

MERIT

Mountain Empire Resources Information Taskforce

Post Office Box 665

Campo, CA 91906-0665

619-478-9549

MERIT@sciti.com

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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.”

Container Ordinance

While the results are old news, the County and DPLU withdrew the proposed Container Ordinance that would have virtually eliminated the use of containers for storage on your property. A number of Campo residents were at the Planning Commission to speak against the Container Ordinance and joined a number of people from other Back County Planning Areas to advise DPLU of the many problems with the ordinance and the negative impacts we would suffer. We do think this ordinance will come back in a few months in a much more palatable form. We will keep you advised.

Planning Group Elections

On the November ballot in addition to the Airport Location vote and the usual raft of initiatives and bond issues, Campo/Lake Morena will be voting for Planning Group members. When our community voted in November 2002 for an elected Planning Group, you elected four residents to a four year term. They included Bev Esry, current PG Chair and the individual who successful organized the campaign to have an elected group instead of the Sponsor Group, Jean Bates, Bill Slaff and Pat Noblitt. All four are running for re-election. Five additional candidates are running; Denise Morse, Rick Northcote, Wally Palmer, Debra Ford, and Karl Brady.

We can not overestimate the importance of this election to the future of Campo and Lake Morena and Cameron Corners. In essence this will be a vote either for slow growth and growth at a rural pace and for community character or a vote for almost 500 homes at Cameron Corners and support for a number of other high density large projects with traffic and lots of people and substantial changes to our rural life style. Both sides will present many self serving arguments but MERIT sees this election in white and black terms. At this point we do not know the views of Mr. Brady, but we know that Noblitt, Slaff and Esry have shown over the last four years their commitment to slow growth and Jean Bates is on the opposite end of the spectrum and believes in a lot of growth for this area. MERIT talked to Denise Morse (owner of Habitats for Harmony and a Healthcare Consultant) and she appears to want Campo to grow slowly in keeping with the rural character we all enjoy. Rick Northcote, Wally Palmer and Debra Ford support large high density projects. Your decision is very simple - yes for what we have or no for something else.

There will be a lot of information coming to you in the next 100 days. This newsletter will carry the candidates statements for you to read and consider. We will also recommend the candidates MERIT believes will do the best for our community.

Candidates Forum for Planning Group and School Board

Prior to the Planning Group meeting next month (Monday September 25th) the candidates for local office have been invited to attend a meeting where the public will be able to ask questions and where the candidates will be able to make a statement. The candidates - both PG and School Board - and issues - the Campo Volunteer Fire fee proposal - will be discussed in a public meeting for the voters to learn more about the issues and the candidates. The tentative schedule is for the Candidates Forum to convene at 4:30 PM at the Community Center prior to the September 25th PG meeting. The Forum is sponsored by the Campo Business Association, MERIT and Kiwanis and refreshments will be served. The format of the meeting is being worked out and will be detailed in the September MERIT newsletter. Absentee voting starts on October 9th and the election is on November 7th.

Information on Voting in November

Registration to vote is open year round. The MERIT Recycling Center has Voter Registration forms available. You can also obtain a separate form to vote absentee and those form are at the Recycling Center also. There are two absentee forms - one is specific for this election only. The second is for permanent absentee status. If you complete the permanent absentee form it will apply for this election and all future elections. Absentee ballots will be mailed on October 9th.

Forms and information are available at www.sdvote.com

Star Ranch

Discussions between Star Ranch and the County over Star's proposed development are on going. In the last month there were two meetings between DPLU and Star to discuss concerns DPLU has regarding the project. Star Ranch has been told that their plan is too spread out and that the areas outside of the Cameron Corners area have much greater housing density than the County thinks is appropriate. DPLU has asked Star to redesign the project to bring the density closer to Cameron Corners and to make their design more reflective of the goals and objectives and land use patterns suggested for General Plan 2020.

