

**REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE  
MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

Held at Fire District Headquarters, 595 San Ysidro Road, May 15, 2006 was called to order by Director Jensen, President at 8:42 a.m. Present were Director Jensen and Director Newquist. Director Venable arrived at 8:43 A.M. Others present at the meeting: B. Hazard, V. Hazard, E. Hvolboll, J. Langhorne, C. Lim, E. Lynch, W. McGrew, R. McClain, J. McGowen, G. McLeod G. Simmons, K. Thorpe, J. Villarreal, and K. Wallace,

1. There was no public comment.
2. On a motion made by Director Newquist, seconded by Director Jensen, the minutes of the April 24, 2006 Adjourned Regular Meeting were unanimously approved.
3. The warrants and claims for the month of April 2006 were unanimously approved on a motion made by Director Newquist, seconded by Director Venable.
4. Chief McClain reviewed the request from Ty Warner Hotels & Resorts for traffic calming devices on Channel Drive. He advised that the request was deferred to us by Santa Barbara County Roads. Their request includes curb extensions that protrude out into the street, referred to as "bulb outs", and the installation of a thirty foot landscaped median where Olive Mill transitions into Channel Dr. Chief McClain reviewed their request and asked that they reduce the bulb out to allow pedestrians to stand out at crosswalks without having the curb extend any further than a parked car.

He explained that we have approved some traffic calming devices within the District in the past, but not on primary response routes. He stated that we have done studies on our response times, and have found that traffic calming devices on primary response routes do affect our response times. We are required to be at the scene of an incident within five minutes of receiving the call, and that includes one minute for "turnout" time.

He advised the Board that he denied their request for the landscaped median on the basis that the median is in fact a traffic calming device, and would likely slow down our response time.

Bill Medel with Ty Warner Hotels and Resorts introduced himself and their architect, David Van Hoy.

Mr. Van Hoy provided an overview of the Biltmore area plan including the Coral Casino. He advised that they have been working on the Biltmore / Coral Casino improvement project for 6 years. The renovation on the hotel renovations are nearly finished and it is significantly more fire safe with improvements to fire sprinkler system, technical upgrades and better access. They hope to move forward with the same type of upgrades for the Coral Casino.

He advised that fire department access to the hotel cottages and hotel amenities are primarily off of Hill Road, as only a few rooms have direct beach access.

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Neighbors to the hotel have requested sidewalk and crosswalk upgrades on Channel Drive to improve the safety of the walking public and their guests.

The system along the street will have an entirely new sidewalk along the front of the hotel, and a wider entrance to the hotel. He referred to two traffic speed studies that indicate approximately 25 % of traffic on Channel Drive are going faster than the 25 mph speed limit. There are two ways to reduce the speed – flashing lights, signage and radar that indicate you are speeding, and traffic calming devices such as brick paving, lights, landscaping.

He advised that the crosswalk at the Coral Casino is located at the blind curve where Olive Mill transitions to Channel Drive. They have proposed a bulb out there to make the crossing shorter. The proposed median also includes brick paving to help reduce the speed of drivers passing through. He suggested that a median will also help handicapped or slower walkers as a half way point when crossing the street. Mr. Van Hoy stated that the median will be 6 feet wide offer low landscaping. The median will provide a 13 foot travel lane on one side and a 14 foot travel lane on the other side.

He added that no signage for the hotel or the Coral Casino is proposed in the area of the median. Hotel signage is only at hotel entrance.

He stated that freeway lanes are typically only 11 feet wide, and many roads in MTO are only 10 feet wide. He felt that this would be sufficient for any fire apparatus to pass through safely. He then reviewed the plans with the Board.

Director Jensen advised that he sat at the intersection the day he received his Board packet, and most cars were in the left turn lane going into Bonneymede. He advised that it appeared that traffic would be go directly into the proposed median. Mr. Van Hoy advised that the striping for this traffic has not been completed, and the new striping would clearly delineate the traffic away from the median.

Bob Hazard, a resident at Bonneymede introduced himself to the Board, and stated that he supports the appeal to install a median on Channel Drive. When he heard that the Fire District needs a 5 minute response time, he and his wife timed the route from Station One to the Bonneymede entrance, and arrived in 3 minutes 30 seconds, which included stop signs and traffic lights. He felt that even if the median slows the response time down 30 seconds as proposed by Chief Wallace, it would still fall within the 5 minute response requirements.

He advised that the Fire District can also access the hotel via Hill Rd and avoid using the route where the proposed median would be. He stated that although aesthetics are not the concern of the Fire District, the median will beautify the entrance to the area, and potentially increase their property values. He advised that Ty Warner has been a great neighbor, and supports him and his efforts.

Director Newquist reminded Mr. Hazard that their time test did not address “turn out time”.

