

**Nuevo-Lakeview MAC Meeting**  
**Thursday May 18<sup>th</sup> 2023**  
**Nuview School District Board Room**

**6:00 PM:**

- Pledge of Allegiance

**6:01 PM: Call to Order—Roll Call:**

- Nick Chizo
- Lawrence Droughn
- Ken French
- Greg Morris (Chair Pro Tem)
- Jaime Sanchez

All members of currently constituted Nuevo-Lakeview MAC present

- **Chizo:** motion to approve minutes and agenda – seconded and approved

**6:02 PM: District 5 Update by Jacob Ochoa with Art Marquez of Waste Management:**

- Community movie night, free admission, Valley View Elementary School, 7:30 PM
- “I am the eyes and ears of the Supervisor...I’m the eyes and ears of the Nuevo community”.
- Report on community clean up that happened on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2023.
- Ochoa introduced **Art Marquez**, community relations representative for Waste Management – provided update of services available to citizens in unincorporated Riverside County. . .State mandates: AB 341 & 1826 (mandatory recycling and organics recycling). . . California SB 1383 intended to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and slow effects of climate change by reducing amount of organic materials to landfills; beginning January 1st 2022, residences and businesses are required to sort and separately collect food scraps, yard debris and food-soiled paper from trash and recycling and subscribe to an organics waste collection service. . .Citizen asked about “stinkweed”, **Morris:** “I think we need to keep things moving” (**Marquez** told citizen to contact him).
- **Ochoa:** Ramona Expressway safety project report – 8.5 miles of concrete media installed. . .show of hands indicated wide approval of improvements made thus far.

**6:11 PM: Lieutenant Matthew Koser, Riverside County Sheriff’s Department:**

- Calls for service in Nuevo-Lakeview area: February 2023: 244 and 2 arrests. March 2023: 303 (no arrests cited). April 2023: 320 (no arrests cited).
- Response times: Average response time this time last year was 68 minutes; the average response time as of now is 47 minutes (NOTE: these include low priority calls). . .”Our

response time for a Priority 1 call, which is an emergency call, is 11 minutes and 19 seconds, that's the average. I'm very proud of that, but we're going to work to get that down."

- Opening of Lake Matthews Station and how RSO can better staff the Nuevo-Lakeview community: "The 168 hours per day that we invest in our unincorporated county areas, which includes us here, is unaffected by the opening of that station [Lake Matthews], so we lost a large chunk of territory that we don't have to respond to, but we got to keep the same amount of manpower, and what that equates to is more deputies can be here and present in our area more often."
- Mail Theft: "I haven't gotten very many calls about mail theft over the last two months; I don't know if that's because it's not happening as much right now, or if you guys still just aren't calling me, so please continue that." . . ."I'm still focused on the mail theft, we're working with the new postmaster that we have in the area to find out, organically, what we can do to make things stronger and safer, and I want you guys to stay vigilant, keep those lights on, get those cameras up, get those Ring cameras out facing toward your mail boxes, and we're still working with the Flock system so that we can identify suspects as they come and go from our area."

**6:15 PM: California Highway Patrol Captain Captain Steve Branconier (new Area Commander replacing Captain Levi Miller):**

- Captain Steve Branconier introduced himself as the new Riverside Area Commander who started May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023
- New to Riverside County area, came from Los Angeles area
- "I saw some donkeys today, which I wasn't really prepared for (audience laughter)
- "I do have two community outreach officers that you may have seen out in the community; one's a motorcycle officer and one is in a patrol vehicle."
- CHP hosting "Start Smart" class: a driver education course that starts as young as 13 – 18 years of age, hosting class on May 24<sup>th</sup>, from 5 pm to 7 pm; contact Officer Navarro to sign up.
- "Bike Rodeo" at Hunt Park, free, June 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9 am to 12 pm – contact Officer Navarro
- Recruitment: "There are plenty of young men and women out there that if you are thinking of a career – not just a job – a career, please consider law enforcement, especially the California Highway Patrol, or any First Responder."
- "I appreciate the warm welcome".

**6:21 PM: Riverside County Code Enforcement Officer Jose Cruz (introducing Code Enforcement Special Enforcement Team [SET] Supervisor Ron Welch):**

- **Ron Welch**: "Good evening. My team runs the illegal vending, noise, illegal events for the entire county on nights and weekends. The number you want to call for us is **951-955-2004**. We do document that. We had a complaint that actually came in, we ran an operation in the desert last Friday, and the complaint came in late regarding vendors here in Nuevo, and on the way back in town we did handle that for you. So give us a call, you guys are what makes us efficient. I have four officers, myself, and my senior officer – we run the whole county and you guys make us very efficient because you call us and tell us where the problems are. . . So without you, we are not effective; with you, we're

very effective. We document it and we can handle your problems, so give us a call 24/7, that number works all day long.”

