

DEDICATED TO A CONTINUING RURAL ATMOSPHERE

Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Meeting
EF/HG Fire Station
December 4, 2013 7:30 pm



From the Chair

By Bonnie Baumgartner

Happy Holidays!

Welcome to all the newcomers to our little slice of heaven known as Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Betsy Keithley for once again stepping up to the plate and publishing our "Chaparral". We realize that not everyone looks for our emailed Elf Alerts, so we thank Betsy for undertaking this publication to keep the EFHG Valley better informed.

Our community motto is "Keep It Rural", an increasingly challenging task as the land available to build on in SD County, especially west of the I-15, is almost gone. Our little community of EFHG has been blessed over the years to have pro-active individuals, and organizations working hard to procure open space surrounding us.

Read more in an update from TECC, The Escondido Creek Conservancy, in this newsletter.

In 2006, the Board of Supervisors permitted the Harmony Grove Village Project that we now see being graded out in our eastern portion. Gone are the cows grazing on the hill, instead we will have new neighbors in a 'suburban' setting. Hopefully they will enjoy the space around them as much as we do, and join us in the fight to protect it. Read more about HGV in an update in this newsletter.

In the same vein, our neighbors to the north of us in Eden Valley are being challenged by a proposed development in Eden Valley, the Valiano project that seeks even higher density, more grading, is gated, and totally goes against the barely 2 year old General Plan that was adopted after 10 years of hard work and millions of your taxpayer dollars. Learn more about this project and what you can do to join us in voicing your opposition to it -in the "Valiano Project " update.

Our trails are a hallmark of our rural community. They are our "sidewalks" without the hardscape and unnatural run off of actual sidewalks. They are our safety zone when out for walks. Trails are made for walking, bicycling, and equestrian use and all of our trails are on private property, allowed by the generous use of your neighbors. NO MOTORIZED VEHICLES ARE PERMITTED Read about current trail projects in the Trail Update.

The Elfin Forest Fire Department is one of the only volunteer departments left after the County re-organized Fire Service and established the San Diego County Fire Authority after the Cedar Fire in 2003. The President of the Fire Board, Nona Barker, will give you an update on the merger study currently ongoing with the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District, and an update on where the County is going on fire protection.

The County of San Diego passed a tiered Equine ordinance that became effective this October. On properly zoned, property you may now board up to 3 horses without a permit as long as the setbacks, structures, manure management are up to code and up to best management practices. Read more in the Equine Ordinance Update.

Join us at our annual Holiday Dessert Potluck, Wednesday, December 4th at 7:30 PM at the Fire Station. Bring a favorite dessert to share and come meet your neighbors. The Town Council will acknowledge members of the community for their service this year.

NEW EQUINE ORDINANCE for SD COUNTY

By Bonnie Baumgartner,

On October 11, 2013, the County of San Diego adopted revisions to the zoning ordinance pertaining to commercial horse business. The ordinance did not change any of the regulations for "horsekeeping" which is how the county defines personal horse ownership. In most areas of the county where it is appropriately zoned "horsekeeping" does not have a limit on the number of horses you can own and keep IF you comply with all other pertinent zoning requirements, setbacks, best management practices for manure, vector control etc. Horsekeeping is an agricultural use.

However, if you keep horses for hire, breeding, boarding, raising, riding, or performing for commercial uses you are a HORSE STABLE. The County developed a Tiered System to define the different levels of Horse Stable. For the complete equine ordinance, please go to: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/pds/advance/Equine/AdoptedEquineOrd10285.pdf>

Whether you 'horsekeep' or are a 'Horse Stable', ALL of the county zoning requirements must be met for structures, pastures and Best Management Practices, including setbacks, dust, noise and vector control, manure management, and dark-sky lighting requirements.

In commercial establishments, i.e. horse stables, the county does not distinguish between those horses owned by the property-owner and those that are boarded – all horses are counted equally. All the following regulations pertain to USABLE acres for horses. Land used for your house, pool, and garage etc. are not included. There must be off-street parking for visitors.

Here is a brief overview:

Tier One:

Boarding of up to three horses is allowed without any permit. You may give lessons, but riding academies, events, or breeding ARE NOT ALLOWED.

