

HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

**FRIDAY, August 31, 2020
2:00 PM**

(Paragraph numbers coincide with agenda item numbers)

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL.

A regular meeting of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Homeless Encampment Committee (Committee) was called to order in the Valley Water Headquarters Board Room, 5700 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California at 2:00 p.m.

1.1 Roll Call.

Committee members in attendance were District 1 Director John Varela, District 6 Director Tony Estremera, and District 3 Director Richard Santos, Chairperson presiding, constituting a quorum of the Committee.

Staff members in attendance were R. Callender, Chief Executive Officer, M. King, Clerk, Board of Directors, M. Bilski, J. Collins, N. Dominguez, M. Ganjoo, R. Gibson, C. Grande, B. Hopper, M. Richardson, D. Rocha, K. Struve, S. Tippetts, and S. Tran.

Guests in attendance were: San Jose residents Robert Aguirre, John Davis, and Gail Osmer; Ragan Henninger and Olympia Washington, City of San Jose; Kathryn Kaminsky, County of Santa Clara, Amanda Olson and Scott Van Gordon, Downtown Streets Team; Jennifer Loving, Destination Home, Deb Kramer, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful

2. TIME OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Chairperson Santos declared time open for public comment on any item not on the agenda.

Mr. John Davis, San Jose resident, expressed concern for destruction of the Coyote Creek embankment, between Williams Street Park and Highway 280, due to the establishment of homeless encampments. He requested that Valley Water consider installing a rocky boulder barrier to prevent intentional destruction of the natural creek embankment and submitted a copy of his letter (Handout 2-A) to the California Environmental Protection Agency/San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board requesting assistance to address issues.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

4.1. Approval of Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve the March 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of the March 13, 2020 Homeless Encampment Committee meeting. It was moved by Director Varela, seconded by Director Estremera, and unanimously carried that the minutes be approved as presented.

4. ACTION ITEMS

4.1. Update on Valley Water's Activities to Address the Effects of Homeless Encampments Along Local Waterways.

Recommendation: Receive a verbal update on Valley Water's homelessness-related activities and the associated impact of state and local restrictions that were imposed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ms. Sue Tippetts, Deputy Operating Officer, reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and reviewed the corresponding presentation contained in Attachment 1 and provided verbal updates on the following items:

- Ms. Jennifer Codianne, Acting Deputy Operating Officer, provided an update on the Stream Maintenance Program reporting on trash and debris removed from creeks, winter preparedness activities, creek safety conditions, and the status of encampment abatements during the pandemic.
- Ms. Kirsten Struve, Acting Environmental Services Manager, provided an update on Creek Conditions including current water quality conditions in local creeks and related impacts of homeless encampments. (Attachment 1)
- Ms. Sherilyn Tran, Civic Engagement Manager, provided an update on Valley Water Volunteer Cleanup Events reporting on events canceled due to the pandemic, activities in progress to gear up for the modified Coastal Cleanup events scheduled to occur September 5, 12, 19 and 26, and continued encouragement for communities to self-clean their own neighborhoods while adhering to social distancing protocols.
- Mr. Mark Bilski, Senior Management Analyst, provided an update on land use for homeless housing, the Veterans Housing Project and potential excess Valley Water properties that could be used in partnership to establish housing for the homeless and veterans.
- Ms. Sue Tippetts, Chief Operating Officer, reported on efforts to secure property easements with the County, City of San Jose and San Jose Unified School District to allow Valley Water access to creeks to perform maintenance to address the impacts of homeless encampments. She recapped discussions held by local elected officials regarding the unhealthy creek conditions and wildfires occurring during COVID-19 shelter in place

orders and a proposal to establish a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to address environmental impacts and homelessness in Santa Clara County. She will report back to the Committee on the proposed JPA as more information becomes available.

Director Varela asked for, and received, clarification on collaborative agreements with the county and cities regarding efforts to address safety along the creeks and rivers.

Director Varela asked for, and received, clarification on potential partnerships with the cities of San Jose, Morgan Hill and Gilroy to address clean up efforts in south county creeks.

The Committee noted the information without formal action.

4.2. Updates from Valley Water's External Partners Regarding Efforts to Address Homelessness in Santa Clara County.

Recommendation: Receive updates from Valley Water's partners on their recent efforts addressing homelessness as well as the impact of the COBID-19 pandemic on these efforts.

Ms. Tippetts reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and verbal updates were provided by the following persons: Mr. Chad Grande, Field Operations Unit Manager, Ms. Kathryn Kaminsky, Acting Deputy Director, Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing, Ms. Ragan Henninger, Deputy Director, City of San Jose Housing Department, Ms. Olympia Williams, City of San Jose, and Ms. Amanda Olson and Mr. Scott Van Gordon, Downtown Streets Team.

The Committee received updates from the County, City of San Jose and other advocacy groups on outreach activities to address homelessness, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their efforts, creek preservation activities and safety measures.

Mr. Robert Aguirre and Mr. John Davis, San Jose residents, asked for and received, clarification regarding Santa Clara County and the City of San Jose's activities and efforts to provide housing, Covid-19 testing, and PPE for the homeless.

Ms. Deb Kramer, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful, expressed concern for conditions at San Jose's Watson Park and reported on volunteer cleanup efforts.

Ms. Gail Osmer, San Jose resident, expressed appreciation for City of San Jose Housing Department efforts to provide basic hygiene needs and trash collection for encampments.

Mr. Aguirre discussed safety conditions along creeks and rivers and the need to provide safe housing and sanctioned encampments to protect the more vulnerable homeless population.

Ms. Tippetts and Mr. Chad Grande discussed scheduled creek maintenance and possibilities of coordinating smaller clean up events along creeks and the Guadalupe River while ensuring the safety of staff and volunteers.

Ms. Amanda Olsen, Downtown Streets Team, reviewed new policies and procedures implemented to support volunteer cleanup efforts, weekly success meetings, contract milestones achieved in areas along the Penitencia Creek and the El Camino in Sunnyvale supporting cleanup efforts, and how Valley Water funding supports their programs.

The Committee noted the information without formal action.

4.3. Update From Destination Home regarding Efforts to Address Homelessness.

Recommendation: Receive an update from Destination Home on the new roadmap for ending homelessness.

The Committee continued Item 4.3 to a future meeting.

Mr. Aguirre expressed concern for Destination Home's community plan to end homelessness versus address homelessness, and asked that Destination Home consider including input from more people throughout the community that have experienced homelessness.

4.4. 2020 Homeless Encampment Committee Work Plan

Recommendation: A. Review the 2020 Homeless Encampment Committee Work Plan, and make adjustments as necessary, and
B. Discuss and determine 2020 Homeless Encampment Committee meeting schedule.

Ms. Natalie Dominguez, Assistant Deputy Clerk II, reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and the corresponding presentation materials contained in Attachment 1.

The Committee noted the information without formal action.

4. INFORMATION ITEMS.

None.

5. CLERK'S REVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF COMMITTEE REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

There were no new Committee Recommendations or Requests for Board consideration.

7. ADJOURN.

Chairperson Santos adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m., to the next meeting to be called to order in compliance with the State Emergency Services Act, the Governor's Emergency Declaration related to COVID-19, and the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20.

[original signed by]

Natalie F. Dominguez, CMC
Assistant Deputy Clerk

Approved: March 30, 2021