**6:23 PM: Riverside County Director of Department of Transportation, Mark Lancaster:**

- Pleased to see people feel safer on Ramona Expressway after median island improvements made
- Median island project on Ramona Expressway was in response to cross-median accidents (multiple head-on collisions/fatalities) that happened in April 2022
- Signal to be installed on Ramona Expressway and Bridge Street – plan to begin work in July 2023 and in service by August 2023
- Working with Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) on four lanes for Ramona Expressway – “from Rider to Warren”, about 8.5 miles, plan to begin late 2024/early 2025
- Gilman Springs Road: there’s been head-on collisions - adding passing lane, funded by State highway safety funds, between Bridge Street and Alessandro Boulevard in the northbound direction. Plan to start by Spring 2024
- Contour Avenue: doing some speed zone studies. East of Valley View Elementary School the speed limit is 50 MPH and west of the school is 25 MPH – speed limits should notch down in about 10 MPH increments; we’re going to reduce the speed east of the school coming westbound. Coming westbound we’re going to reduce the speed. Planning to put another stop sign at Tompkins and Contour in hope of helping slow down traffic. Install radar feedback signs that light up when drivers exceed 25 MPH speed limit: place one west of Citrus for westbound traffic, and east of Hansen for eastbound traffic.
- Lancaster finished by responding to a couple citizen questions, including what can be done about North Drive and Nuevo Road (issue of excessive speed)

**6:29 PM: Mark Lancaster introducing Ken Baez, Administrative Service Manager, Riverside County Planning Department:**

- Baez’ title is Administrative Service Manager, but he acts as Assistant Planning Director
- Baez said he was asked to come and talk about general planning and zoning issues
- **Morris:** “Ken I’m sorry, I going to stop you there because you’re not on the agenda to speak about this and we’re not allowed to speak on non-agenda items...If you want to leave some contact information, that would be great.”
- Before leaving the podium, Baez introduced 5<sup>th</sup> District Principal Planner **Evan Langan.**

**6:29 PM: Kristin Lorge, Riverside County Department of Environmental Health Public Information Officer:**

- **Kristin Lorge** was scheduled but not in attendance; speaking instead: **Ken Chandler**, Program Chief for Retail Food Inspection, Riverside County Department of Environmental Health
- “I was asked to come here today to talk to you about vending trucks.”

- “The changes that have the biggest impact this year as of January: Senate Bill 972 became law which expanded vending options; it was passed with the intent to streamline the process to open up the menus that are allowed to be sold off of street operations/mobile operations, to entice people to get a permit as opposed to the continue unpermitted activity that’s unregulated that we can’t do a whole lot about at this point.”
- “It finally allows for two favorite street foods to be sold legally...that is, chopped-up fruit cocktail and street tacos.”
- “Cities are completely overwhelmed; County Code Enforcement is doing their best to suppress the problem in the county areas, which puts pressure on incorporated cities, so we are aiding cities to try to deal with this problem that they didn’t have before.”
- “However, we are actively permitting these new operations.”
- “We don’t have a lot more tools to deal with the unpermitted operators - that’s unfortunate at this point, and until our county council gives us a decision on the term ‘decriminalization’ and who that applies to, we have very limited resources to deal with the problem.”
- “...we can’t write a criminal citation which sends an unpermitted vendor to the court; we only have the option of writing an administrative citation, which is like a parking ticket.”
- “But to write that ticket, I have to have a California I.D. – and in my 30 years of experience with vending, coming up with an I.D. has been a challenge; I can’t compel anybody to give me an I.D., if I wait for our law enforcement partners to come it could be 30-40 minutes – the person is going to walk away.
- “We’re looking for better tools to deal with that, and once we get our county council decision to come up with a better plan to deal with the unpermitted - but I am grateful that I have a new legal option to offer the people that are selling 90% of the foods.”
- (Responding to citizen question): “Those pop-up operations, table-top operations in a dirt field are still illegal, they never will be permitted.”
- “We are actively educating vendors now, hoping that we will drive more into permit, but at this point all I can do is offer another permit.”