Tier Two:

Boarding of ten horses per acre or up to 50 horses on 5 acres requires a Zoning Verification Permit. Riding Academies, stables with parties, events (shows), camps might fall here, if they meet all requirements.

Tier Three:

Boarding of ten horses per acre or up to 100 horses on 10 acres requires an Administrative Permit. This would apply to larger stables in Harmony Grove.

Tier Four:

More than 100 horses on more than 10 acres requires a MUP- Major Use Permit.

In our EFHG Valley most people will fall under Tier One or Tier Two. The good news is, if you are currently boarding, or currently have only 3 horses on your property and meet all the other requirements as to setbacks, noise, dust, parking etc, you are legal as is.

IF you have more than three horses, and are boarding, you will need a one time Zoning Verification Permit, which is obtained at the 'counter', requires a detailed plot plan to scale to confirm usable land, and proper setbacks etc. It will cost up to \$1,023. Once the Zoning Verification Permit is obtained, it stays with the property, and does not have to be renewed.

For a complete list of "Customer Facts regarding Equine Stables" in the County go to:

<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/pds/zoning/formfields/PDS-373.pdf>

For a Zoning permit Application, go to: Zoning Verification Permit Application: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/pds/zoning/formfields/PDS-378-FF.pdf>

Change Comes to the Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Fire Department Inc.,

County Service Area 107 *By Nona Barker*

Thank you to all who attended the Fire Board's annual business meeting and Board of Directors election on October 14. The members of the Board serve a 2-year term and the terms are staggered. Two members were re-elected and the current Board of Directors consists of: Nona Barker, Ken Baumgartner, Tim Costanzo, Jim Depolo, Byron Macfarlane, Mark Shields, Frank Twohy (as Fire Chief, a non voting member) and JP Theberge (alternate).

The business meeting agenda included a financial report presented by Byron Macfarlane, the treasurer, and a presentation by Frank Twohy, the Fire Chief, to help residents understand the current proposal to join with the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District to provide fire service for Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove. Frank talked about the history of the Department including the establishment of CSA 107, the transitional (or zero) sphere of influence, fire service studies, The County Fire Authority and LAFCO. He addressed the reasons for joining with the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District at this time and the impact of the new development in Harmony Grove, called Harmon Grove Village.

Chief Tony Michel of the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District spoke about his department, their philosophy and the funding challenges to reorganize our departments.

Since the board meeting, the Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Fire Department and Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District have met with the County of San Diego and LAFCO. Currently, all parties involved in the forward movement of reorganization are waiting on the County of San Diego to identify and approve additional funding to balance out a funding shortfall required for a full-time, paid-staff fire station. If the County of San Diego identifies and approves additional long term sustainable funding, the reorganization will go forward. If not, the County Fire Authority plans to dissolve CSA 107 – Elfin Forest and replace EFF with a CALFIRE Schedule A contract.

It is our hope the additional funding will come out of the County's property tax 1%. This property tax is sustainable, does not rely on the County's discretionary funding and does not saddle the residents of either district with additional taxes. Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Fire Department, CSA 107 – currently receives 1/10 of 1% from the area's property tax revenue. Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District shares a range between 3/10 to 7/10 of 1 % or their area's tax revenue. This does not sound like much, but 3/10 of 1% could cover the approximate \$350,000 yearly shortfall. A point or two either way will make a huge difference. It may be possible to retain the current location as a satellite station with the main station closer to Harmony Grove. When the county decides what direction it will take, your Board of Directors will do its best to inform you of the next steps in this reorganization process.

Thank you for your support,

Nona Barker, Chair Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Fire Department, Inc.

Newcomer's Corner

If you notice new people moving in your neighborhood, please send an email to efhgtc@gmail.com so the Welcome Committee (Amy Molenaar) can drop off a welcome basket. Also direct them to the New Resident section of the new web site at: <http://www.efhgtc.org/newresidents.html>

HARMONY GROVE VILLAGE UPDATE

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2013

By Bonnie Baumgartner

The project manager from Harmony Grove Village, Tim Wellman, has been holding monthly updates with individual members of the EFHG community, Town Council representative, San Dieguito Planning Group representative, and recently our Fire Board.

