

**Approved minutes of the Regular Meeting of the
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
Board of Directors**

October 16, 2008

8:30 AM

**Board of Supervisors Hearing Room
105 East Anapamu Street, 4th Floor
Santa Barbara, CA**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Firestone called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: Salud Carbajal, Supervisor, First District; Janet Wolf, Supervisor, Second District; Brooks Firestone (SBCAG Chair) Supervisor, Third District; Joni Gray, Fourth District Supervisor; Joe Centeno, Supervisor, Fifth District; Marty Blum, Mayor, City of Santa Barbara; Larry Lavagnino, Mayor, City of Santa Maria; Ed Skytt, Councilmember, City of Solvang; Michael Bennett, Mayor, City of Goleta, Lupe Alvarez, Mayor, City of Guadalupe; Joe Armendariz, Councilmember, City of Carpinteria; Dick DeWees, Mayor, City of Lompoc; Russ Hicks, Mayor, City of Buellton

Staff Present: Jim Kemp, Executive Director; Stephen VanDenburgh, Deputy Director Programs; Michael Powers, Deputy Director Planning; Bill Yim, Transportation Planner, Terry Contreras, Board Clerk; Kevin E. Ready, Sr., Senior Deputy County Counsel, Aileen Loe, Caltrans District 5 Representative, Pat Mickelson, Caltrans District 5 Representative

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

Pending Litigation: Santa Barbara County Coalition Against Automobile Subsidies v. SBCAG

Pending Litigation: Sustainable Transportation Advocates of Santa Barbara v. SBCAG

4. REPORT ON CLOSED SESSION

Senior Deputy County Counsel Kevin Ready stated the two items had been discussed and that no reportable action had been taken.

G. SANTA BARBARA COUNTY HOUSING ELEMENT FOCUSED REZONE PROGRAM, ORCUTT

Adopt findings of consistency of proposed rezoning with Airport Land Use Plan, subject to conditions.

Motion to approve the consent items 6A-6F.

Motion: Lavagnino Second: Carbajal

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made to reconsider item 6G at the SBCAG board meeting of November 20, 2008 as a departmental item.

Motion: Gray Second: Lavagnino

Motion carried unanimously.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

8. PRESENTATION OF COMMUTE CHALLENGE EMPLOYER AWARDS

Chairman to present certificates of recognition to the five winning employers of the Commute Challenge; Ryerson, Masters and Associates, Inc., Community Environmental Council, Cancer Center of Santa Barbara, Yardi Systems and the City of Santa Barbara.

Presentation only, therefore no action was taken.

INFORMATION ITEMS

INFORMATION ITEM 11 WAS HEARD OUT OF SEQUENCE DUE TO ITEM 9 BEING 9:00 A.M. TIME CERTAIN.

11. TRAFFIC SOLUTIONS ANNUAL REPORT

Receive annual report from SBCAG Traffic Solutions on FY07-08 accomplishments.

Informational report only, therefore no action was taken.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

9. COLD SPRING BRIDGE PROJECT

A. *Hold a public hearing on Caltrans' Cold Spring Bridge Suicide Barrier project*

B. *Provide direction to staff*

Dr. Lisa Firestone of the Glendon Association made a presentation in support of the project. She presented an excerpt from a video entitled "Voices of Suicide – learning from those who lived". She noted that peer review journals say barriers reduce suicide and mental health studies support barriers for suicide prevention. She also addressed the objections that were presented by the opponents to the placement of the barriers on the bridge.

Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown spoke in favor of the barrier plan for the Cold Spring Bridge, he also spoke about the unsafe conditions the current barrier presents for the public safety personnel that respond to emergencies and the costs of responding to suicide calls. He played a video which showed an emergency responder almost being pulled over the bridge while attempting a rescue during a suicide attempt. He also presented video testimony of a Sheriff's Deputy who witnessed a suicide at the bridge. He suggested putting call boxes as well as barriers on the bridge.

Marc McGinnes, Friends of the Bridge, expressed opposition to the placement of the barriers on the Cold Spring Bridge. Friends of the Bridge feel that the barriers will take away the beauty of the bridge; he also noted the money coming from the Caltrans Traffic Safety Collision Reduction fund shouldn't be used for suicide prevention. Mr. McGinnes proposed and described a "human barrier" alternative to the Caltrans barriers project.

