

**THOUSAND PALMS COMMUNITY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**Thousand Palms Community Center**  
**31189 Robert Road, Thousand Palms, CA 92276**  
**Find these minutes on line at [www.rivco4.org](http://www.rivco4.org)**  
**1-27-2022**

	<b>In Attendance:</b>	X	<b>Christopher Mitchell</b> , Chairman
		X	<b>Bill Senso</b> , Council Member
		X	<b>Patricia Saleh</b> , Secretary
		X	<b>Alice Tibbets</b> , Council Member—In attendance but incommunicado
		X	<b>Samantha Wright-Watts</b> , Council Member
		x	<b>Alexis Perez</b> , Liaison to 4th District Supervisor Perez, 760-863-8211
	<b>Call to Order:</b>		<b>Chairman Christopher Mitchell</b> opened the meeting at 6 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Secretary Patricia Saleh-Swaim called the roll. Senso moved to accept the minutes from November 18, 2021 as written and Mitchell seconded. Minutes were approved.
	<b>Council Reports:</b>		Senso (President and Director of the Thousand Palms Chamber) said the Chamber is up and running. A Mixer will be held on Feb. 9 at Denny's in the back room from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. \$20 flat fee.  Saleh reported that IID is trying to figure out how to reduce its ECA (Energy Cost Adjustment), an add-on fee for extra electricity this last summer.
	<b>Staff Reports:</b>		<b>Alexis Perez reporting</b> : Community Fund update: Roughly, \$450,000 will come to the Thousand Palms Community Fund. They're still figuring out how and where to distribute it. A Community Cleanup flyer was emailed to the Supervisor and the first will be Nov. 5 as well as a Hazardous waste collection date. She will notify us when it's finalized. Affordable Housing from the Housing and Workforce Solutions Department has reported in but it will have to be presented at the next meeting. Wright asked about the Taco Stand operations and Perez reported that they must close at 10 PM. Environmental Health handles it. The stands have to get a permit. Perez has also contacted Environmental Health regarding the food truck and the homelessness by the Valero gas station. Vehicles will be removed soon that are parked there illegally. Saleh will send her the information on the new homeless housing in Palm Springs and whether or not that housing will be usable by Thousand Palms homeless.
	<b>Sheriff's Dept</b>		<b>Sargeant Chris Gelinis reporting</b> will be the official representative on Zoom from now on. cgelinas@riversidesheriff.org He reported the following: July 21 to Jan 5—38 stolen vehicles, Will work with code enforcement to shut down the complaints about speeding on Via Las Palmas in the Desert Moon area. New short-term rental permits must be submitted long before large Coachella Valley events, etc. Sheriffs will review the permits and will know about the events going on. New ordinances will go into effect next month. Mitchell asked for year over year reports on burglaries and other infractions comparing the progress or deterioration of the situation. Mitchell asked what is the case if the person contacts 911 and does the Sheriff's Department have to respond. Gelinis said that the complainant must leave their name or they will not respond. They will keep the complainant's name a secret. If there's screaming and fighting they'll respond quicker. Bill Wrightone of the owners of a home having events, said some parties are out of hand but he keeps his under the noise meter limits.
	<b>CHP</b>		Officer Raphael Espinosa: NA

