

Supervisor Dawn Rowe Discusses the Fire Tax at a Meeting Shortened by an Emergency

The Council approved the agenda for the October 21 meeting of the HVCC in Johnson Valley, but by that time the announcement of an emergency community meeting at Sportsman Lodge in Joshua Tree at 5:30 had made it obvious we had to cut it short.

County Supervisor Dawn Rowe described the emergency, brought about by the State Department of Hospitals informing San Bernardino District Attorney on October 17, that the Ventura County Superior Court recommends releasing a re-offending violent sexual predator in Joshua Tree. This, after Sacramento County refused him. He will be seeking treatment in the Coachella Valley



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mends releasing a re-offending violent sexual predator in Joshua Tree. This, after Sacramento County refused him. He will be seeking treatment in the Coachella Valley Sheriff John McMahon, Supervisor Rowe, and the District Attorneys office called the meeting in Joshua Tree to alert our citizens. Cpt Trevis Newport, ordinarily in attendance at HVCC, was to inform them of the court proceedings and discuss options available. Voicing our opposition to the court recommendation is likely.

Rowe also reviewed the tortuous path of the expansion of County Fire Protection Zone 5 (FP-5) to meet budget shortfalls by adding \$157 to every parcel's property tax bill without your having a say in the matter except by a protest process designed to fail. (Her description of the number of calls her office receives as tax bills get

opened, indicates the inadequacy of the original FP-5 protest process.)

The Board of Supervisors repealed the FP-5 expansion, limiting the tax levy to two years while County Fire works some budget cuts, including addressing new equipment purchases, sending three people out on a fire truck to answer a medical emergency, and a new Fire Chief bringing a new perspective on operations.

The idea of consolidation, Calfire taking over County Fire, seems unlikely.

Asked about the problems faced by the Joshua tree Farmers Market, Rowe reported the market would be allowed to continue while the original operating permit non-compliance issues of more vendors than the original 12 permitted, parking and extra hours were addressed, either by adjustments to return to compliance or relocating.

After Rowe departed to make the trip to the emergency meeting, the

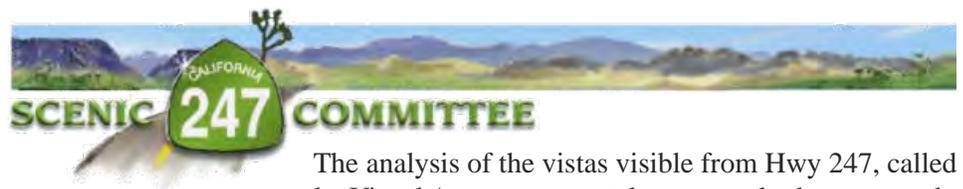
Council addressed the rest of the shortened agenda, including some Council business

HVCC President Jim Harvey reported on the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council approval of a resolution declaring the Morongo Basin a "Hate-Free Zone." Aside from the fact that an "advisory" council are merely advisors to the Supervisor, that same proposal encountered zero approval from a full house of Homestead Valley citizens, or the Council, at our September meeting in Landers.

He reported no response from 8-Minute Energy after he sent the HVCC position paper in opposition to industrial renewable energy projects and invited them to come to meet with us.

Harvey also announced the update of the HVCC website should be completed before next month's meeting in Flamingo Heights.

Good news for our Public Outreach!



The analysis of the vistas visible from Hwy 247, called the Visual Assessment, catalogs not only the man-made intrusions on the scenery, but also rates them according to the level of intrusiveness. Mile-by-mile, Scenic 247 Committee members have assembled hundreds of photographs. Sara Fairchild, our volunteer landscape architect, has written descriptive commentary for each, and Brian Hammer has volunteered section maps to accompany them. The County is the governing body for the entire 76 miles of the highway, and must meet Caltrans' guidelines for Visual Assessment before formally proposing it for Scenic designation. The Committee announced they plan to have this draft Visual Assessment in the hands of County Land Use Services and Caltrans Landscape Architect by October 28, for their review and comment.