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APRIL'S FEATURED PROGRAM:

Issues Facing the Elected Fallbrook Community Planning Group

presented by Chairman **Jim Russell**

During the 18th century, land use planning was something of an afterthought. "Landowners could do just about anything they wanted to do with a property," explained **Jim Russell**, chairman of the **Fallbrook Community Planning Group**, a 15-member elected board that advises San Diego County Board of Supervisors on issues such as land-use planning, traffic and development. A lot has changed in the last 200 or so years, especially in fast growing northern San Diego County, he told the audience at the monthly meeting of the Fallbrook Revitalization Advisory Council. With room for less than 1,000 new homes, Fallbrook, as it stands now, is on the verge of build out. One of the challenges will be to ensure that Fallbrook retains its intimate rural character. Over the years, the community planning group has taken a dim view of overaggressive grading and development. It opposed San Diego Association of Governments' Smart Growth Concept that would have concentrated future development in already developed areas to maximize transportation infrastructure. The group also voiced concerns about commercial, industrial and residential development on about 1,000 acres at the I-15/76 interchange that called for major grading and development of retail centers that potentially could wipe out merchants in downtown Fallbrook. Russell realizes that development will occur at this undeveloped interchange but wished it was not as "intensive" as being proposed by developers. Land use is an important thing in unincorporated towns such as Fallbrook, explained **Vince Ross**, FRAC chairman. "But it also is the hardest thing to explain because of its specialized language," he said.

Over the next several months Fallbrook residents will have an opportunity to comment and weigh in on the new Fallbrook Community Plan, which was last updated about 10 years ago. The community plan ultimately will become part of the county's general plan, which is a blueprint for growth and development through 2030. The community plan will be presented for public review at the Planning Group Meeting on May 18 at 7 p.m. at Live Oak School. Among other things, the updated plan

reinforces the community's desire to remain rural. "We like Fallbrook as a rural area," said Russell, who has chaired the planning group for the past 21 years. "We would like it to stay that way." Because agriculture is such a large component of this rural picture, the planning group is also trying to make sure there is enough low-cost housing for field workers, packing plants, irrigation companies and tractor repair shops to support the growers. "We are doing this in the community plan to accommodate these kinds of businesses," Russell said. He said it's important that the wishes of the community become part of the county's general plan because county planners typically have a one-size fits all approach to zoning and land-use planning that does not take into account the unique character of Fallbrook. "County planners don't understand anything but urban development," he said.

It's also important Fallbrook resident will get an opportunity to comment on a Pedestrian Enhancement Study that is looking at ways to make the downtown core of Fallbrook more pedestrian friendly and safe. Ross hopes the study and its recommendations will help reduce the number of pedestrian-related accidents on Main Street. "We are definitely getting more pedestrian traffic in that area," Ross said. Among other things, the study will help identify problems and deficiencies such as missing sidewalks, crosswalks that are not clearly marked, lack of traffic control at pedestrian crossings and dearth of wheelchair and stroller access. The study area is roughly outlined by Potter Street in the east, Summit Avenue in the west, Mission Road to the north and Fallbrook Street to the south. RBF Consulting, which was hired by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to do the study, will make a presentation at the Community Planning Group meeting on May 18.

OTHER REPORTS:

Supervisor's Corner: *Community Enhancement Hearings*

Residents of San Diego County will get a chance to request a portion of the county's transient occupancy tax (TOT) fund at annual community enhancement hearings on June 8-9. The 5th District (North County) and 2nd District (East County) are the only districts that bring in TOT for the County.

Our objective in returning this hotel room tax to organizations is to help raise money to promote tourism, bolster economic development and strengthen community services. Fallbrook has been a major recipient of TOT funds. Last year, based on my recommendations, various groups in the village received \$177,500.

The Community Enhancement program funding level for Fiscal Year 2008-09 was anticipated to be \$3.2 million. I am pleased to say that, despite a down economy, TOT collections through the second quarter of the fiscal year are a little more than \$1.6 million. Fallbrook's TOT at the mid-point for the fiscal year is nearly \$214,000, second only to Rancho Santa Fe for unincorporated areas.

The TOT hearings will be held at 1600 Pacific Highway in the Board Chambers (Room 310), San Diego from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. both days.

Each supervisor also has \$2 million in community assistance funds to distribute. Several years ago supervisors voted to use funds from the sale of a trash-to-energy plant in San Marcos to pay down the county debt.