**6:36 PM: Cal Fire Nuview Station No. 3 Captain Scott Robbins and Fire Marshal Steve**

**Payne:**

- **Robbins:** “In the past 3 months, Engine 3 has run 312 calls – 207 of them were medical aids, 35 were traffic collisions, and 21 were fires.”
- **Payne:** “What you may be most concerned about right now is what we call ‘Hazard Reduction’, or commonly known as the ‘Weed Abatement Process’.
- **Payne:** “What those folks [Hazard Reduction] do is we have some inspectors throughout the county, they go out proactively every year...to enforce hazardous vegetation, weeds, overgrown trees...that would present a fire hazard.”
- **Payne:** “Some of you may have noticed in the past sometimes it’s kind of challenging to get in touch with us or to get a response – maybe you got bounced back-and-forth through Code Enforcement, so we work very hard on that process; we have one of our representatives in the back of the room and we also have some pamphlets...where if you have a concern or you want to report a complaint, you can contact us either by

phone or go on the website and report that concern and within a couple of business days we will get out and check that concern.”

- **Payne:** “If we do see Code Enforcement violations, like a neglected building or other structure, we will refer that to our Code Enforcement”.
- **Payne:** “To try to improve our customer service, we’ve taken some steps to change our process around, we’re going out there getting eyes on all those violations seeing what we can do to serve everybody.”
- **Robbins:** “If you do have a complaint about property, we have some papers over there with the number to call or the website to file the complaint, and then they will get to it.”

#### **6:39 PM: Nuevo Citizen’s Patrol – Amanda Wilcox:**

- “First of all, we’re looking for members...We need people.”
- “Our group was thirteen-ish people, and then in 2013 when Connie and Maria were murdered it jumped - we had 42 members strong.”
- “We are low right now, we are down to about 12 members, but we have 4 members in the process right now from town that are joining – it’s not hard guys, it’s not hard.”
- “When the bad guys in town see our vehicles driving around, all they see is ‘Sheriff’; they’re not going to be around if there’s lots of us driving around.”
- “You get lots of training, it’s pretty interesting...You serve Nuevo, it’s where we need you, but if you want to help further up the food chain, we help a lot on all kinds of things: from fun events to crime scenes to accidents.”
- “We relieve deputies so they can go do the job.”
- “Our community members went to a C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Team) training...There were 14 of us...and they are very super qualified people now...8 of them were from Citizen’s Patrol, and Citizen’s Patrol has a C.E.R.T. trailer, a trailer that is ready to roll out if there is a disaster in Nuevo.”

#### **6:43 PM: Presentation by ‘Nibble This’, Speaking About Proposed Cannabis Dispensary:**

- **Chairman Pro Tem Morris:** “They [Nibble This] have 15 minutes to present that we’ve agreed to give them, through the County. After that, we’re going to have about 10 minutes of questions, and then we’re going to move to public comment, so let’s listen and then we’ll get our chance to speak, and we can ask some good questions.”
- **Charlena Berry** (speaking for ‘Nibble This’): “I’ll just say that this is the scariest room I’ve been to.”
- **Raquel Origel** (speaking for ‘Nibble This’): “Hi, my name is Raquel Origel, I’m the founder of ‘Nibble This’, and I’ve been working since 2002 on this project and I’ll say that I’m a native of Riverside, I was born and raised in Blyth California, so. . .” (cross talk/unintelligible).
- **Charlena Berry:** (speaking for ‘Nibble This’): “Thank you, Raquel. So we’ve been trying to come see you guys since, I want to say November. I have gotten probably two dozen emails asking me not to come to town, and so finally getting on the agenda has been what I’d say is pretty intimidating, to say the least. My name is Charlena Berry. I am a normal person, I have a daughter who is 16 and learning to drive and appreciate what you guys are doing for your new drivers. Raquel and I have been working together on this since 2019, we paid for this with money out of our own pocket, it’s not money from out of state, Raquel is from here in the community, she’s an incredible businesswoman. I

