



# San Diego County Local Agency Formation Commission

Regional Service Planning | Subdivision of the State of California

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## MEMORANDUM

February 4, 2019

**TO:** San Diego Commissioners

**FROM:** Robert Barry, Chief Analyst

**SUBJECT:** **Agenda Item No. 12 |  
Supplemental Correspondence to Commission – Louis Russo**

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The San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) received the attached written correspondence from Mr. Louis Russo addressed to the Commissioners regarding Alpine Fire Protection District and Agenda Item No. 12 – “Alpine Islands Reorganization.” The correspondence was inadvertently excluded from the agenda distribution and will be added to the public record in step with the earlier comments received before January 22<sup>nd</sup> and provided as part of Attachment 6 to the Executive Officer report.

Attachments: as stated

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#### Administration

County Operations Center  
9335 Hazard Way, Suite 200  
San Diego, California 92123  
T 858.614.7755 F 858.614.7766  
www.sdlafco.org

Jim Desmond  
County of San Diego

Dianne Jacob  
County of San Diego

Greg Cox, Alternate  
County of San Diego

Catherine Blakespear  
City of Encinitas

Bill Wells  
City of El Cajon

Vacant, Alternate  
City Selection Committee

Mark Kersey  
City of San Diego

Chris Cate, Alternate  
City of San Diego

Chair Jo MacKenzie  
Visita Irrigation

Vice Chair Ed Sprague  
Olivenhain Municipal Water

Judy Hanson, Alternate  
Leucadia Wastewater

Andy Vanderlaan  
General Public

Harry Mathis, Alternate  
General Public

1524 Montecito Vista

Alpine, CA 91901

August 21, 2018

Supervisor Bill Horn, Supervisor Dianne Jacob, Mayor Catherine Blakespear, Mayor Bill Wells,  
Councilmember Lorie Zapf, Jo Mackenzie, Mr. Ed Sprague, Mr. Andrew Vanderlaan

9335 Hazard Way, Suite 200

San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Commissioners:

This is a picture of the Alpine Fire Protection District Fire Marshal (left), Mr. Bloom, sitting next to Mr. Colin Campbell (right) at a meeting being held at the Alpine Community Center and hosted by San Diego County regarding our General Plan.



Mr. Campbell is one of the Trustees of parcels in Alpine known as Campbell Creek Ranch, whose home and parcels burned in the West Fire in Alpine.

I am a member of the Alpine Community Planning Group (ACPG) and after the recent West Fire in Alpine, the chief of Alpine Fire came and gave a presentation regarding the fire. One of the things he said was that in the records of fires in Alpine, the parcels owned by Campbell Creek Trust, and the adjacent ones owned by Kaderabek/Augustyn, have never been recorded as burning since records were kept, around 1970 (almost 50 years ago). The West Fire started right next to these parcels and quickly moved to the overwhelming amount of fuel on these two parcel owner's properties (over 100 acres combined).

I live approximately 2 miles from these parcels and have numerous friends whose properties abut these parcels. I have never seen ANY clearing on the boundaries of these properties, nor adjacent to the roads, nor, quite frankly, anywhere on these parcels.

I submitted a California Public Records Act Request (CPRA) to Alpine Fire Protection district asking for ANY records indicating that the Alpine Fire Protection District Fire Marshal, or any other employee, had contacted the owners of these parcels regarding fuel clearance, or any other matter. Here is the request and reply:

**Louis Russo <louisfrusso@gmail.com>**

Wed, Aug 8,  
5:44 PM (13  
days ago)

to Bill, Admin

August 8, 2018

Bill F. Paskle, Chief  
Alpine Fire Protection District  
1364 Tavern Road, Alpine, CA 91901

RE: Public Records Act Request

Dear Chief Paskle,

Pursuant to my rights under the California Public Records Act (Government Code Section 6250 et seq.), I ask to inspect and obtain a copy of the following, which I understand to be held by your agency:

Any records held by your agency showing contact by any member of your district, but in particular your Fire Marshal, with the owners of the following parcels within your district: 4042401500, 4042310300, 4040505500 and 4040420500. Please include any documents showing inspection by your Fire Marshal, Mr. Bloom, or any other district employee of these parcels and/or any compliance letters, or other letters, sent to the owners of these parcels from the time the current owners acquired these parcels up to and including July 6, 2018.

I ask for a determination on this request within 10 days of your receipt of it, and an even prompter reply if you can make that determination without having to review the record[s] in question.

If you determine that any or all of the information qualifies for an exemption from disclosure, I ask you to note whether, as is normally the case under the Act, the exemption is discretionary, and if so whether it is necessary in this case to exercise your discretion to withhold the information.