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	<b>Fire Department</b>	<p><b>Fire Chief Sal Salinsian reporting:</b> He works halftime. His Report: No residential or construction fires lately. Working with Ana Velasquez on community projects. The Fire Department on Robert Rd. now has a fire engine and a fire truck with ladders on it. They can run medical calls and fire calls at the same time with the two trucks. Two Battalion chiefs have been hired to take care of the community better. From his perspective, he said, everything is moving along pretty smoothly. They check on gas usage. The trend he's seeing is that there are a lot of small nuisance fires from homeless encampments. They handle them respectively to when they're called in. They go to check on bonfires and other burning debris every weekend. There are 500 gallons of water per engine. There's smoke from the fires and it lays over the community.</p> <p>Council Member Wright asked about the large barbecues at the corner of Varner and Ramon at the Chevron Gas station on Fridays and Saturdays. It is worrying her that fires should not be near gas stations. Gelinias said that if they have permits there's nothing the Fire Department can do, but without permits he can deal with it. Salinsian said that they are patrolling the barbecues but there have never been any fires yet. Wright said she is always worried that there could be an accident there, etc. because it produces a large crowd. Gelinias said this is a CHP concern.</p>
	<b>Desert Recreation District</b>	<p><b>Ana Velasquez</b>  Reporting on the fencing and vacant lot across from the Community Center and Library: Public Works has lifted the fencing and tried to repair it. Many of their workers are out with covid but they will continue to keep up what they've promised. She invited everyone to the Recreation District headquarters on Feb. 17 starting at 9 AM. And, they will have different craft stations for Valentine's Day. Leagues were cancelled this month due to covid. They will have a summer camp, and there will be a career day. They will get to ask what it's like to be on the Council. Keep them in mind for community events.</p>
	<b>Transportation Department</b>	Dennis Acuna—NA
	<b>Cathedral City</b>	<p><b>Cathedral City Economic Development Director</b>  Stone James—NA</p>
	<b>Off Hwy Vehicle Feasibility Survey</b>	<p>1-28-2022 is the last day to participate in the survey. County of Riverside is looking for 6 areas to operate off-road vehicles. It used to be okay to operate them on Edom Hill but that was shut down. Coachella, Banning and other places in Riverside County are possible. To access the flyer, there's a link. There is a flyer with six areas highlighted.</p>
	<b>Old Business</b>	<p><b>Bill Wright Reporting on Allbright Services and Castro Roofing:</b></p> <p>1) Rene of Allright Services—a construction and cleanup business. They started the company in 1987. In 1994 they moved to Thousand Palms on Vista Chino Road. In 2017 the multispecies act was approved and he was out of conformance. He had to get a restoration permit to get 15 acres operational. They will donate 10 acres to the multispecies habitat. They don't dump on the property. They put the cleanup in containers.</p> <p>2) The other site is Castro Roofing Storage Yard  A mile away from Allright Services.</p> <p>Saleh asked if these projects will interfere with mines on opposite side of street. Wright replied that they don't interfere with mining operations on the other side of Vista Chino. He has 10 to 14 trips per day along that street. Motion to Moved to approve by Bill Senso and seconded by Mitchell.</p>

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	<b>New Business</b>	<b>Fred Noble (Tom Noble's brother)</b>
	<b>Salvador Solar Farm project</b>	<p>Noble said that he was working with his brother Tom Noble on a project with 286 lots that were approved for homes, but his brother passed away and they aren't ready yet to start the building. IID and SCE substations form a massive grid in the north portion of the land, he said. There is a 40 acre block between the substation and the proposed solar facility, making it the ideal location for a solar farm. He said that a European company came and proposed a solar project by this property, and they negotiated with IID but didn't get approval.</p> <p>Noble said he has been in the solar and wind business for years, and said that the farm will cost about \$500 million—\$550 million. Sales tax will come to the county, and a significant portion will come to Thousand Palms. The farm will include solar panels and storage batteries. The state's plan is to make solar reliable. He said that the farm will cover the electricity shortage time from 5 to 9 pm. It will operate without staff and be visited quarterly. It will be 1,200 feet from Ramon Rd. It will not be intrusive into the neighborhood or block horizons, etc. He said he was hoping to start it in 2023. He also said that around \$700,000-\$750,000 will come to Thousand Palms from sales taxes. Alexis corrected him to say that the sales tax money does not go directly to Thousand Palms but goes into the General Fund. Mitchell asked if some of it could be sectioned off for Thousand Palms. No answer was given.</p> <p>Saleh asked for an elevation of how the farm will look from the street. Tibbets said that Tri-Palms residents worried that it might affect golf in their area. The concerned residents did not attend the Zoom meeting this evening so she decided not to object. Saleh mentioned that Fred's brother Tom originally proposed that Ivey Ranch in Thousand Palms could get energy from the farm since it was nearby. She asked if that was still the case. Fred Noble replied that if the Public Utilities Commission would change the ordinances so that electricity can be sent anywhere they want, he would be happy to benefit Ivey. Right now it will go into the SCE grid. SCE owns the wires but Salvador can sell to whomever they wish. The ultimate buyers of this energy have yet to be determined. San Jose, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage may also buy discounted energy, he said. It's becoming a dynamic market. Saleh asked why IID wasn't for the idea. He said that they are doing another Solar Farm in Palm Springs and this is not theirs. Saleh said Thousand Palms will not benefit electricity-wise from this project. They might get some of the taxes, but not the electricity. Public commented—Bill Wright said that he is in support of this project. No other public comments. Mitchell called the question. Senso voted to approve. Wright seconded. Approved 4 to 1, Saleh abstaining.</p>