have 4 other locations in the State of California. I work with 'Weed for Warriors' at my other stores, I give 20% off every day to veterans. 'Gina' [another member of the 'Nibble This' presentation team] is on my buying team – I don't know if you guys noticed that we're women, this is probably the hardest industry for a woman to operate in. Less than 10% of C-Suite positions in the industry are women, and I promise you that we are bullied, harassed, and taunted on a regular basis. I passed out a presentation that normally in other communities they afford us the opportunity to put it on the board, we haven't been given that opportunity here, it's my understanding that we're only here because of due process, is the way I read it, so I'm not going to go through it tonight, rather, I just wanted to talk and tell you guys about us so that we don't seem as scary. We are looking to go at Zapata's, we've been paying rent for the restaurant for the last 6 months there, we fixed their electric. It's our understanding that the big fuss is that we're asking them to leave when in fact we've been helping them. So I don't know where things have gotten lost in translation. I tried to come here in November and we were removed. I wrote a book called 'Breaking the Stigma', because part of what I do in this role is that we have to do the hard job of looking communities at you in the face and say, "Hey, marijuana is not bad." I understand the concerns. My family has been impacted by the opiate endemic, crisis – the leading cause of death in the United States for 55 and under right now is Fentanyl. I lost my brother in 2021 to Fentanyl. I believe in my heart and soul that if marijuana was readily available instead of narcotics that the opiate crisis wouldn't be here. Most of us are of the age that we grew up with the War on Drugs, and the image of 'This is your brain, and this is your brain on drugs'. When I started in the industry, I did not believe marijuana was a viable alternative to pain management. I have watched people with PTSD learn to sleep again; I know a doctor who uses cannabis and CBD's to put children with Autism back on, balance them on the spectrum. My team, 3 weeks ago, ran in San Diego, an Autism run. We try not to be overt, from a perspective of "Hey, we're selling marijuana." We're not the trap shops that used to pop up; every one of my shops has 2 security guards. Not only do we upgrade the facility – in this case, the entire carpeting will be redone, we're replacing the septic system, new exterior, we're remodeling the whole corner – but we bring jobs to the community, all of our jobs pay a minimum of \$15 an hour. My store in Wildomar California, we have 30 employees and they're all local and that money goes directly back into the community. We allow all of our employees to earn tips, which takes their wages to somewhere between \$22 and \$25 an hour. Financially, I saw some of the questions that were out there, how do we know what public benefit is going to come back – when we work with Riverside County, I have to sign something with Raquel and Gina called a 'Development Agreement'; that is a legally-binding contract between us and the County that says I'm promising to pay 2 public benefits, and it's based on the square footage. One is an additional public benefit, and one is the baseline public benefit. Those funds, it's my understanding, when I write the check to Riverside County, is that they have successfully implemented this, are taken and applied directly to the community. Over the course of 10 years, I'm responsible for paying, to the County, \$1.6 million when it comes down to it. The County can take retribution against me if I don't make those payments, and in addition to that, there is sales tax money and excise tax money that comes back to Nuevo from the State itself. Once the money goes to the County, I don't know how it will get to you, but I can tell you that there is legitimate money that comes out of the store in the form of public benefit – you'll have to talk to your elected officials about that. There is the worry that

there's traffic that's going to increase there and deteriorate that corner; we've hired a traffic engineer to review those studies, based on approved and licensed people, approved by the State of California, they indicate that there's no impact (laughter from the audience)...The State of California has a licensing and traffic department that is here with us that review those things, and I promise you the traffic department was the last person to give us clearance, and as of this afternoon we have 100% clearance from all departments at the county level. So, humbly, I don't know if we should continue – Gina, do you have anything that you'd like to add...

- **Sanchez (to Charlena Berry/'Nibble This' members):** "Can I ask you a question? So you seem like a very smart business person, all 3 of you...Why would you try to open a business that no one wants in their community?" (audience applause).
- **Charlena Berry to Sanchez:** "So, in 2019, there was a merit-based process that selected merit-based individuals - Raquel personally sent lobbies around town during the 2019 merit process and collected signatures in 2019, we've been intentionally delayed since 2019...(cross talk).
- **Sanchez interjects to Charlena Berry/'Nibble This' members:** "Let me stop you there; I've been here all my life, and I have 6 kids, I've raised 4 of them and still raising 2 now. I guarantee you: no one in this town wants it."
- **Charlena Berry to Sanchez:** "I'm very sorry that you feel that way." (numerous audience members, loudly: "We ALL do!").
- **Sanchez to Charlena Berry/'Nibble This':** "It's just very irritating when we see individuals like you that keep pushing and pushing and pushing to do something that no one wants – what makes you think that business in going to thrive in this community?... (cross-talk/people talking over each other).
- **Raquel Origel to Sanchez:** "Let me answer the question: before we even went through the process, we did go around locally and take a poll (cross talk)...I need to be allowed the opportunity to speak, if I'm going to be asked questions..."
- **Sanchez:** "So folks, can you let them speak with us, so you guys can hear what we're going to ask, we all feel the same way."
- **Raquel Origel to Sanchez:** "Your question is: why would we do it? Based on the data that we received, it was wanted. Fast-forward to today, based on additional data, going back and researching local residents, it is our understanding that not, quote-unquote, "everyone" feels this way. If that was honestly true, we would be having a different discussion."
- **French to Raquel Origel:** "So where is that data and why aren't you presenting that data?"
- **Raquel Origel to French:** "First of all, I wasn't even sure what the time period was that we were going to speak. We weren't given an opportunity to do a PowerPoint" (audience chatter/comments)
- **Morris/Sanchez (to audience):** "Let them speak, let's be respectful."
- **French to Raquel Origel:** "What we're looking for is you can see all these people here don't want this in our community...How are you going to sell this to us so we want this? Convince us. You haven't done anything to convince us. You've convinced us you're nice people, you've got kids, you've got families, I understand that. Convince us we need this in our community, because we aren't convinced."

