

HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020
12:00 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 12:00 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 J. Choate, N. Dominguez, M. Ganjoo, M. Garcia, R. Gibson, B. Hopper, F. Lee, M. Lugo, C. Pilson, E. Serrano, M. Richardson, K. Struve, S. Tippetts, C. Tovar, S. Tran and E. Wilkinson.

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 emerging homeless encampment developments along Coyote Creek near William Street Park, and asked the District to consider installing large boulders along the creek wall to prevent excavation, especially the digging of tunnels to establish dwelling spaces.

Mr. Roger Castillo, Homeless Advocate, expressed concern for salmon migration impacted by emerging homeless encampment developments along the Upper Guadalupe River trails and other safety hazards, and urged Valley Water to work with the City of San Jose to address his concerns.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

3.1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair.

Recommendation: Elect a Committee Chair and Vice Chair for the calendar year 2020.

It was moved by Director Estremera, seconded by Director Varela, and unanimously carried that Chairperson Santos and Director Estremera maintain their respective offices as Chairperson and Vice Chair for the year 2020.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

4.1. Approval of Minutes.

Recommendation: Approve the minutes.

The Committee considered the attached minutes of the November 15, 2019 meeting. It was moved by Director Estremera, seconded by Director Varela, and unanimously carried that the minutes be approved as presented.

5. ACTION ITEMS

5.1. Update on Rescheduled Environmental Cleanup Event.

Recommendation: Receive updated information about the rescheduled Valley Water environmental cleanup event recommended by the Board as a Valley Water-led collaborative effort among local government agencies, homeless service providers, community volunteers, and unhoused individuals to perform cleanup activities along Coyote Creek.

Ms. Sue Tippetts, Deputy Operating Officer, reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and the corresponding presentation materials contained in Attachment 1 were reviewed by Mr. Mark Bilski, Senior Management Analyst, who reported the scheduled environmental cleanup event had been canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

During the presentation, the Committee made the following requests of staff:

- Staff to work with the City of San Jose to notify volunteers of the canceled clean-up event and reschedule the event to a future date when COVID-19 restrictions are removed.

5.2. Downtown Streets Team Update.

Recommendation: Receive updates from Downtown Streets Team staff members on grant-funded projects through the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection (Safe, Clean Water) Program and address concerns regarding organizational issues highlighted in the media.

Ms. Sherilyn Tran, Civic Engagement Manager, reviewed the information on this item, per the attached Committee Agenda Memo, and the corresponding presentation materials contained in Attachment 1 were reviewed by Downtown Streets Team staff who reported on cleanup activities along the Upper Guadalupe River, the El Camino in Sunnyvale, and the Coyote, Los Gatos and Penitencia Creeks. Downtown Streets Team staff also reported on assistance programs to provide volunteer team members with employment and housing to achieve self-sufficiency.

Downtown Streets Team staff reviewed the results of an investigation alleging discrimination and mistreatment of staff noting there was no evidence of gender bias in salary, promotions or other opportunities, or indication that staff had been rewarded based on perceived favoritism or socializing with management. Downtown Streets Team staff recapped the implementation of new policy and monitoring programs to address employee concerns.

The Committee noted the information without formal action.

5.3. 2019 Homeless Encampment Committee Accomplishment Report.

Recommendation: Review and accept the 2019 Homeless Encampment Committee Accomplishment Report.

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

The Committee noted the information without formal action.

5.4. Review 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 corresponding presentation materials contained in Attachment 1.

Mr. Robert Aguirre, Homeless Advocate, reported that the City and County have implemented a moratorium on homeless encampment sweeps to avoid relocating homeless communities and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

During the presentation, the Committee made the following requests of staff:

- Staff to coordinate an update from Downtown Streets Team on continued activities and how Valley Water funds are being used to support their efforts.
- Staff to coordinate an update from the CHEERS organization.
- Staff to coordinate an update from other local agencies on their efforts to address homelessness.
- Staff to work with Mr. Aguirre and City of San Jose to coordinate trash pickups from homeless encampments along Valley Water creeks.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS.

None.

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

Ms. Natalie Dominguez, Assistant Deputy Clerk, confirmed that there were no new Committee Recommendations or Requests for Board consideration.

Direction to staff was recorded as follows:

Item 5.1:

- Staff to work with the City of San Jose to notify volunteers of the canceled clean-up event and reschedule the event to a future date when COVID-19 restrictions are removed.

Item 5.4:

- Staff to coordinate an update from Downtown Streets Team on continued activities and how Valley Water funds are being used to support their efforts.
- Staff to coordinate an update from the CHEERS organization.
- Staff to coordinate an update from other local agencies on their efforts to address homelessness.
- Staff to work with Mr. Aguirre and City of San Jose to coordinate trash pickups from homeless encampments along Valley Water creeks.

7. ADJOURN.

Chairperson Santos adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

[original signed by]
Natalie F. Dominguez, CMC
Assistant Deputy Clerk

Approved: August 31, 2020