

**Minutes**  
**Ridgecrest Ranchos Recreation and Park District**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**May 7, 2024**

Meeting location: Palos Verdes Library, main branch, Purcell Room  
Time: 6-8pm.

Board members in attendance: President Margo Beylen, Treasurer James Colton, Secretary Charles Lee, John Polen, John Smythe.

Board members absent: none.

Special guest: Paul Novak, executive officer for LAFCO for Los Angeles County.

Meeting was open to the public. No closed session.

Agenda provided (see separate attachment).

President Margo Beylen called the meeting to order at 6pm.

She introduced Paul Novak, executive officer at LAFCO (Los Angeles County), who was asked to come to explain what LAFCO is and how this relates to duties and responsibilities of the Ridgecrest Ranchos Recreation and Park board.

The below notes reflect both Mr. Novak's prepared remarks and responses to questions posed by the board members and the attending public.

Mr. Novak gave a brief history of his professional background and how it led to LAFCO. He also gave a brief history of LAFCO itself. LAFCO stands for Local Agency Formation Commission, and each county of California has this agency. It is separate from LA County (government). (LAFCO for Los Angeles County will be referred to as LAFCO-LA for the remainder of these minutes.)

LAFCO-LA has jurisdictional authority over 88 cities in LA county, as well as more than 90 "special districts" \*(of which Ridgecrest Ranchos is one). This jurisdiction is primarily over boundaries and powers.

The most common issue presented to LAFCO-LA is boundary adjustments (annexation, detachment).

In the early 2000s LAFCO-LA began to perform municipal service reviews (MSR). The last one for Ridgecrest Rancho was in 2017. (It is available online: <https://lalafo.org/en/municipal-service-reviews/>)

Mr. Novak noted that at the 2017 MSR for Ridgecrest Ranchos, his recommendation at the time was that the district should become a subsidiary district of the city of Rancho Palos Verdes. The Ridgecrest Board was split over this (2 in favor, 2 against; the 5th had resigned). As the city of RPV wanted unanimity if dissolution was requested, Mr. Novak's recommendation was not adopted.

LAFCO-LA has powers over functions and classes of services that Ridgecrest Ranchos is allowed to provide. (Please refer to the attached documents provided by Mr. Novak re: "functions or classes of service.") Mr. Novak noted that in the 2017 MSR it would have been helpful for LAFCO-LA to have specified what these "active" and "latent powers" are. He noted that subsequent MSRs will have this information.

LAFCO tries to assist districts and cities with adequate funding for what the functions and services they are planning to provide, to avoid failing districts/cities

QUESTION: What are the things Ridgecrest Ranchos can and cannot do?

ANSWER: Ridgecrest Ranchos cannot do more than what a Recreation and Park district is authorized to do.

Mr. Novak referred to Article 7, Powers and Duties (5786 - 5786.31).

**(Please refer to the attached document provided by Mr. Novak)**

Mr. Novak noted that LAFCO-LA has little, if any, enforcement ability for many issues.

Board members asked specifically about landscaping and a new monument sign in the front entryway. He states that this is fine as it is taking place on property owned directly by the district. Trees along Crenshaw Blvd (north of the entry) in our district boundary should also be fine. Mr. Novak was less sure of street-lining trees on the actual neighborhood streets, as he felt that these were the responsibility of the city (of RPV).

**QUESTION: How does the county arrive at the amount they bill us in property taxes?**

**ANSWER: The (roughly) 1% property tax gathered from households is divided among over twenty LA County agencies, so the variation in what the district receives back is related to changing property assessments.**

**QUESTION**

**This is public land.**

**Right to passage signs.**

QUESTION: For a (landscape) bid as high as \$12,000, do we need at least a certain number of bids?

ANSWER: Mr. Novak said he could not provide a specific answer for now as to whether there is a specific rule. He noted that at his agency, for any projects over \$10,000 they have established a public bid system.

Mr. Novak noted that for smaller agencies for whom an annual audit might take a disproportionately high percentage of the budget, it is possible to ask the county supervisor (Janice Hahn's office, in this case) to be audited on a different cycle, e.g. every 2 years. While it is possible to audit every 5 years in some cases, Mr. Novak did not recommend this length of time.

QUESTION: Do we need a website, and if so what information is required?

ANSWER: Yes. He stated there are specific requirements, but that he did not have these offhand and will send us this information later.

QUESTION: Can the district install security cameras?

ANSWER: If it's just on district property (the entryway, which is property directly owned by the district), that is permitted. However, installing cameras throughout the neighborhood street is more problematic, as the streets are not directly owned by the district.

QUESTION: Do we need bylaws?

ANSWER: LAFCO does not regulate this, but having bylaws is fine. He noted that LAFCO stays out of elections. Mr. Novak stated he could help refer a lawyer that could help us set up bylaws.

Mr. Novak stated that Ridgecrest Ranchos is a public agency and subject to the Brown Act. Our meetings must be open to the public; the agenda must be available 72 hours in advance (website and at the location it will take place); and no private meetings among board members are allowed. (Two board members talking on their own is permitted, but any gathering of three or more is not.) The public has a right to submit comments, which the Board can consider at their discretion.

The Board member seats are an elected position.

Mr. Novak recommended "appointment in lieu of an election" if the number of running candidates equals the number of available seats. If a ballot vote is needed, this is expensive, especially if done in a non-election (odd numbered) year. He recommended that our elections be moved to the consolidated election (even years) to reduce costs.

QUESTION: Three of our current members were not elected through the ballot system. How do we address this?

ANSWER: Mr. Novak stated he would provide us with a contact in the county to help us with this.

QUESTIONS: What are other obligations of the Board to notify the public of its actions?

ANSWER: Other than adequate notice of the meeting date/time and the agenda (noted earlier), there is no other notice required. Nor is there a minimum frequency of meetings.

As there were no further questions, and Mr. Novak had no further prepared remarks, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 745pm.