Director Venable advised that their data shows that 25% of cars going faster than 25 mph, which would indicate that 75%, more than the majority of drivers, were traveling within the speed limit.

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Mrs. Hazard advised that she walks on Channel Drive every evening, and does not consider it to be a primary response road, but a destination. She felt that the distinction between a primary response road versus a "destination" would allow the Board to consider this decision.

She advised that the number of people visiting the area is much lower than normal because of the current construction and the poor weather we have had. When there are cones out for construction, the cars do slow down. She felt that installing the median would force the driver to pay attention and would work to slow traffic and make it safer for pedestrians. She advised that many people that come to the area are not familiar with the traffic conditions and are unaware of the large amount of foot traffic in the area.

John McGowen introduced himself to the Board as the president of the Coral Casino, represents over 600 memberships. Their concern is with safety of their members and the children of those members. He advised that he hopes the Board will consider doing anything they can to prevent the accident he referenced at the previous meeting, where a child was struck by a car while crossing the street.

Christina Thorpe introduced herself to the Board as a longtime resident in the proposed area. She advised that she feels that this is very dangerous area for pedestrians and supports the installation of a median. She asked the Board to consider traffic calming on a case by case basis. She stated that a median would force drivers to slow down in the area.

She advised that residents in the area have worked with the County for years to address pedestrian safety and were met with indifference and reports that they (the County) have no money to make improvements. She is grateful to Ty Warner for addressing this issue, and hopes to get the support from the Fire District Board to address their concerns for pedestrian safety.

Kevin Spear introduced himself as the Manager of the Coral Casino for 14 years. He advised that he travels across the road more than anyone, calculating that he has probably crossed the road over 25,000 times. He stated that he has come very close to being involved in an accident many times.

Chief McClain introduced 4 letters from the public stating their opposition to the proposed median. He added that he had also received many phone calls regarding the proposed median. He explained that he did not solicit any public support, and this was not publicized other than our normal posting methods. He advised that had we done that, there would probably have a much larger turnout for public comment.

Mr. Medel closed by saying that he was pleased that the Fire District approved most of their proposals. He advised that he feels that by narrowing the original proposed median, they have reduced the argument that it would reduce response times. He added that Carpinteria has medians along some of their primary roadways, and allow parked cars in the same lanes. He asked that the Board not change the Fire District's policy, but rather consider this as a unique situation and requested that they uphold their appeal of the Fire Chief's decision.

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Mr. Hvolboll advised that the Board's decision shall be based on all information in their packet, everything that has been submitted at this meeting, and any other input provided today. In addition, if they have been down to the site or had any discussions with other community members, the Directors must disclose that during this meeting. He added that when they vote on this issue, the decision needs to be in writing to the appealers.

Director Jensen advised that he spoke with Chief McClain about the project and then drove down to see the area for himself on Friday after he received his packet.

Director Newquist advised that he travels to that area every week, as he has a sister in who lives in Bonneymede. He advised that he also used to be a member of the Coral Casino and he is very familiar with the area as well.

Director Venable advised that he has lived in the community for a long time, and he too is very familiar with the area where the median is proposed. He stated that there has been an influx of people using the beach, and the recent construction has caused a lot of traffic congestion. He referred to a hedge along curve where Olive Mill and Channel drive transition as an ongoing problem. He feels that the added vegetation may be distraction to drivers and doesn't feel he can support their request to appeal the Fire Chief's decision.

Director Jensen asked Chief McClain for clarification on the Fire District's concern with the proposed median. Chief McClain advised that the Fire District's position is that we currently reach the Biltmore within a 4 minute travel time almost 100% of the time, and emergencies on Butterfly Beach 80-90% of the time. Our policy has been to maintain that response. He feels that a thirty second delay can and will make a difference. This is a situation where we are being asked to look at one specific intersection; however the debate could be made for every intersection in the community. He referenced an accident at an intersection where speeds are in excess of the posted speed limit on a regular basis.

He also explained that there is no bike path along the road where they propose the median, and if there were a bike on the roadway, we would have no place to go to swerve around the bicyclist. We would have to wait for the bicyclist to get beyond the median or off the road to pass.

He referred to Mr. Burton's opinion that a median will not effect our response times, however his report is based on a situation where there are alternate routes to take to the same location; there are no alternate routes to get to Butterfly Beach. Mr. Burton describes a street as 28 feet with parking on each side with an average speed of 20 mp. This would not be the case with a median; there would be no way to swerve around a car that has pulled to the side or a bicyclist in the roadway where the median is. Chief McClain advised that Mr. Burton's information was helpful, but may not apply to this specific situation.

Mr. Hazard asked the Board to balance the safety of the pedestrians with the need of the Fire District to meet desired response times.