Recommendations for grant awards, largely to non-profit organizations that enable them to serve the community are made during the year through our office and subject to approval by the board as a whole.

For a complete listing of our community projects grants in recent years, go to our [website](#).

Permitting for Special Events

Hot Summer Nites got off to a cool start this year after Connections Networking Group was unable to get permitting for its beer and wine garden at the Avocado Festival. **Manny Gratz**, Connections president, admitted his group started the permitting process late but was nonetheless frustrated by changing rules and organizations that seem to be working at cross purposes to each other. "I've never understood how the system worked," said Gratz, a mortgage lender. "In the past we were able to sit down with the county and work it out." This year, however, the Connections group will start its series of six Hot Summer Nites in the red, after having to cancel a fund-raising event that would have included two breweries and seven wineries. The group is now "in the hole" after paying for advertising and insurance for an event on private property that never took place. **Janice Bricker** with the Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society said she has encountered the same problems trying to plan for the annual Gem and Mineral Fair the society holds on the first Sunday in October. "It's horrendous," she said. "They always want something more." **Don McDougal**, co-owner of the Grand Tradition, said the county is making it difficult to put on a July 4th fundraiser for the Fallbrook Beautification Alliance. This year the county is requiring that he create a plan of how trash from the event will be separated and recycled. "It's a Pandora's box," he said. Non-profit groups in unincorporated areas of San Diego, i.e. Fallbrook, typically need to apply for what is called a Temporary Community Events Permit (TCEP for short) to put on an event. While the permit covers events no longer than four hours a day over a four-day period, the application is 30 pages long. **Vince Ross**, FRAC chairman, said he was concerned about how onerous the permitting process has become and what effect it will have on the 170 or so non-profit groups in Fallbrook that rely on special events for fundraising. He suggested that FRAC hold a special meeting to address the issue and get some assistance from the San Diego Board of Supervisors to help reign in a permitting bureaucracy that is creating more problems than it solves.

Here and there... **Chris Hasvold** with [Coldwell Banker Landmark Group](#) told those attending the FRAC meeting that all the pieces are in place for a recovery in the local real estate market, especially for

homes priced less than \$750,000. Sales are up, more buyers can afford homes, home prices are down and mortgages are at their lowest level in decades. "Refinancing is going through the roof," he said. "As long as the borrower has equity, they are getting interest rates in the mid-fours." ... **Tom Causey**, code enforcement officer with the County of San Diego, said he is available to answer questions from the public at the Sheriff's Sub-station at 388 East Alvarado St. every Monday. Typically he sees about eight people each Monday, including many who just received a code violation notice. He reminded the audience that his department does not actively go and seek violations. They come to him in the form of complaints... **Christi Knight** with San Diego County Supervisor Bill Horn's office told the FRAC attendees that the supervisors have approved a vegetation management report that help get rid of dead and dying plants and trees and clear brush in fire prone areas...Marlene Rantanen, Fallbrook Center for the Arts said the [Fallbrook Art Center](#) has a new ADA restroom thanks to the San Diego County and Supervisor Bill Horn. The art center will host the 16th Annual Reflections of Nature National Wildlife Art Show on May 2-3 and the 13th Annual Gourd & Fiber Art Show on May 17-June 28 Don McDougal with the [Fallbrook Area Visitors Bureau](#) handed out the new informational Find Fallbrook brochure. The three-fold, eight-page resource neatly fits in a pocket and replaces four separate brochures. The brochure, underwritten by San Diego Country Supervisor Bob Horn, provides information about key attractions, galleries, art schools, more than a dozen restaurants and shopping and home décor opportunities. The brochure is available at the visitors bureau office at 123 W. Alvarado St. or [online](#).

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED PROGRAM:

The "New Look" at the Fallbrook Village Association, an update on ongoing projects, and new collaborations. Presented by Vince Ross and Don McDougal on May 21 at 11 a.m.

The Fallbrook Revitalization Advisory Council was formed by San Diego County 20 years ago to serve as a forum for community organizations where information about important Fallbrook issues could be exchanged. The networking group, which is made up key members of the municipal, private, non-profit and for-profit organizations, serves as an advisory body to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

The Fallbrook Revitalization Advisory Council meets on the third Thursday of every month at the Fallbrook Public Utilities District office at 990 E. Mission Road. Meetings are open to the public.

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