- **Raquel Origel to French:** “So...that is such a loaded question...it depends on what angle you’re looking at...are you looking at it from the perspective of is it legal versus illegal...the community just doesn’t want cannabis at all?”
- **Morris to Raquel Origel:** “I have two quick questions: first, we would like to see the original data that somehow convinced you that it’s wanted here, because that’s a tough one. Second, do you mind sharing with us if you have a profit-sharing agreement with **Amer Abugherir** and **Danny and Rami Khouri**? (cross-talk)...So you guys are simply paying rent until you can move in?”
- **Raquel Origel to Morris:** “That’s correct.”
- **Morris to Raquel Origel:** “And then in 2019, you did come and ask people and you got the impression that it was wanted here?”
- **Raquel Origel to Morris:** “That’s correct, and that was also part of our application.”
- **Morris to Raquel Origel:** “We would love to see that data.”
- **Droughn to Charlena Berry:** “Charlena, you mentioned in your speech ‘heart and soul’...that’s exactly what this community is, that’s why we’re here. It’s heart and soul. You mentioned heart and soul – heart and soul of this community is why you have us here, to oppose what we don’t want...we don’t care about the 2019 data, we don’t really care about that, because the heart and soul is giving you the actual answer...look at every eye here...this community is saying we oppose what it is that you are trying to offer...Heart and soul is Nuevo community...heart and soul is this MAC Council.”
- **Charlena Berry to Droughn:** “I would say that you guys have done an excellent job at rallying individuals against us (cross talk/unintelligible, microphone turned off)...this is what change looks like and I’m very sorry that you guys feel that way about not wanting us...There are people that when we give them jobs...they’ll be glad that we’re here...”
- **Droughn to Charlena Berry:** “Are those people here? I’m just wondering, are those people here? If they’re here, then you needed to point them out.”
- **Charlena Berry to Droughn:** (cross talk/audience chatter) “It’s simply you don’t want us here.”
- **Morris to Charlena Berry:** “There’s a number of issues why people don’t want your business here, it’s not about the illegality or legality of marijuana...I’m not sure how to explain this, because it seems pretty obvious...this is a small community – look at all these people here, they’re here because they don’t want it; all the people you’re talking about who do want it?”
- **Charlena Berry to Morris/MAC Council:** “This is what change looks like” (cross-talk/audience disapproving of Berry’s comment)...
- **Morris:** “Charlena, thank you so much for the presentation...we’re going to have 10 minutes of questions – let’s be civil.”

#### **6:58 PM: Questions to ‘Nibble This’ from the Public:**

- “Where do you live? Why don’t you guys open a store there?”
- “What makes you feel that that fits in with what our community is about?”
- “How many customers a day do you anticipate?” **‘Nibble This’ representative ‘Gina’ responds:** “We see anywhere from 150 to 300 a day.” (outcry from the audience)
- “Where’s **Amer** and **Rami**? Why aren’t they here? They own Nuevo Market and the land that you’re leasing or renting...why aren’t they here to back you up? Because Amer wouldn’t want this in his community, he has tons of kids.” **Charlena Berry responds:**



“They have no obligation to be here...They have signed that authorizing it [the dispensary] at that location [where Zapata’s Restaurant is currently located].”

- “How is your business going to help (kids/community)? **Charlena Berry responds:** “Our business cures cancer” (audience bursts out in laughter).
- “The location you chose is the problem...you have houses completely surrounding you, residential neighborhoods; we have a school bus stop there...what benefit are we going to gain from it with you being within a neighborhood - why would you choose a location in a residential neighborhood?” **‘Gina’ of ‘Nibble This’ responds:** “Every town we open in any city or any county, they have the green zone maps. We follow where the green zone maps are...We found the building, we found the authorization from the landlords...the landlord previously had a trap shop [illegal marijuana store] next door, that is not the way we want to come...this is allotted and this is green-zoned.”
- “How many cannabis stores are there in a 5-mile radius?” (cross talk/back-and-forth assertions)
- “If everybody doesn’t want you here, why can’t you go to Romoland or Homeland...it’s obvious nobody wants you here, why fight it?” **Charlena Berry responds:** “So, we are in a contract with the landlord for 10 years...We have to stand here and fight it, because if I don’t fight it, I still have to pay rent...” (audience chatter)
- **French to Charlena Berry/’Nibble This’:** “Just one last thing: can you please provide us with that data and that research so we can pass it on to the community; they’d love to see that - thank you.”