Chief McClain advised that it is not the Fire District's job to enforce the speed limit. If the concern really is to slow traffic down for pedestrian safety, he suggested that they consider putting a solar

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powered radar that shows the speed of the driver and flashes lights when they go above the speed limit instead, similar to the ones currently located on San Ysidro Road. This type of device slows traffic down, without compromising the response time of a fire engine.

Mr. Medel asked what data we have to prove it will slow down our apparatus. Chief McClain proposed that it will slow down our response, and no one has proven that it won't.

Mr. Medel asked if it the median could be put in and tested to see if it will affect the Fire District's response. Director Venable suggested that they wait and see what the bulb outs do to slow traffic down instead. Director Newquist agreed.

Chief McClain advised that this was not an advertised meeting, and we may have a different debate if more were involved. Again, he suggested that the best solution would be to install a radar sign. They are effective and slow traffic down, without impeding our response times. He added that the Fire District is being dragged into an aesthetic debate.

On a motion made by Director Venable, seconded by Director Newquist, the Board unanimously denied the appeal made by Ty Warner Hotels & Resorts to install a median on Channel Drive in the interest of maintaining response times and public safety, and based on documentation submitted in their packets, Chief McClain's testimony, the letters submitted to Chief McClain, the testimony from the petitioner and the public.

5. Chief McClain asked the Board to renew the Bears for Children agreement with the Assistance League of Santa Barbara. On a motion made by Newquist, seconded by Jensen.

6. Chief McClain advised that the Mutual Aid agreement provides for free assistance. However, when it is a wildland fire, there are many other agreements that are utilized for reimbursement. For example, we have a local agreement with the USFS because we have a mutual threat area. In exchange, we will send an engine as a first response to certain areas on the forest.

ROSS is a new federal computer program that facilitates the ordering and movement of resources. There are some limitations about how the ordering process flows, and it is causing concern with regard to getting and filling requests efficiently and fairly throughout the county. Previously all of our resources were ordered through the USFS, however, now they are now under the operational area coordinator. The county has stated that they don't have the ability to make it happen, but they don't want to give up control as the operational area coordinator. Chief McClain advised that he, Chief Wallace, and Geri Simmons have been working to try and resolve some of these problems. We have worked out our ability to work directly with USFS on local responses, but we haven't been able to address requests out resources outside of the Los Padres Forest.

He explained that we have benefited tremendously from our past agreements with the Los Padres Forest, by increasing our employee's experience levels in ways we could not provide otherwise. Additionally, many agencies have actually increased their revenues from the administrative fees that are charged when resources are utilized under these agreements.

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We may have to push to become area coordinator, or possibly fund a position at Los Padres Dispatch. He advised that he wants to keep the Board informed of this process and let them know of potential changes that may be coming.

Director Newquist, asked if it is possible that we take on the responsibility of becoming area coordinator, and if so, what is the impact? Chief McClain advised that we are capable, and it would require a vote by the County Chiefs, and he is not sure he will have enough votes to make it happen. If he were able to get the votes, we would have to get all of our dispatchers trained in ROSS, as well as the battalion chiefs. Currently Geri Simmons, and Jackie Jenkins are proficient in resource ordering and utilizing the ROSS system. They have committed to be available to make this work until additional personnel could be trained.

On a motion made by Director Newquist, seconded by Director Venable, the Board unanimously voted to support alternatives to improve the operational area concept by encouraging this district's participation, including taking on the responsibility of becoming area coordinator if necessary.

7. Chief McClain advised that the Elections Office has accepted a letter by residents with an argument in favor of Proposition 4 Override. However, in the past, Price, Postel and Parma has submitted the impartial analysis of the election, but the Elections Office has stated that it should be done County Counsel.

Price, Postel and Parma has submitted an argument to the Elections Office stating that there are no laws that require County Counsel to submit the impartial analysis and to allow them to continue as they have done in the past. They have not responded at this time.

The Board took no action.

8. Chief McClain advised that one of our paramedics has been on administrative leave, and will probably apply for a non-industrial medical retirement (not a workers compensation issue.) The employee has asked to be paid his holiday and vacation time until the proper documentation can be submitted for retirement. It will be paid out at straight time and at his current salary.

On a motion made by Director Newquist, seconded by Venable, the Board unanimously approved the request of payout for vacation and holiday time for an employee on administrative leave.

### 9. Fire Chief's Report

Chief McClain reported on several issues including: Grand Jury Report regarding County preparedness, the County EOC, emergency medical response, sheltering, and public information; County Fire Department Management Report; LAFCO's proposal to consolidate all three special districts into one Community Service District; FDAC and Legislative Day in Sacramento; Preseason Fire BBQ; and the progress of remodel.

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10. The board had not requests for agenda items for the June 19<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting.

Director Jensen adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

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Roland J. Jensen

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John Venable