The grading of the first phase of project is about 80 % complete. They expect to have models up by the First Quarter of 2015. The main entry to the project is from Citracado Parkway where it exists now, connecting to Harmony Grove Village Drive (a new road not yet built) and across the new bridge (Citracado Bridge) near the existing cement plant. They expect this connection will be done in October/November of 2014.

The 'blue line' areas where there are traditional streams feeding into Escondido Creek, are to be planted with native plants, and maintained as a green belt. Some areas along Escondido Creek in the project have been cleared of non-native species, replanted and are being irrigated by above ground water lines until the native plantings become established. These areas will be maintained by The Escondido Creek Conservancy.

Harmony Grove Rd. in the project will be widened to include turn lanes, but will still be two lanes. Country Club road in tract will be widened, and the curves softened. Country Club Rd. off tract will be widened and a median added. The residents of HG are adamant that the speed limit be slow since they are a 'traffic calmed' area, and that a minimum of street lights be added.

The blasting in areas around Country Club will continue for a while longer as they have hit hard rock in the creation of the 84 day pond storage site for reclaimed water.

The sewer pumping station is nearing completion, but the sewer treatment plant still has plans submitted. Completion of the plant is 16 months after approval.

It is possible that we will have new neighbors by January, 2015.

Trails Committee Completes New Trails

Development of new community trails is one goal of the EFHGTC Trails Committee. We are happy that some time ago the expanded link between Los Vientos Serenos and Circa de Media was completed. All of the adjoining neighbors were in agreement, and gave permission. Joy Jackson's persistent efforts to coordinate and organize are to be applauded. Go Joy!

The mysterious trail elf has finished installing split rail fencing along the new link on Elfin Forest Lane east- no small feat since there was rock just a few inches down!

Jan Denny has been hard at work coordinating neighbors and SDGE along Seacrest Lane to install a trail adjacent to the road to allow safe walking, riding and hiking. Jan has also organized meetings 'on site' for the Canyon de Oro Trail upgrade with Maryanne Vancio from the County Parks Service, Karen Ogawa from OMWD, and Bob Keeley from the City of Encinitas Parks and Recreation.

Rock removal, grading, and gravel have been installed on the Fortuna del Este trail to improve that existing trail.

*Do you have a trail that needs work? Do you want to establish a new trail link over your property? Do you have an urge to do community service and help save a trail? Contact any Trail Committee member and we will sign you on! **Trails Committee:** Bonnie Baumgartner, Chair; Joy Jackson, Jan Denny, Carolyn Swerton, Nancy Reed, Carla Zilka.*

Eli Starts His Egg Ranch

By Eli Steria

I have been fortunate to grow up here in Elfin Forest and my experience of raising chickens has been more than I ever expected. I have learned to be a caretaker of chickens, entrepreneur, and marketer. It all began with eight hens from the Harmony Grove chicken ranch. After that I bought twenty chicks from a local feed store and my operation grew from there. My family enjoyed the company of the chickens and large amount of fresh eggs. During that time, I joined the Olivenhain 4H Club to learn new information. Along with attending meetings, I learned showmanship and presented a hen at the Del Mar Fair.

As I got older I wanted to expand and sell eggs locally. By the age of 9 we ordered 100 chickens which arrived at the Escondido post office. Eventually I sold eggs at the local farmers market along with sunflowers I also grew on our small hobby farm. One of the biggest challenges has been the constant threat from neighborhood coyotes. Unfortunately, this large flock was taken over multiple nights until the flock was completely gone. This event made me work even harder to build a better hen house to protect my new flock of 100 hens.

Since then, my egg business has been stronger than ever and growing at a consistent speed with new customers weekly. The daily hassle of the logistics of customers stopping by has been difficult. So I have created a self serve market which is built on the honor system. Customers can come at their convenience to pick up their fresh eggs daily, weekly, or monthly.