If you would like to review the recommendations in GP2020 go to the Planing Area map at <http://www.sangis.org/LibraryService/DownloadedFiles/0621gp5jun05sponsormorena.jpg> or http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/cnty/cntydepts/landuse/planning/GP2020/pubs/prop_maps.htm

At this point the next move is for Star Ranch. They will need to decide what they want to do and then come back to the County. MERIT assumes they will also come back to the community if they develop a new plan.

Campo Lake Morena Business Association

The Campo Lake Morena Business Association meets at 5 PM on the third Friday of the month at the Campo Diner. The next meeting is 15 September 2006. The group is now officially incorporated as a 501(c)(6) organization and this month elected their Board of Directors and new officers. The Officers are Dan Lawrence, President, Randy Lenac, VP, Raquel Morrison, Secretary, Gene Vick, Treasurer. The Directors include the officers and Rick Northcote, Arvilla Johnson, Lynn Neff, and Wally Palmer. You can visit their website for a lot of additional information. Go to <http://www.clmba.org/> The mailing address is PO Box 33.

The Business Association has been working for a year now. One thing the group has brought to the community is an information sign to help orient and inform tourists and visitors. The sign was erected the first of this month and while there are some enhancements to the sign that will be completed later this month, this information source is badly needed. You can see the sign at the west end of the Cameron Corners retail area. The Business Association should be applauded for this contribution to the community.

The Business Association is preparing a map that will be part of the sign. The map will show the locations of the various businesses that are member of the association. Notices and announcements of community wide interest should go to the Business Association. Meetings of the Association are open to all business owners, their representatives, nonprofit groups and community organizations, farmers and ranchers and other interested members of the community..

Campo Fire Department Spaghetti Dinner

While the event is a few weeks away mark your calendars for Sunday October 8th from 4 PM to 7 PM for the Campo Fire Auxiliary Spaghetti Dinner which is a fund raiser for the Campo Fire Department.

New and Accurate Back Country Phone Book Planned

Many of us continue to use the old book despite the many inaccuracies and missing listings. A new directory complete with residential and business listings is being put together now for distribution in January 2007. The directory will be complete with basic residential listings provided at no charge and will also contain business listings and advertising. There will be sections with information on things you need to know like local emergency numbers and recreational amenities in the area and

museums and local attractions including annual community events. Residential listings may include extra lines of text for a small annual fee. The Back Country Phone Book will be distributed to the Back Country areas of Barrett, Boulevard, Campo, Descanso, Dulzura, In-Ko-Pah, Jacumba, Lake Morena, Mount Laguna, Pine Valley, Potrero and Tecate.

It is important to know that residential listings will only be voluntary and you will need to complete a form to be listed. The form is available at a number of locations in the community including the Shady Rock video store, East County Lumber, the Cameron Corners Convenience store and the Community Center. You can also register on line at www.backcountryphonebook.com Listing information must be submitted no later than October 15th, 2006. Include your last name, first name, address (please state if you don't want it published) and phone number to: BCPB, PO Box 247, Campo, CA. If you would like to advertise, please contact Carmen DeLaGuerra-Sylva for the Campo area at 478-5958 or Tony Neff for outside the Campo area at 478-5479.

VFW

Just a reminder that the VFW continues to provide a wonderful meal at their Steak Fry which is held on the third Saturday of the month. The next schedule is for September 16th and October 21st. Due to the increase in costs including gasoline the price has been increased to \$12.00 but it is still a great value.

The annual "Hog Wild" celebration normally in October will be held a week earlier on September 30th this year due to a schedule conflict with the Fire Department event.

Like many VFW is struggling with the increased costs of water and sewer and also with a substantial rent increase. Contributions and support are always needed and will be greatly appreciated.

