

Pojoaque Valley Planning Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, November 17, 2005 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Sammy Quintana Community Board Room

(Note: This is a meeting summary and is not intended to give the meeting contents in its entirety. If you would like to get more details about the meeting, please contact another committee member that was present at the meeting, or the SF County Planning staff.)

David Dogruel opened the meeting at about 6:40pm and asked for reports from community members.

Committee Member Reports

Ben Gomez told us about the dedication ceremony for the Bobby Trujillo Bridge in El Rancho. The event was very successful -- Channel 13 covered it and about 100 people attended.

David D. said that the Firemen's Ball was also successful. They had gotten good feedback from attendees, and it was a good fundraiser.

Renee V. passed out invitations to the Potluck that will be held on Saturday, Dec 3rd at the El Rancho Community Center starting at 4:00pm. She has also mailed invitations to committee members.

Discussion of the Community Center

David D. and Jack K. told us that Commissioner Montoya has requested \$400,000 of capital outlay money for the Community Center. We need to clarify what we want at the old high school site and also how the Jacona Land Grant site could be utilized that would be best for the community.

A number of community members attended our meeting. They wanted to learn more about our ideas for new uses for the old school property, and also where potential commercial districts could be located. They included Arsenio Trujillo, Ben Ray Lujan, and Danny Mayfield. Also, several members of the families that originally donated the land for the schools attended. They were Margarita Trujillo, Katarina Trujillo, and her son Felix Benavidez. They wanted to know more about what the committee and County were considering for use of the old high school building.

David D. presented some of our ideas, including:

1. A branch office for County Government – to get information, to purchase dumping permits, to pay property taxes etc.
2. Cooperative Extension services
3. Elders mentoring youth or more involved mentoring programs
4. Offices for non-profits to work with the Valley on projects like agricultural revitalization
5. Arts and crafts and other classes offered
6. A library
7. Access to high-speed Internet computers

David added that we would preserve all of the historically and culturally significant material on the site. Also David stressed the importance that the committee and County learn and honor the original intent of the owners and now the heirs for the building and keep them informed.

Margarita commented that these projects were for the community, but not specifically for students, so she would need to discuss this with her family.

Katarina told us the history behind the donation of the land and the existence of the schools. She was five years old when the project started. At that time, about seventy years ago, there was a plan to shut down the existing Pojoaque Valley school and transport all the children to Santa Cruz for school. Several families donated land for the schools, with the proviso that the land not be sold. Valley people made adobes, hauling water from the river, and went up towards Los Alamos to cut the vigas. This was all done with horse and wagon. The whole Valley cooperated on this. Pablo Sena donated the lumber for the floors. Women made meals for the workers. It was a community effort.

Katarina and Felix told us that they had heard rumors that the land would be sold to Pojoaque Pueblo or that Wal-Mart was interested in it. They were worried that the land might be taken by eminent domain, especially in light of the recent Supreme Court decision and were also concerned when they heard that the County was looking into what could legally be done with the land. Margarita emphasized that the families want the property used for educational purposes, and not for casinos.

Jack replied that the School Board had asked the County to look into the possible legal uses for the land. The PVPC's concern was that the buildings were going to be demolished. He added that this is one of the most central areas in the Valley. It might be a good place to also incorporate a plaza. We view the land as institutional (not commercial) property. He assured everyone that there is no hidden agenda. He also noted that Pojoaque Pueblo owns a small piece of the land, and that we hope that the Pueblo will be willing to donate it or trade other land for it.

Felix said that in the 1930's the land was donated for \$1. He showed us a copy of the Warranty Deed and added that as far as he knows, it was never signed, even though the donors were definitely educated well enough to sign. Things were done by a handshake.

Arsenio T. had several questions, including who would develop the school's land, who would be responsible for planning the project, and whether the Valley would need to incorporate in order to accomplish this. Jack answered that nothing has been decided; it all depends on the group. The first step is to see what is possible. We are just looking at various ideas right now. The idea is to make use of existing buildings, and limit the new construction as much as possible. There are various possibilities. For example the Valley could create a local non-profit to do the planning and development, the County could handle it, or, if the Valley Council is implemented, it could oversee this work. Jack emphasized that our ideas would be brought before the general community, especially the heirs, before anything is decided.

Ben Ray commented that \$400,000 doesn't buy much and that more should be requested. He also asked about whether we are considering a business incubator. Renee told him they are considering a business incubator that would promote local businesses, entrepreneurialism, and business training. However, the first step is to make sure the buildings are not demolished, and that's what the County will be assisting with this legislative session.

Felix suggested that we could also have a Sheriff's substation as part of the complex.

Definition of Zones in Pojoaque and Nambe

Jack and Renee brought two pairs of large aerial photos covering Nambe and Pojoaque. Jack pointed out a circle on one map, around the 285/503 intersection. This radial corridor is currently designated as one of two commercial districts for the Valley. It doesn't actually zone anything, but it does give people the right to come in and ask to have an area zoned as commercial. The circle is rather arbitrary, and does not reflect detailed knowledge of the area, nor all the current areas that have businesses. Jack suggested that we eliminate this circle, and, instead, mark the areas we think would be appropriate for commercial development, and zone them commercial. Land in these commercial areas could remain residential, but it would be easier to do commercial development on them.

Everyone agreed with this concept. The group divided up, with half working on one pair of photos, and half working on the other pair. We used different colors to mark existing commercial, institutional, agricultural, and Pueblo lands. We also marked areas that we felt should be zoned commercial. This work proceeded without controversy. A quick comparison of the two groups' work at the end of the meeting, showed that they were essentially in agreement, although there were some differences which would need to be reconciled. The County will put both sets of markups on one photo and bring it to the next meeting to make it easier to reconcile the differences.

Next Meetings

At the next meeting we will work on the aerial photos of Cuyamungue and 502 west.

The next meetings will be on Dec 8th and Dec 15th.

The meeting ended at about 8:40pm.

Notes by E.B. and R.V.