#### **7:09 PM - Public Comments:**

- **Krista Mead (sp?):** “I’ve been a resident of Nuevo for almost 22 years...My foremost concern is what does the addition of the marijuana dispensary benefit Nuevo with?...Was Nuevo selected as a site because of the length of time it takes for law enforcement to get to us here? Why do you feel that we should welcome a business that even YOU guys feel needs security guards? (applause)...many studies have shown that dispensaries traditionally target Hispanic and black populations; could that be a reason for choosing Nuevo?...Some dispensary operators in California have also been involved in organized crime and money laundering...Neighborhoods and retail areas with dispensaries have an increase in noise, traffic, and negative impacts on neighboring land use and property values...Traffic was so bad where you want your dispensary that it was backed up from Menifee Road...”
- **Marti – Nuview Lion’s Club:** “Where there’s a need, there’s a Lion...Come to a Lion’s meeting, we meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at the pavilion where Nutrilite used to be...We’re doing the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade...We also do the holiday meals for our families in need on Thanksgiving and Christmas.”
- **Dan Clark, President of Nuview District Teacher’s Association:** “I’ve been a resident of Nuevo since 1980...I represent over 100 teachers, counselors, and speech pathologists in this community...I come with the same message: ‘We don’t want drugs in our community’...Since California has legalized the sale of drugs, we’ve seen an increase in drug usage and sales on our high school campus here in Nuevo. Giving parents more access to drugs gives students more access to drugs as well. We don’t need to make it easier for our students or our parents to access drugs, and we don’t need the crime associated with the sale of drugs in our community. Please do not allow

our community to suffer the same fate that other communities are suffering with the influx of drugs and drug sales. We do not need a dispensary and we do not want a dispensary.”

- **Jennifer Gurke (sp?)**: “My name is Jennifer Gurke, I’ve live in Nuevo for...23 years....[looking at/speaking to ‘Nibble This’ representatives]: “You weren’t convincing to me...Everything that they’re [Nibble This] is based on the dollar... Simple question, poll: how many of you think the number one thing that Nuevo needs is a pot shop? (numerous audience members exclaim, “No!”)...I’m pretty sure there’s one thing more that Nuevo needs than a pot shop, so nibble on that (audience laughter).
- **Kim Howard-Lotze**: “I’ve lived in this community for 47 years...I’ve worked for **Amer [Abugherir**, owner of Nuevo Market] and **Rami [Khouri**, co-owner with **Amer Abugherir** of the property for the proposed cannabis dispensary where **Zapata’s Restaurant** is currently located], and I’m highly disgusted with them right now...I’m surprised they’re even allowing this...Why pick our little town of Nuevo, that we have no cops and it takes them so long to get here and you say there’s security guards, but security guards aren’t going to do anything...Why in our little community?...This is our community and we don’t want that here, and if you have a 10-year contract with Rami and Amer, then you need to find a way to break that, because they’re in it for the money too – that’s all they’re in it for...I’m not bashing that pot does not help, it does. It does help with sleep, it helps with anxiety...But this is our community, it’s little, it’s full of family...I’m asking you to think again on this, because nobody here want it, nobody does.”
- **Wallace Blair**: “I’ve only lived here for 13 years. But in 13 years it has changed a lot...Nothing personal against you ladies [‘Nibble This’ representatives] but you’re wrong. There’s no way that you got 150 to 300 customers coming here a day and you’re not going to affect the infrastructure of this community...You’ve got a two-lane road in here, two lane road out of here...We have no police force here...it takes 11 minutes for the Sheriff to get here – that’s lights and sirens going...11 minutes, it’s all over with by then...11 minutes is an eternity when you need a cop. We need them [law enforcement] here first before we even *think* about entertaining a pot shop in this community...I would suggest that since you do have all the money that you talk about you have that you can spread around into the county...take it somewhere else where it’s wanted.”
- **Shawna Linan (sp?)**: “I don’t want any kind of pot shop...I’m just against it completely.”
- **Mary Moran**: “I’ve lived here 29 years, I raised my daughter here, she went to the schools here, and I volunteered at the schools”...It’s [cannabis dispensary] going to lower our home values, without a doubt...It’s all a moneymaking situation – we do not need it...It’s not about Zapata’s [restaurant]...We need to fight for our little town.”
- **Katie-Jane Troudt**: “My family’s been here for 45+ years...I too, am a farm girl, grew up on the farms, and I know the smell of manure when I smell it...we do not need ‘Nibble This’, we do not need a dispensary...we don’t want you. It’s very clear with the smug looks on your faces...you have no respect for us...I work in science and guess what: cannabis does not cure cancer, it might help with the effects and the pain, but there *is* no cure for cancer...marijuana dispensaries bring crime. In a town where we already have a lacking police presence, this makes us sitting ducks...The proposed business and the proposed site is not only adjacent to a residential area but directly across the street from senior citizens, there are multiple bus stops within 100 feet. In my opinion, the intentionally deceptive name of this business is geared towards children and teenagers – no different than vaping and the tobacco companies where they’re drawing people in

