

# **Minutes of the Mesquite Ranch Neighborhood Association**

## **Regular Meeting – July 1, 2008 – Call to Order**

The Meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm. The following board members were present:

Randall Pierce  
Keith Miller  
Sylvia Katvala  
Chip Ellis

A Quorum was noted for the record.

## **Minutes of May Meeting**

Motion to approve the May meeting minutes was made by Randy Pierce and seconded by Sylvia Katvala. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

## **Special Presentation – Senita Valley / Vail School District**

Members of the Vail School District attending the meeting to present status of the Senita Valley Elementary and Rincon Vista Middle Schools were invited to introduce themselves:

Connie Erickson – Principal, Senita Valley Elementary School  
Kevin Carney – Principal, Rincon Vista Middle School (formerly of Desert Sky Middle School)  
John Carruth – Assistant Superintendent, Vail School District

Mesquite Ranch residents that were members of the Senita Valley Site Council were also in attendance.

Connie Erickson began the discussion by stating that approximately 555 K-5 students and 130 grade 6-8 students are ready to begin classes at Senita Valley on July 14<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am. She explained that there would be two crosswalks to facilitate movement of Mesquite Ranch students to the school: one at Metropolitan allowing crossing to/from the north side of Bilby and another further east to permit crossing to/from the south side of Bilby at the main entrance to the school. Crossing guards will be available at both crosswalks to ensure safe movement of students. Ms. Ericson invited parents to attend an open house and barbecue to meet the teachers on Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:00pm. A communication to parents of upcoming events will be made to parents of Senita Valley students.

John Carruth explained that the entrance to Senita Valley Elementary at Marquette Street was currently fenced off due to ongoing construction of Rincon Valley Middle School to the south of the Senita Valley campus. There is currently no access to the school from Marquette, though, if construction progress permits, plans are to open pedestrian access at Marquette as soon as possible during the current school year. Mr. Carruth added his strong support for Ms. Erickson and Mr. Carney and indicated that their previous experience with new school startups would help ensure a strong start for both schools.

Kevin Carney described accommodations at Senita Valley for a limited number of middle school students during the current school year and explained that construction was on track for a July '09 opening of Rincon Vista Middle School.

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### **General Discussion – Senita Valley School Opening**

The floor was opened for general discussion around the opening of Senita Valley School.

A resident expressed concern that he had not received communication about re-registering his daughter at Senita Valley, or for after-school care, despite numerous conversations with staff at the school. Ms. Erickson agreed to meet with the resident directly to resolve the issues.

Randy Pierce agreed to provide a link from the MRNA website to the Senita Valley School website to assist in communication.

Kevin Carney added that a listserv would be set up soon to allow concerned parents and residents to receive up-to-date information about Senita Valley and the construction progress of Rincon Vista.

Randy Pierce asked about bus traffic to and from Senita Valley. John Carruth explained that buses were currently transporting students to Senita Valley from the Desert Willow Elementary area in Rita Ranch, as well as from areas further south on Houghton Road. He added that bus traffic would increase once the middle school opened next year.

A resident expressed concern over the 3-4 inch “bump” along Bilby at Metropolitan due to the new pavement not being at the same elevation as the older section of Bilby west of Metropolitan. John Carruth explained that he was not familiar with the issue, but assured the group that the road would meet city codes and that this transition would likely be fixed, particularly if safety was a concern.

A resident asked about the status of the 5-foot median between the cattle fence at the west boundary of the Senita Valley property and the block walls at the east boundary of Mesquite Ranch. John Carruth stated that he was not aware that this strip of land was owned by VSD, and expressed concern over the need to provide additional funds to fence off the area. Randy Pierce explained that prior review of property maps indicated that Vail School District owned this land. He reiterated MRNA’s previous concerns over the easy access of the strip from the Marquette Street entrance, and the potential for unintended use of this strip for pedestrian access, due to steep terrain, the propensity for rattlesnakes, and the possibility of vandalism along property boundaries. The resident explained that a simple re-direction of the current barbed wire fence and a sign could help deter children from entering the area, at little cost. Mr. Carruth agreed that the ownership issue needs to be resolved, and advised that the issue would be addressed concurrently or soon after opening of the Marquette Street entrance.

Sgt. Plummer of TPD addressed concerns over congestion by indicating that both bike and motor officers would be made available during the first week to ensure smooth traffic flow, enforce school zone speeds, and direct safe use of the crosswalks. He indicated that the dropoff pattern from Bilby Road designed for Senita Valley was “ideal” and believed it unlikely that Marquette Street would be used as a vehicle dropoff point for students.

A resident raised safety concerns due to the lack of a sidewalk on the south side of Bilby Road east of Metropolitan, which requires students from Mesquite Ranch to cross Bilby Road twice to get to the new school. John Carruth advised that addition of the sidewalk was the responsibility of Pulte, and was expected to occur as development east of the school continued, resulting in the widening of Bilby to two lanes east of the school. Randy Pierce expressed concern that the addition of the sidewalk was at Pulte’s discretion, given the current slowdown in development, and felt that Vail School District should help resolve the issue with Pulte and ensure that a sidewalk was provided to ensure safe access for residents of Mesquite Ranch to the school.

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### **Committee Reports**

Community Service – Chip Ellis reported that the Fall Community Yard Sale and Cleanup would be held sometime in October.

Plans & Development – Randy Pierce briefly discussed the Houghton Road widening project. The project will occur in three phases. Phase 1 from I-10 to Valencia will begin this month, with expected completion in 2009. Phase 2 from Valencia to Irvington will begin in late 2009 with completion approximately one year later. The Community Design Review Committee, consisting of City and Neighborhood Association leaders will be scheduling open houses to communicate progress to the community.

Development at Valencia and Drexel is believed to be for a Valero gas station/mini mart.

Eastside Church of Christ has purchased land at Houghton and Escalante to build a church.

Home Depot is still planning a multi-retail development on land between Old Vail Road to the railroad tracks.

Traffic & Safety – Sweeping of MRNA streets by the City was completed shortly after the May meeting.

Newsletter – Chip Ellis requested article submissions by July 8 to support a July newsletter submission to DNR.

Social Committee – A community barbecue is tentatively scheduled for September 13<sup>th</sup>. Interested volunteers should contact Karina Trumbull.

Treasurer's Report – No account activity since last month.

### **Call to Audience**

A resident expressed concern over recent City pickup of recyclables. In particular, on two occasions, recyclables were not picked up on Tuesday (the normal pickup day) but were picked up on Wednesday. Randy Pierce agreed to make a call to express the concern and obtain information on why this occurred.

### **Meeting Closure**

Randy Pierce advised that the next meeting will be the MRNA Annual Meeting, held August 5<sup>th</sup>, at the Multi-Purpose Room at the new Senita Valley Elementary School.

Motion to adjourn the annual meeting was made by Chip Ellis and seconded by Sylvia Katvala. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 7:50 p.m.