



Empire Municipal Advisory Council

General Contact Information:

P.O. Box 1841

Empire, CA 95319

Email: TheEmpireMAC@gmail.com

www.StanCountyMACs.com

Members:

Christopher Nunes, Chair

Dorothy Roberts, Secretary

Cari Raybourn, Member

MINUTES

Wednesday, January 24, 2024 @ 6 PM
Empire Community Library, Community Room
98 I Street
Empire, CA 95319

Present (identified by a checked box):

Christopher Nunes

Cari Raybourn

Dorothy Roberts

1. Call Meeting to Order – Meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM by Chair Nunes.
2. Pledge of Allegiance - Pledge of allegiance was recited by all in attendance.
3. Introduction and Roll Call – Chair Nunes welcomed the public and the members introduced themselves and welcomed our newest member, Cari Raybourn
4. Approve Meeting Minutes from May 23, 2023. – A motion was made to approve the minutes.

Chair Nunes Motioned, Vice Chair Roberts Seconded. Unanimously approved.

5. Public Comment

- Chair Nunes read information regarding public comment.
- Mr. Rodriguez raised a concern regarding a statement from Public Works in January 2019 regarding the installation of sidewalks and updated storm drains in Empire. He sought clarification on the timeline for the commencement and completion of this work. Other attendees echoed concerns about the needs for sidewalks, especially considering recent rainfall. In response, Erica Ignacio acknowledged the concern and committed to contacting Public Works for updates. She also urged residents to make use of the Stan Connect app for further communication and updates.
- Horacio Madueno, representing Stanislaus County Behavior Health and Recovery Services, began by introducing himself and providing an overview of the services offered by their organization. He highlighted the recent initiative where officers are now directly receiving calls through the crisis hotline, with clinicians accompanying patrol units during their shifts. Additionally, he shared the hotline numbers for easy reference:

Crisis Hotline: 1-888-376-62468, with option 2 for mental health services, option 3 for drug and alcohol services, and option 4 for immediate crisis assistance.

The National Suicide Hotline: 988, which accepts both calls and text messages.



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6. Community Reports

a. Public Safety

i. Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office – Deputy Babbitt

The Deputy presented crime statistics for the Empire area for the month of December 2023.

ii. California Highway Patrol – Officer Francisco Arias.

- The officer provided statistical data pertaining to accidents, abandoned vehicles, and vehicle-related crime in Empire from October 2023 to January 2024. Additionally, information regarding staffing and the appointment of the New Captain were discussed.

Mr. Rodriguez raised a concern regarding the observed decline in the presence of officials in the Empire area since 2021. Officer Arias addressed this concern, assuring attendees that steps are being taken to enhance the presence of law enforcement in Empire.

A resident brought forward the issue of frequent accidents occurring at the S curve on Church Street and proposed the installation of a streetlight to mitigate risks. Erica Ignacio clarified that this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the Public Works department. She assured them that the issue would be duly addressed during the Public Works segment of the meeting.

The officer informed attendees that the CHP would supply steering wheel clubs to vehicle owners upon presentation of their vehicle registration.

iii. Stanislaus Consolidated Fire – Captain Drapes

- The captain presented detailed statistics regarding the responses from the Fire Department, Station 22, for the entire year of 2023. Additionally, he conveyed important information to the attendees, highlighting that Station 22 provides advanced life support services to



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the Empire area, ensuring the presence of paramedics alongside firefighters to deliver a comprehensive form of life support.

- Furthermore, the captain informed the audience about upcoming improvements at Station 22, including a new paint job and ongoing maintenance for the current engine. He also discussed efforts being made to procure a new fire engine to enhance the department's capabilities.
- An attendee raised concerns about fireworks being discharged in the area. The captain addressed these concerns, providing relevant information and potential actions to address the issue.

iv. Public Works – Bill Martins

- Mr. Martins responded to Mr. Rodriguez's concerns regarding the drainage project, clarifying that it is part of the larger Cal Trans project. He provided updates on responses made by Public Works, including addressing floods, replacing knocked-down stop signs, and managing high weed growth in alleys.
- Furthermore, Mr. Martins acknowledged concerns about installing a light at the S curve on Church Street. He committed to personally inspecting the area to assess the need for appropriate reflectors to enhance visibility, recognizing the area's propensity for accidents.
- Regarding the Empire storm Drain Trunk line, Mr. Martins informed attendees that it is currently undergoing design processes. He mentioned that Public Works is actively seeking funding to address damage to the existing trunk line, which will extend from Santa Fe to the river. Importantly, he clarified that this project is distinct from the Cal Trans initiative.
- Vice Chair Roberts raised inquiries about the turn signal at Yosemite and Santa Fe, citing the intersection's history of accidents. A discussion ensued regarding the various projects involving Cal Trans and Public Works. Erica Ignacio committed to requesting Cal Trans to



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present at future meetings to provide additional insights. Mr. Martins encouraged the use of the Stan Connects App to inform the county of various concerns.