with cotton candy and this and that...Nibble This, Cake House, whatever you want to call yourself, you're drawing in kids and you're doing it on purpose, and you know why? Money. Moreover, the proposed placement of this business will increase our traffic...We want new traffic studies...The property owners do not live in Nuevo, they don't care...The company that does own the property does nothing to rid the vagrants, the drug addicts, and the loiterers out of their current (applause, unintelligible)...You are not here, they are not here for the betterment of Nuevo. They're here for the betterment of their pocketbooks...The property owners and the owners of Nibble This do not care about this town and they're not going to...We need to stand up because we as a community are small, and I don't like being pushed around...I'm here to ask the Supervisor [Gutierrez], who isn't here, by the way, and the other County representatives, to please put a stop to this before it begins...Because we choose to live rural, we should not be treated as second-class citizens. We are Nuevo strong. Thank you." (applause)

- **Chuck Santone:** "Ladies [Nibble This representatives], you're not the victim...I know you started back in 2019, because back in 2019 I received a check from someone from your organization because, in order to get the licensing, you needed to do something to help the community, so you sent it to **Nuevo Citizens Patrol**...and we sent the check back (applause)...You say back in 2019 people wanted it, that's back when we had 42 members...It was a unanimous vote, all 42 members said "no, we're against that" and we sent the check back...I don't understand how you can say that people were for it back then...You talk about the money coming back into the community. Is that like the money like Cannabis 21, where they currently owe the County \$1 million, but the County still hasn't collected it, they were supposed to pay it before they even opened – they're open, but they still haven't paid it...Back in the last administration with the previous supervisor [**Jeff Hewitt**], **Boomer Shannon**, his Chief of Staff, instructed me that I guess you ladies had explained to him that you weren't concerned, because the community would forget about it in a few months (audience responds negatively). Boomer Shannon told you at that time that myself and some other individuals in here were not going to let this die."
- **Christina Castro (sp?):** "I do want to say if you ladies haven't noticed yet, there's a lot of passion in this town. We love where we live, and we want to keep it the way it is...There was a study in 2019...The storefront marijuana signage is extremely influential to young adults. The study found that living near dispensaries with storefront signage was associated with 4-6 times larger effect of marijuana use. So why does the dispensary want to set up here in Nuevo? Nuevo doesn't have a large population. Do the owners/operators want to target our young adults? Or is the length of time it takes law enforcement to respond to Nuevo?...What about the property values of the homes located across from the dispensary?...Will you compensate them for their losses?...Will emergency vehicles be delayed due to your traffic?...finally, I come back to where I started: why Nuevo? I can only find negative impacts for the community if a dispensary comes to Nuevo. We are a small rural town that only requires the bare retail necessities; a marijuana dispensary is not a necessity we want."
- **Sherry (sp?):** "What concerns me is you're talking about adding 300 cars a day...I have been in this town 25 years...I've had to get a very large dog to protect my horses from the element you want to bring into this community...we don't want you here...What are you going to do to accommodate 300 cars a day? You don't have a plan. You want to come here because we don't have the city taxes and stuff that incorporated areas do;

this is a cheap rent situation, cheap tax situation, and you think you were going to come in here and ride roughshod over a bunch of country bumpkins.”