Chair Firestone asked Mr. McGinnes to read into the record the names of the other citizens groups opposing the Cold Spring Bridge project who had written letters. He identified the following organizations:

1. Citizens Planning Association South County Land Use Committee
2. Concerned Taxpayers Action Network
3. Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club
4. Los Padres Forest Watch
5. Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation
6. Santa Barbara County Action Network
7. Women's Environmental Watch
8. Santa Ynez Valley Alliance
9. The Pearl Chase Society

Marc McGinnes stated that a letter from the Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association was included in opposition to the project but since the ongoing politics had been so intense the association changed its position to neutral.

Councilmember Armendariz rejected the characterization of the reversal of their position. Mr. Armendriz stated that the decision was made by the Board of Directors based on coming to the conclusion that at that particular time they lacked the sufficient facts to make a declarative position on the issue. The decision was not based on politics, it was based on the best effort of the Board of Directors to interpret the information that was presented. The information has now been called into question in a variety of different ways and that was the reason behind the decision.

Public Comment

Linda Jackson spoke as the Executive Director of the Solvang Chamber of Commerce and voiced her support on the placement of the barriers.

Paul Trent addressed the Glasgow study and the effectiveness of bridge barriers in saving lives.

Ann Bennett addressed the board in support of the barrier project.

Karen Aydelott Robbins addressed the board in support of the project as the mother of the most recent suicide victim.

Sally Stewart, suicide victim survivor, expressed support for any barrier on the bridge.

Nicholas Beeson, attorney and radio talk show host spoke of the aesthetic beauty of the entire drive along Hwy 154. Mr. Beeson feels that the protection of distressed lives far outweighs any aesthetic diminishment that may occur with the placement of the barriers.

Tom Wildroe, talk radio show host, expressed his support for the bridge barriers. He also expressed the need for prevention of suicide while keeping law enforcement safe.

Lee Chiacos expressed his opposition to the placement of the barriers on the bridge. He asked what would happen if the money could be spent on the causes of suicide.

Anne Greaney, representing Mental Health and NAMI, spoke on mental illness, depression and suicide. She supported the barrier project.

Dr. Jamie Rotnofsky, spoke about suicide, mental illness and the restriction of means. She spoke in support of the barrier project.

Joni Kelly, consultant for Glendon Associates, stated that the barriers would be saving lives.

James Mills, resident of Solvang, feels the money should be spent elsewhere to protect drivers and children. He does not support project, and feels the money should be spent for safety on the roads.

Anna Campbell, landscape painter, does not believe seconds of a diminished view are even worth one life. She stated that there are beautiful views from vista points on both ends of the bridge. She supported the barrier project.

Walton Clark, resident, supports the barriers project.

Nelson Trichler, Search and Rescue team, expressed concern about safety of the personnel that go in to retrieve bodies and spoke in support of the barrier.

Garrett Glasgow, addressed the misconceptions about the scientific literature on suicide barriers. He said he was not sure if barriers save lives or not. He also commented that call boxes have not been studied in regards to saving lives.

Motion to find that the proposed 99 room hotel in the approach zone, with revised findings, is consistent with the ALUP.

Motion: Bennett

Second: Armendariz

The board was informed by counsel that if the board took no action on the project's consistency or inconsistency with the ALUP within 60 days after the matter had been referred to SBCAG then, by State law, the project would be deemed to be in compliance with the ALUP.

Motion withdrawn by Mayor Bennett. No action taken by the board.

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Coast Rail Coordinating Council meeting of September 19, Soledad

Due to time restraints, the Coast Rail Coordinating meeting summary was not presented.

Board members will be mailed a copy of the CCRC summary.

13. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jim Kemp, Executive Director, reported that SBCAG had received a letter from the state Housing and Community Development Department approving the RHNA plan that was adopted by the board in August. This will be directed to the cities so they may update their housing element.

14. CALTRANS DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Aileen Loe, Caltrans, congratulated the City of Lompoc and the County of Santa Barbara for being awarded Federal Safe Routes to School program funds. Each received approximately \$400,000 dollars.

Supervisor Carbajal asked that Caltrans District 5 staff give attention to constituents that are concerned about pedestrian safety concerns on Hwy 192 at Cold Springs School.

15. COMMUNICATIONS

None

16. ADJOURN

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, November 20, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Santa Maria.