7. Local Government

Board of Supervisors – Channce Condit

- Erica Ignacio relayed a message from Channce Condit expressing his apologies for his absence due to scheduling conflicts. He conveyed his eagerness to attend future meetings himself or ensure representation from Russel Fowler.
- Mr. Condit also expressed enthusiasm for the LOVE Empire initiative and offered sponsorship for dumpsters to facilitate a cleanup effort. During the meeting, discussions centered around LOVE Empire and potential projects associated with the initiative. Attendees deliberated on various ideas and initiatives aimed at enhancing the community.
- Mr. Rodriguez inquired about 50 million for Temecula and Erica clarified.

Chief Executive Office

- Erica informed the attendees of her recent promotion to Deputy Executive Officer, following her four-year tenure as our Community Manager. She mentioned that the organization is currently in the process of interviewing candidates for a new Community Manager, aiming to have someone appointed by late March. Erica assured the community that she will be closely overseeing the transition process and requested patience and support from the community during this period of change.

Assemblymen Juan Alanis, District 22

- Danielle Morgart informed attendees that residents can reach out to their office for assistance with any state-related issues they may encounter, emphasizing their commitment to providing support to the



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community. She proceeded to present on the legislation being worked on by the assemblyman and the bills he has introduced on behalf of his constituents.

Moreover, Danielle emphasized that while these bills have been introduced, they are still in the process of navigating through the various channels of government before potentially being signed into law. She reminded attendees of the necessary procedural steps and the importance of due process in the legislative journey.

Congressman John Duarte, 13th District, Gavin Cline was not present.

- Gavin Cline provided an update on behalf of Congressman John Duarte, highlighting his ongoing advocacy efforts for the 13th Congressional District in Washington, D.C. He mentioned that Congressman Duarte has voted to ensure the continued operation of the government and is actively working to support families within the district.
- Gavin emphasized the importance of addressing spending issues while ensuring the smooth functioning of federal programs and agencies.

Congressman Duarte is focused on making prudent spending decisions for the fiscal year 2024, with an emphasis on common sense approaches.

Gavin also mentioned that Congressman Duarte has recently provided military service nominations and has successfully filled 7 out of 10 nominations.

Gavin encouraged attendees to reach out to Congressman Duarte's office with any federal concerns they may have, reaffirming their commitment to assisting constituents. He assured attendees that they are welcome to contact the office for support and assistance.

Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil

- Not present



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School District

- Claudia, representing the school district, began by informing attendees about the retirement of Dave Garcia, the former district Superintendent, and the recent hiring of Dr. C.W. Smith as his replacement. Although Dr. Smith couldn't attend the meeting, Claudia conveyed his apologies and expressed his hope to participate in future gatherings. Additionally, Claudia provided updates on the school district's initiatives, including the ongoing food distribution program on the 1st and 3rd Fridays, which serves approximately 300 families in the community.
- Claudia shared information about recent and upcoming events within the district.
- April Towe, President of the Booster Club, then provided details about an upcoming Car Show scheduled for April 13th.
- Claudia further informed attendees about a series of 10 sessions focusing on early child development for parents with children aged 0-5, commencing on February 14th.
- She expressed concerns about declining school attendance and highlighted the school's efforts to enhance school attendance and create a supportive environment for the community's children.
- During the meeting, a resident inquired about options for online schooling for families who travel. Claudia addressed the question and provided information on the district's policies and available resources for accommodating such needs.

Library

- Diane Ramirez provided attendees with updates on the availability of February calendars featuring upcoming library events. She mentioned the continuation of the Thursday 3 pm art programs and announced the



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addition of Tuesday sessions on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays for various projects

- Moreover, Diane informed attendees that the Master Gardeners program will be held on the first Saturday of each month. She also mentioned that story time will now commence at 11 am on Wednesdays.
- Additionally, Diane shared the library's operating hours, noting that it is open from 10 am to 6 pm on Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from 10 am to 5 pm on Fridays and Saturdays. Attendees were encouraged to visit the library during these hours to participate in the various programs and events offered.

8. Informational Items

- a. None.

9. Action Items:

- a. Chair Nunes presented the MAC calendar for 2024.

Chair Nunes motioned to accept the 2024 calendar
Vice Chair Roberts seconded
Motion passed unanimously.

- b. During the meeting, the MAC discussed the nomination and election of officers. It was decided to table the election of the Vice-Chair with the hope that new members would join the MAC soon.

Christopher nominated Dorothy Roberts for the position of Secretary, which was seconded by Cari Raybourn. The election carried unanimously, and Dorothy Roberts was appointed as Secretary.

Subsequently, Dorothy Roberts nominated Christopher Nunes for the position of Chair, with Cari Raybourn seconding the nomination. The election also carried unanimously, and Christopher Nunes was appointed as Chair of the MAC.

Christopher encouraged others to join the MAC and to get involved so that we can conduct these meetings consistently.



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Members must be a registered voters and live within the boundaries of Empire.
Erica Ignacio reminded the attendees that the MAC is now an appointed MAC as of May 2023.

10. Council Comments & Recommendations for Future Agenda Items. – None.

11. Adjournment: 7:11 PM

Next Regular Meeting – February 27th, 2023, at 6:00 PM.