My hens are Rhode Island Reds which are the best brown egg producers, and lay one egg every twenty-five hours. We feed them a corn based product and also many veggie treats including pumpkins, cucumbers and squash grown organically on the farm to give the eggs excellent yolk color and flavor.

Overall, I have benefited financially by being able to support my hobbies such as motocross and filming. I have been able to acquire parts and gas for my dirt bike and very good camera equipment to pursue my dream of being a self employed videographer. Also supporting myself financially will help me possibly own my own home at the age of eighteen just like my dad.

If you would like to know any more information, you can contact me by phone, text, email or Facebook if you have any questions, I would be more than happy to answer them.

Eli Steria, (760)-525-6974, ElisFarmFreshEggs@gmail.com
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Elfin Forest Community Foundation Met Twice Recently to Provide Grant Funds to Deserving Applicants

By Tony DeBellis

The first meeting was a special meeting held on September 24th. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss whether the Community Foundation could financially assist with funding the option fee shortfall that The Escondido Creek Conservancy faces in the acquisition of the 502 acre University Heights property.

Citing the importance of keeping Elfin Forest rural as a major commitment, the board agreed to provide \$15,000 to TECC.

The second meeting was the Foundation's regular semi-annual meeting held on October 17th. After discussion by the Board of the proposals submitted, the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove CERT was granted \$1500 to purchase equipment and The Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Town Council's Trail Committee was granted \$975 to clear a trail along the northern edge of Canyon de Oro.

The Escondido Creek Conservancy Thanks the EF/HG Community for Their Support During 2013

By Kevin Bernard, Chair

The following is a list of some of TECCs accomplishments in 2013:

On November 1st, TECC welcomed Ann Van Leer as our new Executive Director. Ann has served TECC as our real estate broker in several significant open space acquisitions, including Family Stations and University Heights. Her extensive experience in habitat preservation with The Nature Conservancy, her own firm, Land Conservation Brokerage, and her years of experience in all levels of politics, make her a perfect fit for TECC as we move forward with our vision of how the watershed should be protected and transformed into a dynamic asset for North County.

Ann Hough, our Managing Director, continues to focus on the day to day machinations of TECC and has done so much to make TECC such a stable and sustainable organization. Without Ann's hard work and determination, TECC could not be involved in as many acquisitions and advocacy projects.

TECC took title to 240 acres west of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve known as Cielo del Norte, which was entitled for housing. Now it will serve as a permanent home to several federally endangered species.

TECC Identified all the funding to complete the purchase of the 500 acre University Heights properties (Sleeping Lady Ridge), north and east of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve between Elfin Forest to the west, Harmony Grove to the east, and San Marcos to the north. TECC anticipates this acquisition to be completed by mid-February or early March. Thank you to everyone who contributed to TECC, thereby enabling us to raise a record amount of funds in a very short period of time. These funds were used to service the option costs on this property. Your contribution was leveraged at 800 to 1, meaning for every dollar you contributed, we secured eight hundred dollars toward the final purchase price. Congratulations!!

The acquisition of University Heights also ensures the continued mission, and presence of Quest Haven Retreat, 650 acres of prime habitat with a very small development footprint.

On the north side of Harmony Grove Rd. between Harmony Grove and Elfin Forest, County Park & Rec acquired three additional properties totaling 25 acres which preserves most of the scenic value of the unique drive between Harmony Grove and Elfin Forest.

In late October, in partnership with The Conservation Fund, an option was secured on another entitled property known as Cielo Estates. This is approximately 255 acres of critical habitat that is adjacent, and to the west of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve, north of Via Ambiente.

In total, TECC and its partners were able to preserve over 1000 acres in the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Core Habitat Area during 2013. This is more than three times the size of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. Thank you all for helping to preserve this land.

The TECC staff and board members continue to advocate for acquisitions of habitat and open space in the watershed with other agencies, such as the Department of Defense, U.S., and California Fish & Wildlife Agencies and County Office of Park & Rec. Many of TECC's acquisitions have triggered other organizations and agencies to acquire adjacent properties in recognition that contiguous habitat is critical for the sustainability and diversity of species on those lands.

