

CAPISTRANO BAY DISTRICT
AGENDA REPORT
July 25th, 2017

Old Business

ITEM 9a

Undergrounding Utilities

The previous meeting's discussion centered around two possibilities:

1) Placing Transformers Underground in Vaults

Manager Russell suggested seeking an independent opinion of the consultant's claim that SDGE no longer permits the placement of residential power transformers in underground vaults and was directed by the Board to pursue an independent opinion. This was achieved in a discussion with Joe Chiquete, an official in the Planning Department with the City of Laguna Beach, who has been dealing with assessment district formations and undergrounding projects in Laguna Beach for close to thirty years.

Laguna Beach is unique since the southern half of town is situated in SDGE territory while the northern half is regulated by Edison. In the phone discussion with Mr. Chiquete, he confirmed that about fifteen years back, SDGE began to cease placing transformers in vaults for residential projects so today it is no longer an option – all transformers today are either placed on power poles or above ground level on small concrete pads. It is interesting to note that, according to Mr. Chiquete, SDGE is a bit more tolerant of compromise with working clearance requirements around transformers while Edison seems to a real stickler in this area.

It's time for our community to give up on the notion of underground vaults and concentrate our creative energy on what we CAN do, and not what we can't do.

2) Limited Space Problem in Southern Half of the Community

Homeowners Steve Reid and Dave Gutierrez have recently conducted a walking tour of the southern half of the community to closely examine any potential locations where above-ground transformers might be placed, keeping in mind that the inland side of the road, abutting railroad property is NOT an option. Several potential areas were identified and that information was passed on to Manager Russell on Friday, July 21st in a second walking tour with Dave.

The site information that was collected on Friday will be organized into photographs, plotted on the consultant's plans and presented to Utility Specialists for their evaluation of the feasibility of placing transformers along the seaward side of the roadway in the southern half of the community, on homeowners' property. Those areas that actually pass muster with the consultant can then become the viable areas to acquire for transformer placement. The process after this, however, becomes more of a challenge as the District may soon have to seek permission from this select group of owners.