom Ranch, announced their plans to expand Freedom Ranch's program in the coming decade. In the past few years Freedom Ranch has acquired properties on both sides of their operation. Residents have been curious about their plans and there have been some rumors circulating. Mr Weber wanted the Planning Group to know and wanted to respond to the rumors.

Mr. Weber said they wanted to double their capacity from the current population of 50 in their alcohol and substance abuse program. A Major Use Permit would be required and that would come to the Planning Group for their vote. While Freedom Ranch has some preliminary drawings, the expansion planning is in the initial stages and it would be at least a couple of years before the MUP could be presented to the community.

Campo Groundwater Studies

Groundwater quality and availability is a major concern for residents throughout the Back Country. Nowhere is the concern more critical than in Campo/Lake Morena. The Planning Group supported an application by the County to the State for a grant of \$250,000 to conduct a comprehensive groundwater study of the Campo Creek Basin. The grant was not awarded. The Planning Group established Groundwater Subcommittee which is collecting information which will help the Planning Group make better recommendations and will help the community with information. The Subcommittee is under the very capable leadership of Larry Johnson.

The Mission Statement adopted for the Subcommittee says:

Mission Statement - The purpose of the Subcommittee is to work with County, State, Federal, Indian and International organizations along with private and public groups to accomplish a Comprehensive Hydrologic/Hydrogeologic Study of the Basin(s) within the Planning Area. To analyze the results of the Study with the aid of the above groups and implement a new Groundwater Management Plan for the Planning Area based upon Standards acceptable to the local public and the Campo/Lake Morena Planning Board. This will involve coordinating with all above organizations, assisting with the search for funding, helping maintain focus and progress toward the goal.

The Subcommittee is requesting the Planning Group adopt a revised Mission Statement at this Mondays meeting. *Mission Statement The purpose of the Subcommittee is to work with County, State, Federal, Indian and International organizations along with private and public groups to accomplish a Comprehensive Hydrologic/Hydrogeologic Study of the Basin(s) within the Planning Area. To review the results of the Study with the aid of the above groups and recommend a new Groundwater Management Plan for the Planning Area. This will involve coordinating with all above organizations, assisting with the search for funding, helping maintain focus and progress toward the goal.*

The County requires applicants for land use projects in this area to do detailed water studies. The County is also preparing a study of Groundwater for the EIR required for General Plan 2020 Update. This study is being conducted by Jim Bennett, County Groundwater Hydrologist and the study is progressing well. Jim is looking for a Fall 2006 draft.

The Groundwater Subcommittee meets monthly at 7 PM at the Community Center on third Tuesday of the month although there will be no meeting in July. The next meeting is August 15th. Public participation is welcomed and the discussions are very informative. Subcommittee members are working on Legal Issues, Water Quality, Water Study Model and Data, Grants and a Groundwater Studies Library. A website for the subcommittee was recently established www.campogroundwater.org and is in the process of adding information such as internet sites for groundwater, articles on groundwater, minutes and agendas for meetings, etc. The site is being updated and expanded daily and we recommend that you check it frequently.

Update on Proposed Development Projects

Last month we gave you a list of development projects proposed or in the planning stages. Not on that list was a project being developed by Dr. Bohannon. This projects involves 480 acres on a parcel south of Highway 94 across from the Rancho del Campo Sewer Plant and west of Castle Rock and Campo. The parcel touches the US Mexico border.

The number of homes is uncertain but we understand they are considering 60 to 80 homes. Those would be added to the 1,120 homes and 10,000 daily trips on Buckman Springs the County would estimate as the impact of all the development projects. A subdivision map has not been filed but the owner's agent is working on access issues and is trying to develop a map.

While most of the development projects are proceeding slowly, MERIT was advised Miller Ranch is back on the market. George Carroll exercised his option, made the purchase at \$2.2 million through Westminster Ltd., a Chicago entity. Mr. Carroll has put the property back on the market at \$2.5 million but there may still be plans for a development if the property does not sell.

Harvest Glen Ranch (the Old Buckman Springs Ranch) on the east side of Buckman Springs is a

285+ acre property originally proposed for 38 homes. The developer missed a number of deadlines for submission of reports and studies but DPLU gave them extension after extension. The project has been referred back to the PG for consideration (see the agenda above). The fact that DPLU has requested the PG to vote on this project is a joke. The required Groundwater Investigation Study, which was submitted very recently months after the deadline, has not even been reviewed by the County Groundwater Hydrologist. There are serious problems with the water supply on some of the lots where an 800+ foot well only produced a little over 1 gallon per minute which is well below the minimum required. This project will require a substantial redesign before it can be considered. DPLU has sent the project to the PG with no documentation on the project and with no information on the failures shown in the Groundwater Investigation. In addition, the developer apparently is in Chapter 11 bankruptcy and their phone is disconnected and no one can be reached to comment on the status. **MERIT strongly recommends that everyone living in the vicinity of Harvest Glen come to the PG meeting to learn what is happening and to express your concerns.**

Legacy Ranch is still in the process of changing their project to eliminate the lots on the west side of La Posta Road. These parcels would have had driveways going on to La Posta which would be quite dangerous. The extent of the redesign is not clear but the final project may have only a few parcels on the east side of La Posta. When the details are finalized we will include them in a future newsletter.

Star Ranch will be making another presentation to the Planning Group on July 10th and this will be a good opportunity for you to learn first hand the status of their project.

Community Improvements

Supervisor Jacob made two grants out of her Community Projects Fund that will help our community. The first of those grants was \$40,000 to the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum to construct public restrooms at the Museum. The second grant was for \$34,120 to Mountain Health to purchase materials needed to install a well at the Little League fields.