For instance, County Park & Rec acquired the remaining 380 acres of Bottle Peak, just south of Lake Wohlford, now a contiguous preserved habitat of over 800 acres, half of which is owned and managed by TECC.

The ESCONDIDO CREEK Conservancy

Continued from page 5

For the past five years TECC has been involved in the effort to rehabilitate and restore the channelized seven mile stretch of the Escondido Creek that runs through the City of Escondido. The Reveal Escondido Creek Committee (REC), a committee of several Escondido residents representing many Escondido organizations, has been organizing and conducting numerous creek clean-ups and educational events for the past few years, as a way to bring attention to this gem that meanders through the entire length and width of the city. In late October REC requested to become a member committee of TECC, uniting the efforts of REC and TECC in the quest to create a seven mile long linear park/trail/development on the creek in the city limits of Escondido.

REC has successfully advocated for funding and grants to create pilot projects along the creek. Some of these projects include a \$500,000 lighting project that is currently being installed to increase night time safety of the trail, the construction of a pocket park and trail entrance at the Evans Tire property on Broadway, and several other projects designed to enhance the trail that connects thousands of Escondido residents from one end of the city to the other. The long range plan is to connect Escondido, via the creek trail, to thousands of acres of preserved habitat that surround Escondido at Daley Ranch, Bottle Peak, and the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Core Habitat Area. All of this has led TECC to launch a campaign to advocate to the North County region's municipalities and business community to move toward adding a recreation/eco-tourism component to the local economy as a way to capitalize on our area's year-round temperate weather, unique ecosystems, and preserved open spaces. We hope this will attract a demographic, and create opportunities for our current residents, that value open spaces, critical habitat, vibrant urban and related rural neighborhoods, and local foods, art and culture. We have been fortunate enough to have had tens of millions of dollars of public funding committed to our little piece of paradise. We should find a way to share it with those who revere and respect it.

Being a member of TECC affords you the opportunity to put into action the philosophy of, "Think globally, act locally", whether it is through financial support, or volunteering your valuable time. TECC, as much as any non-profit, has a long history of leveraging your donations into public funding and public benefit.

Please become a member, or renew your membership in 2014 and consider giving the gift of membership of TECC for the coming holidays.
www.escondidocreek.org



Richard Murphy



The Elfin Forest Interpretive Center Honoring Susan J Varty Welcomes its 25,000th Visitor

By Jeff Swenerton

On Friday, October 11, 2013, The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC) and Olivenhain Municipal Water District (OMWD) held a ceremony honoring Dale Johnson, who was the 25,000th visitor to the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center which opened its doors in June of 2009.

This was the first visit to Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve (EFRR) for Mr. Johnson, a resident of Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Johnson was presented with a package that included hiking poles, a 2014 calendar featuring the EFRR Interpretive Center, TECC gear, and a ranger-guided hike to commemorate the occasion.

Jeff Swenerton, TECC's Vice President, stated: "What a pleasure it has been to be a part of this successful partnership with OMWD. For all of us that work at the Interpretive Center, our greatest pleasure comes with exploring our natural environment with all our many visitors including over 1,000 school children and our many family groups each year. We appreciate the generosity of our many donors that have made this possible."

OMWD Park Supervisor, Jeff Anderson, stated: "We are very pleased to see our 25,000th visitor come through the doors of the Interpretive Center in just over four years of being open to the public. We would not be celebrating this milestone today if it were not for the extraordinary partnership we have with The Escondido Creek Conservancy, the enthusiastic support we receive from OMWD's Board of Directors, and our incredibly dedicated and talented docents who have volunteered over 3,700 hours since our first visitor walked through the door in 2009."

The center resulted from a unique public/non-profit partnership between Olivenhain Municipal Water District and The Escondido Creek Conservancy. Its construction was funded by a \$68,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to OMWD and over \$565,000 in private donations raised by TECC. Cooperation between the two entities continues today in joint operation of the center and its educational programs.