**State of Palm Springs Unified Trustee Area 1**

**Madonna Gerrell, Trustee Area 1 Representative over Thousand Palms, reporting: State of Palm Springs Unified School District**

Gerrell reported that she was re-elected last year. There's still a 5-member board with John Gerardi as president. Mike Suizi is the new Superintendent.

Keeping schools open and safe for students is their priority, she said. Business Services superintendent said they've served over 10 million meals during the pandemic. Parents were able to drive through Della Lindley and more to get meals. She says there are 730 K-12 schools.

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**State of Palm Springs Unified Trustee Area 1 (Continued)**

Keeping schools open and safe for students is the District’s priority, she said. Business Services superintendent said they’ve served over 10 million meals during the pandemic. Parents were able to drive through Della Lindley and more to get meals. She says there are 730 K-12 schools. Her district is going to be revised because of the census. She serves Desert Hot Springs (DHS), Cathedral City (CC), North Palm Springs (NPS), Sky Valley (SV) and Thousand Palms (TP). Based on the census her district will now have 33,000 students. There are four high schools in District 1. Alternative high schools are in DHS and Cathedral City. School Resource Officers have been brought back to campuses and trained with security personnel to keep schools safe. Keeping the kids in good mental health is a priority for PSUSD. There’s a hybrid school system for students to study by Zoom who don’t want to come back to school. Handicaps, etc. make them interested in alternative programs.

They’ve done great work across the district to stay open during covid. They have less students this year. They’re down to 24,000. Eighty percent are Hispanic. Eight percent are White, and 93 percent are socioeconomically challenged. They qualify for free lunch. 10% of students are homeless. Despite this, the graduation rate was 90-91% last year, and they graduated in person as well as by Zoom. Fifty percent are going to college. Tutors are available to parents. The schools have an air purification system and daily cleaning in the classrooms. Nurses are still limited. District dashboard on line every day to let parents know the progress of covid. Five hundred eighty seven are Infected as of today. Indoors students must wear masks. Outdoors it’s optional. This week the rates seem to be going lower. She can be emailed directly from the website or to [mgerrell@psusd.us](mailto:mgerrell@psusd.us). Mental health wellness centers are provided at Nellie Coffman and Rancho Mirage high schools where students can self refer. These resources supported by a foundation will soon be across the district. District testing was available. They were testing 1,000 a day, but they had to limit it per the day. If students are positive for covid, the county ordinance on Jan 12 indicates that they must stay home for 5 days. They test for covid on day 5. The district is giving out tests. If they’re positive they stay home for 10 days. If they test negative they can come back. If still positive they have to stay home. Staff has the same procedures. Staff is almost 100% vaccinated, but were not forced to do so. Culinary Arts Academy and Auto repair programs are continuing. Nicci Avinia was State Teacher of the Year in Rancho Mirage. Security staff is now multi-tasking, handing out masks, etc. There is a new parking lot at Della Lindley, and a new principal named Amanda Gonzales, a 22-year veteran. There are new shade structures at the elementary schools. She said she was also proud to say one of the first stations for electric vehicles in the state of CA will be at Cathedral City High School. Students/school personnel are served first, then community members. Della Lindley is being renovated. Despite the pandemic we have 92% in person attendance. In December 2021 it was 65% attendance because of covid. Invites people to come to Board Meetings or watch on You Tube. They are translated into Spanish on Zoom, and into Spanish

**2022 Meeting Sched.**

March 24, May 26, September 22, November 17.

**Public Comments:**

None

**Agenda Items for Next Meeting:**

The two dispensaries coming on line, and money that will come to us. Dispensary on Ramon.

**Adjournment**

Senso moved to adjourn at 8:34 PM. Mitchell seconded. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting: March 24, 2022

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Patricia Saleh,  
Thousand Palms Community Council Secretary**