If you determine that some but not all of the information is exempt from disclosure and that you intend to withhold it, I ask that you redact it for the time being and make the rest available as requested.

In any event, please provide a signed notification citing the legal authorities on which you rely if you determine that any or all of the information is exempt and will not be disclosed.

If I can provide any clarification that will help expedite your attention to my request, please contact me. I ask that you notify me of any duplication costs exceeding \$20 before you duplicate the records so that I may decide which records I want copied..

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Louis F. Russo

1524 Montecito Vista

Alpine, CA 91901

619 300-0866



**Bill Paskle**

Fri, Aug 17,  
5:10 PM (4  
days ago)

to me

Mr. Ruzzo,

In response to your Public Records Request received by email and also by certified mail dated August 8, 2018: The District does not have any records showing contact by any member of the District with owners of the four parcels of property. Your request also asks for documents showing inspection of the

said parcels or any letters sent to the owners of those parcels from the time the current owners acquired the parcels up to and including July 6, 2018. The District does not have the capability of determining when these parcels or any other parcels were acquired. So we cannot comply with that request, however we did go back three years for those parcels and the District has no documents or letters of the type requested for those parcels.

This Public Records Request from you is considered complete.

**Bill F. Paskle**

**Fire Chief**

**Alpine Fire Protection District**

1364 Tavern Road

Alpine, CA 91901-3831

619-445-2635 ext. 302 office

619-445-2634 fax

619-672-3866 mobile

[bpaskle@alpinefire.org](mailto:bpaskle@alpinefire.org)

[www.alpinefire.org](http://www.alpinefire.org)

I have since written back to the Chief indicating that a former Fire Board member I am aware that fire districts have access to the County Records records and asking if he would look deeper.

I have NUMEROUS communications from people within the Alpine Fire Protection district AND outside the Alpine Fire Protection District (but within the area Alpine Fire wants annex) who have visited by and/or received a letter from Mr. Bloom regarding fuel clearance on their parcels, sometimes in ways the parcel owners consider excessive. Yet, the Campbell/Kaderabek/Augustyn parcel owners don't even get a warning.

The fact is, the owners of these parcels solidly support members of the Alpine Fire Board and ACPG (financially, as co-plaintiffs in lawsuits, etc.) and there is not a question in my mind, nor those of my neighbors, that the lack of contact by the Alpine Fire Protection District with these parcel owners was not an act of omission but rather an act of commission. Alpine Fire Protection District's Board Chairman is also the vice chair of the ACPG and a member of a small group of developers/builders/realtors who have supported with the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors outrageously density on these parcels in return for concessions including NOT holding these parcel owners to the same fire regulation provisions that the Alpine Fire District appears to apply to the rest of the town.

I will repeat what I have said before, WE WERE EXTREMELY LUCKY WITH THE WEST FIRE! Had the winds been higher, a true disaster would have occurred. We were NOT helped by the Alpine Fire Protection District, not to mention the ACPG and these parcel owners.

Those of us outside the Alpine Fire Protection District do not, under any circumstances, wish to be annexed by Alpine Fire!

Sincerely,

Louis F. Russo



1524 Montecito Vista

Alpine, CA 91901

October 18, 2017

San Diego LAFCO

9335 Hazard Way, Suite 200

San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Commissioners:

As you are aware, our neighbors to the north are experiencing unprecedented fires, damages, destruction and death. One would think that at a time like this, Alpine Fire Protection District (AFPD), which is seeking to annex parcels within their Sphere of Influence (SOI), would make every effort to protect the residents of the district and prepare them. We, in Alpine, abut Cleveland National Forest, are subject to Santa Ana's and have geographical features such as the Sweetwater River Basin; all of which make a repeat of what is happening to the north a real possibility.

I have tried repeatedly to get information such as the County Emergency page, <http://www.sdcountyemergency.com/> the widest dissemination (including the means to sign up for cell phone alerts) to all of Alpine. AFPD should be doing the same. There are various venues through which it could be doing this (The Alpine Sun, East County Magazine, Alpine Community Network, The Union Tribune), yet all that is to be heard is the sound of crickets. We are in the area that was devastated by the Cedar Fire and yet AFPD minutes indicate they are more concerned with the pay scale for the Chief and meeting with the County r.e. the tax base in the event of annexation.

Something is very wrong with AFPD and we in the proposed annexation areas do NOT want to be part of it. Please vote to DENY this annexation request. We want a fire agency that cares about the residents vice lining their own pockets.

Sincerely,

Louis F. Russo