Grant Funding Awarded to Interpretive Center

By Jeff Swenerton

Over 1,000 school children participated in an Interpretive Center (IC) school program this year. The program is a part of a partnership with the San Diego Zoo Watershed Program and San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy. The program was honored with a nomination for the 2013 Eco Ambassador Award. We also recently received a \$7,500 grant from San Diego Gas and Electric and a \$10,000 grant from The Charles H. Stout Foundation for this and other IC programs. This will provide vital funding to further develop our programs and support the training of over 40 Interpretive Center volunteer docents. If you would like to get involved go to: www.escondidocreek.org.

Things we should know about honeybees and why we should care

By Patti Newton

Before I understood honeybees, the sight and sound of a swarm had me running for cover, rounding up the dogs and cats, and battering down the hatches. Another time, watching a feral hive move into our owl box freaked me out. I'm embarrassed to admit that now, but many people, through fear and/or ignorance, will call an extermination company which proceeds to kill the colony. And that is a really bad thing to do, especially in light of the multiple threats these tiny, industrious, and hugely important agricultural partners face on a global scale.

Fossils indicate bees have been around for more than 150 million years which makes them almost as old as flowering plants! Until relatively recently the bee populations have managed just fine; colony collapse disorder (CCD) has devastated their numbers and put our food supply in peril. No single cause of CCD has been identified, however, pesticides, particularly a group known as neonicotinoids (a.k.a. neonics), remain pervasive in our environment and are extremely harmful. When bees forage upon flowers treated with these neurotoxins (systemically expressed through the pollen), they render them incapable of finding their hives, so they die.

Responsible for every third bite of food we consume, bees' importance to our very existence cannot be overstated. In addition to pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, and other toxins, our system of food production, known as "monoculture", requires we participate in a very unnatural system of pollination. For example, migratory beekeepers truck one million hives (half of the US hives) across the nation to the almond orchards here in California which produces 100% of our almond supply in addition to about \$3 billion it exports annually. If bees remained in the area beyond the flowering period they would starve, so they are trucked to the blueberry fields in Maine and other locations where they continue to work under incredibly stressful conditions. Monoculture and migratory beekeeping is unnatural, causes undue environmental and hive stress, and also contributes to bee starvation across the nation. Farmers used to plant multiple crops and other vegetation which flowered year 'round, allowing bees to live in the area and pollinate naturally, a win-win. Many US farmers have followed Europe's lead and refuse to use these deadly chemicals.



What you can do. First and foremost, do not buy ornamental, fruit, or vegetable plants from Home Depot, Lowe's, or Target. These stores knowingly sell plants grown from treated seeds and/or sprayed with neonics. Unwitting customers happily plant them in their gardens hoping to attract beneficial bees and end up killing them instead. Buy organic plants from certified local growers or grow your own from organic seeds to avoid these very serious problems.

Did you know that the honey you buy in the supermarket in those little plastic bear jars is largely comprised

Continued from page 9

of high fructose corn syrup? Further, it is likely imported from Asia which does not have to disclose this information (or if they do they cleverly defeat it). Again, buy from local beekeepers, common at farmers' markets, or from grocers you trust. Consuming local honey is an excellent way to manage allergies, among other notable medicinal benefits.

Don't be fearful of bees. While foraging, bees couldn't care less about stinging you. In fact, you can safely enjoy watching them closely as they make their living going from flower to flower. While swarming, bees are not aggressive because they have no hive to protect. They are simply looking for a new home. If they take up residence in your birdhouse or some other inconvenient location, then call a beekeeper, not an exterminator.



A good resource is the San Diego Beekeeping Society. <http://www.meetup.com/The-San-Diego-Beekeeping-Meetup-Group>. Many of your neighbors in Elfin Forest and surrounding communities are beekeepers and some are even willing to help you remove a swarm or hive on your property. Please feel free to call me at 760.471.8937 if you need help.

Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Town Council Board members: Bonnie Baumgartner 760-510-1175, Jacqueline Arsivaud-Benjamin 760-855-0444, May Meintjes 760-744-7336, J.P. Theberge 619-884-2694, Nancy Goodrich 760-591-9489, Amy Molenaar 760-532-0133, Mark Shields 619-564-3600, Sandra Bartsch 607-440-0503, Jan Denny 760-736-8436. At-Large member: Melanie Fallon

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