Planning Group Agenda for August 28, 2006 meeting - Community Center 7 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Items (l) under Old Business and (a) under New Business will be heard out of order at this time:

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a. We have received copies of correspondence between county and MERIT pertaining to the failure of that department to monitor Campo Hills and sites several problems that they have failed to address. (See item d under Old Business)
- b. We have received notice from county that they are proposing to adopt a Negative Declaration for their County Noise Element Update. A copy of the draft Negative Declaration was attached.
- c. We have received documentation similar to the presentation by Tom Parry of TAC in June regarding speed limits and their legality. A copy is available should anyone want to review it.
- d. The Railroad Museum reports that they have lost one of the two large oak trees. Close inspection shows the trees to be distressed. On another front, Dianne Jacob has found the \$40,000 needed to install real restrooms at the Campo Depot, but volunteers are needed. Please contact Brain Elmore if you are interested in volunteering. Volunteers will get first chance at the wood from the fallen oaks.
- e. Supervisor Dianne Jacob will be holding a coffee for all interested residents of our community on September 29th at the Mtn. Empire Community Center from 8:30 to 10:30 am.
- f. We have received a notice from county they are intending to adopt a Negative Declaration regarding the amendments to the County of San Diego Subdivision Ordinance and Resource Protection Ordinance. Comments on the proposed Neg. Dec must be received no later than Sept. 15th. Copy is Available.
- g. We have received a copy of the bill for the 2nd quarter 2006 billing from Mtn. Health & Comm. Services for use of this building for Planning Group Meetings in the amount of \$1050.00 – no action required.
- h. CalTrans has sent us information on the application deadline for Transportation Planning Grants due October 13, 2006.
- i. The Historic Old Highway 80 Bill – ACR123 passed both houses and is now in enrollment and will be chartered by the Secretary of State.

VI. COMMITTEES/LIAISON REPORTS: (Two minute update unless noted.)

Camp Lockett Park (Chair – J. Bates); County Trails – Shirley Driscoll; Disaster Preparedness Meeting – L. Johnson, Liaison, Board critique and discussion on recent Horse Thief Canyon Fire (10 min); Comprehensive Ground Water Study -

(Co-chairs L. Johnson & J. Carmody) Discussion & possible vote of Website license. (5 min); Wireless Communications – Bob Shea, Liaison, Transportation – Bob Shea, Liaison, Jacumba Crossing – Bob Shea Liaison

VII. EXPENSES: Please report any valid expenses.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Possible vote on the possibility of proposing future bicycle races going through Jacumba rather than Campo. Jacumba has expressed an interest in having the them there but so has our Business Association Group here in Campo. This item has been held over from our March 2006 meeting.
- b. Discussion regarding possible changes to Standing Rules. MAY BE TABLED UNTIL SEPT. MEETING
- c. Discussion regarding adopting standing rules for membership on sub-committees. (Discussion and Possible vote -30 min)
- d. Discussion and possible vote on sending a letter to Dianne Jacob and DPLU requesting their assistance in getting answers to some of the decisions made regarding Campo Hills as well as DPLU's failure to follow this development through – does this reflect their handling of future projects in our area? (15 min)
- e. FYI-DPLU has notified KB Homes the first initial review of their Commercial Lot Extended Initial Study is incomplete per CEQA and requires additional information and/or revisions.
- f. Discussion on the possibility of Star Ranch requesting changes from the Board of Supervisors to Policy I-78 and I-135 and the position this Board wants to take regarding this issue should it go before the BOS – (15 min).
- g. FYI-DPLU has told Star Ranch if they want their support, they will need to concentrate the increase in density and intensity of use closer to the Village Center as proposed by GP2020.
- h. FYI-County has notified Debra Gardner of Nextel Communications that DPLU will recommend denial of the Graves cellular project P04-061 should they go ahead without the proposed landscaping. This is the “shed” type structure that we approved with the condition of not using Pepper trees. County has recommended they substitute a fire resistant evergreen tree with similar coloring to the natural vegetation such as Toyon, Liquidamber or Rhus Lancea. They have also recommended substitutions for native shrub species which would be more fire resistant and they include Sage (except black sage) Ligustrum, Calif. Redbud, Monkeyflower, or Common Yarrow.
- i. FYI-Graves Cellular tower – still awaiting word from Tom Graves and DPLU, but we have received a copy of a notice sent to applicant stating that DPLU will not accept a non-camouflaged structure and they will not support an extension of this project until a meeting with them takes place, nor will they accept any further submittals until the issue is resolved.
- j. FYI-County has determined the Harvest Glen project to be incomplete as defined by CEQA and has requested additional information/revisions from them.
- k. We have received a Replacement Parcel Map for the Vaughn Project that does not seem to be any different than the one we denied in January. Discussion and possible vote. (10 min)
- l. Glen Webber of Freedom Ranch will explain their MUP modification they will file soon. (3 min) This item will be heard out of order following Approval of Minutes.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- Patrick McDonough (858-495-5162) of Department of Parks and Recreation will give a 30 minute presentation on What They are Doing and Where They are Going. This item along with item (I) above will be heard out of order following Approval of Minutes.
- Discussion and vote by the Planning Group Members regarding the offer of a Political Forum to be held just prior to our September meeting. (10 min.)

X. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

XI. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING September 25, 2006

MERIT-Campo Website Now Up and Operating

MERIT has set up a website to share information on the three objectives spelled out in our Mission Statement - natural resources, groundwater and rural character of the community. Check the site at www.MERIT-Campo.org The site has been open for less than a month and there is much work still to be done. However, all the MERIT newsletters - all 54 - will be on the site. This newsletter you are reading is already posted and a number of the past letters including the first one back in June 2000 are online. The remainder are being added daily.

The Planning Group Agenda and Minutes of Planning Group meetings will be on the website. These will include the Preliminary Agenda, which is usually out 10-12 days before the meeting, and the Final Agenda which is out 3-4 days prior to the meeting. Initially we will have minutes for the PG meetings of the last 12 months and we will then work towards going back to at least 2000.

The website has the capability for you to search for information and there is a bulletin board and a feedback section. The website has a link to the Community Calendar that can be found at www.campo-online.com

One section will be devoted to all the known development projects being considered for the Campo/Lake Morena Community Planning Area. We intend to provide copies of applications and letters to and from the developer and Department of Planning and Land Use relevant to each project.

The cliché that “it is a work in progress” is true here. We do want to hear from you if there is information you would like to see on the website. Our goal is information that you can use.

Groundwater Subcommittee for the Planning Group

Most of the residents in this area are concerned about groundwater. The Planning Group has set up a Groundwater Subcommittee under the chairmanship of Larry Johnson and Joe Carmody. The Committee meets on the third Tuesday at the Community Center at 7PM..

The Subcommittee has a website that is up and running. The Subcommittee is reviewing and adding articles and technical reports and reference materials. The objective of the Subcommittee and the Planning Group is to provide information on the important issue of groundwater that will enable you who live here and the Planning Group which represents you to make wise decisions on land use issues.

The website is www.campogroundwater.org and we believe you will want to bookmark this site and check it out frequently.

Post Office Celebrates 9-19-06 - Zip Meets Date

Someone clever recognized that our zip code 91906 is also a date on this year's calendar. The post office has setup a celebration of this once in a lifetime event. The celebration is Tuesday September 19th at 10:30 AM at the Community Center. Refreshments will be served. The program includes the VFW Color Guard, 11th Cavalry reinactors with their horses, a history of Camp Lockett presented by Roger Challberg and Ernest Collier, retired Buffalo Soldier.

Status of Pending Development Projects

There have been no changes to the projects from what we reported last month with the exception of Star Ranch which we discussed above. However, replies from DPLU to A Children's Village/SVDP EIR will be completed at the end of next week and will be available. Some other projects have actions pending and we will report all the information to you in the next newsletter.