



STATE OF THE CITY MEETING

By Diane Dearing

The meeting took place in the Mill at 10 AM on Saturday, November 4, 2017 with the introduction of **Randy Johnson** (Mayor) by **Dave Hodgin** (President of Scotts Valley Senior Life Association (SVSLA)). After introductions of **Jim Reed** (Vice Mayor), **Donna Lind** and **Jack Dilles** (Council Members), **Jenny Haruyama**, (City Manager), and **Piret Harmon** (General Manager SV Water), he began with the motto of "Doing more with less." His first examples were of the upgrade of the restrooms at both **Siltanen Park** and **Sky Park** as well as the upgrade at the **Senior Center**. He said the **Middle School** in SV was built in 1941 and that finally after the delay of the beetle issue, the new school will be ready to open in one year. The **library** is the best in the county and only took between \$6- \$7 million to build, which is half of what other libraries in the county have cost. He mentioned that SV was only getting \$3 out of every \$100 in tax revenue until winning the law suit which now provides SV \$7 of every \$100. Due to the TOT (ten percent tax), the **Lexington Hotel** will bring tax revenue of \$2-\$3 per room (129 rooms) and the **1440 Multiversity Hotel** (getting its name for 1440 minutes in a day) which is at the location of the former Bethany Campus, will bring about \$15 per room via taxes.

The **Town Center** is taking shape in that one of the major buildings was just taken down. This center will have a major restaurant (**The Hangar**) and also will provide housing, retail and office space. It will take \$40 to \$50 million to build and Randy and others will be talking to three interested developers soon. One of the selling points will be that the residents of San Lorenzo Valley go through our area and will bring customers. He also noted that **Kaiser** moving in as well as **UCSC**

(in the old Borland building which has brought in 400 employees), are helping as well.

He discussed the need for affordable and senior housing can be accomplished by smaller units. Some of the newest housing will be **40 homes by Santa Village** site on the 150 acres, **50 town homes near Borland**, **20 units behind the Shell Station at Mt. Hermon Road**, and **30 to 35 condos by the Lexington**. He discussed the reduction of **30 % to 40 % less water usage since 1990**. Also, the plan is for better lights and lane usage at the **SV Drive and Mt. Hermon Road intersection**. He said they have been keeping up with slurry sealing to keep from having to redo roads. Overall, he predicts a bright future for our town.

Steve Walpole Jr., Police Chief, reminded us that his father retired as SV Police Chief in 2001 and he has been on board for one year. When he came on they were down four officers and they are now filled with local homegrown officers. There are **volunteers** who work on weekends and they receive the same training as regular officers. Our volunteer program is the largest in the county. There also is the **Explorers** program for teenagers of minimum 15 yrs of age, who ride with the officers and hopefully one day will join the force to keep our officers locally grown. He spoke of the Firearms Ordinance with the moratorium of gun shops. The recent passage of a resolution governs methods to store guns safely with hopes of no theft. In the past 45 days since passed, there has been no theft in SV gun shops. The **Emergency Preparedness** program was developed with the Fire Department and the School District. All employees have been trained. They also have worked together on the county-wide "intruder call." Finally, even though our Police Department has had very few complaints, they are working on a program, with the input from the community, to install **body cameras** by May or June.

Steve Kovacs, Fire Chief, recently came to SV from Murphy, CA. He has been with four districts in his 36 years in this field. He stated that the department is funded through property taxes and not via city of Scotts Valley. They cover 22 square miles and there is currently a Facility Study to decide if they will stay and remodel or build from scratch. This should be completed by June. They are building a new website for more community outreach. They have had longevity in their department but in the next several years they will lose 1/3 to retirement. There is a high rate of cancer due to the high toxicity of smoke. Therefore, they are looking into better protection of clothing as well as better mental health programs. Counseling is needed due to the horrific scenes that firemen see which is embedded in their minds. He also said that when a department orders a new fire truck, it must be built to their needs. He gave statistics on the recent fires and did offer that one of SV fire engines was in Napa fires for 14 days as well as one in the Bear fire locally. Fire protection is a community effort and that we should clear trees and weeds and keep the perimeter clear for firemen to access. Everyone should have an evacuation plan with a container that houses all emergency needs ready to go and a rendezvous point for family to reunite. He said to sign up for **Nixel** and **Code Red** to get alerts. With many folks giving up land lines, it makes it necessary to **register your cell phone with 911** to get the reverse 911 call. Also, people can check **Cal Fire** and **Wildfire.org** for information. He ended with "When you see a firemen, personally give him/her your thanks....they do not get enough of this type recognition."

Piret Harmon, General Manager of SV Water District, reminded us that with new connections it will help lower fees. She reminded us that our infrastructure is over 50 years old with 60 miles of old pipe. Each mile of pipe cost \$1 million. They are constantly looking into innovative methods of providing safe water for low fees. It was brought up by **Donna Lind**, Council Member, that recycling water used for irrigation has also caused lower usage. Also, the agreement with Pasa Tiempo Golf Course where we sell water that used to go into the ocean, has helped support our system.

Jenny Haruyama, City Manager, noted that the great leadership of the council has helped keep our expenses down. They are working on a five-year plan which will be up on the updated website. The workshops involving the community have been well attended. Our public safety has been on the minds of our police as they go out of their way to keep us all safe. She gave some

examples. She wants a dialog to continue being strong between the community, the city council and the other city departments.

The presentations ceased and the Q & A brought the following items:

- There is NO knowledge by the participants regarding **Google** possibly moving here.
- The **Emergency Preparedness Center** is for the city people to organize NOT for the community. In the event of the need, there will be places designated. Also, the Police Chief noted that they would open up the road to Avisa to aid in our evacuation.
- Update on **Watkins-Johnson/Avisa** property is that there is a draft of an environmental report which should be completed by December, after which the rezoning to residential property will proceed. The public will have 45 days to comment. They have promised to keep us informed.
- A **Traffic Engineering** has begun regarding the intersection of **Blue Bonnet Drive** and **Bean Creek Road** to see if they will go forward with a **four-way stop** or merely the trimming of bushes.
- SV has kept taxes low by not taxing on items such as cell phones as other cities do.
- **Pension plans** are a big expense and are a cause of many struggles. There needs to be more participants to keep ample funds available. It is an ongoing problem.
- Everyone can call **438-1000** if there is a concern about whether your **water heater is strapped safely**. It is a **FREE** service of Scotts Valley Senior Life Association (formerly Monteville Community Life).
- This event was one of the semi-annual workshops provided for the benefit of local seniors without charge. SVSLA is a non-profit organization funded through the generosity of our neighbors.

The meeting ended and attendees enjoyed the delicious assortment of food and drinks prepared by **Heidi Jackson**, **Wilma McHenry**, and **Linda Tanner**.



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