- **Saad Patah** (**NOTE: According to public information, Saad Patah is Chief Executive Officer, Secretary, and Chief Financial Officer of Cake Enterprises Inc.—information Mr. Patah did not divulge/make clear during his public comments**):  
“My name is Saad Patah. I’m a grandpa of 10. I have 4 kids. The way all of you are thinking, exact thinking that I did. When my kids were teenagers going to high school, telling them, you know, I was telling them no to drugs – all drugs – then, now, they see their dad bring samples of marijuana home, brings edible to their mom, basically, they tell me, “Dad, where were you when we were teenagers?” I said “Well, when you guys were teenagers, I had a different thinking”. I do a lot of consulting for a lot of companies, and what I see here within the community, there is a lot of misunderstanding. There is a lot of uh, I was here listening to the ladies, and I think they need to be given a little bit of a chance. And I do consulting for them, don’t, you know, look at it – I am biased, OK, but I’m always for the right thing. If something is wrong, I would not go and put my name – it’s wrong, you know, it’s my nature, the way I grew up. So I mean I see a lot of concerns here, people telling me, “we don’t want change” Well, first of all, you did get change. You got a lot more new residents, you know, all that, that’s a resident, that’s change. You guys are talking about traffic study, I know their traffic study, you didn’t give them an opportunity on it, their traffic study is 2 month old, it’s not 2019 (audience members: “That’s what they said”)...2019 they applied...there’s a disconnect with the community and the county, so I mean, I see the process (Patah turns to the MAC members) I think we’re gonna need like 3 minutes more (audience members to Patah: “Where do you live? Patah answers, “I live in Escondido”...audience member: “Put it in your neighborhood”)...So, the minute that the city allows it, I am gonna put it in my neighborhood. Could I get an extra minute? So, the lady in front of me, she was talking about, she was offered to have a restaurant in the shopping center. I know Lisa [**Lisa Sarmiento**, owner of **Zapata’s Restaurant**]. I know Lisa personally. Lisa, if you guys gave her more support, and visited her store and she made money, she would not be leaving, I know what I’m talking about, I talk to her. So you’re talking about traffic study, the traffic study, you only have community here. . . (**Morris to Patah**: “You have 5 seconds” (cross talk, audience comments, **Saad Patah** public comments done). **Morris** to audience: “Civil, please...civil and respectful”.
- **Daniel Garcia**: “I’m Daniel Garcia, I live in Hemet. I grew up in L.A., but I have lived in the Inland Empire since about 2009 when the Great Recession hit. I’m not here to defend marijuana, I’m here to point out some economic things that the little town of Nuevo needs to be aware of. The Press-Enterprise had a headline today, “*California Layoffs Jump 60% to 27 Month High*”. Yet, somebody in here said there’s a lot of unfilled jobs in the town of Nuevo. The reality is that there is tax dollars that are needed for economic development everywhere in California, and that comes from single family residences primarily. Most of the dairies - I remember when I was a kid, there were dairies all from Chino to, God, to the 15; all the way – there aren’t any left at this point. You guys may want to preserve your way of life – I’ve been in the midwest, it reminds me of a little town out in Ohio I stay at. But, the thing is, you can stand in the way of that kind of money, it’s unfortunate that what’s going on here is a dying breed, it really is. Your 2-lane road that somebody referred to is going to have to be a 6-lane at one point. The location they’re in will probably be torn down to a higher use and a more valuable

building...If you guys are upset with them, you should be upset with the directors who established the green zones to begin with. Why did they put them? They put them in places wherever they can generate tax revenue. I'm just pointing out, I'm not defending weed or anything, I'm pointing out economic realities for your way of life...If you go down Newport Road from Menifee, the construction is all the way to Winchester Road now, it used to end before the hill at Menifee... **Sanchez to Daniel Garcia:** "You're right, there is change in houses and stuff, but what's the housing got to do with marijuana?" **Daniel Garcia to Sanchez:** "I'm not here to defend marijuana...There is a melting pot of mix of businesses that go to promote healthy economic development, marijuana just happens to be on the forefront...Enjoy it while it lasts, enjoy it while it lasts." ["it" being apparent reference to Nuevo's rural lifestyle].

- **Maricarmen Pulido:** "I'm a resident of Nuevo, I've lived in Nuevo for 9 years...It's not the change, it's not the traffic, marijuana is a gateway drug and that's why I oppose it...Charlena, Raquel, and Gina: you are all smart, strong businesswomen, I'm a businesswoman, so I like to empower other businesswomen. I know that if you were to bring another business to Nuevo, Nuevo would support you – they just don't support the dispensary...It's nothing personal against you, it's against the dispensary...I would be open to partnering up with you guys to open Starbucks or something else that would benefit the community" (applause).

#### **7:51 PM – Nuevo MAC Council Member Comments:**

- **Lawrence Droughn:** "I'd like to go back to the heart and soul of what one of the young ladies had said. The heart and soul of our community is everyone sitting in these seats. They're the heart and soul of what is opposing your business, your nature of business. It's a business – because I'm a businessperson, too – but it's not the kind of business that we want here in this community...The thing is, let's not let what you think business should be and places should be in Nuevo. Nuevo is not that place. We're a community that has heart and soul that's willing to oppose, every step of the way, where you're going."
- **Jaime Sanchez:** "I just want to thank everyone for coming out and showing your support. I think I've said what I had to say to these people. Thank you."
- **Ken French:** "I wanted to say thank you to you ladies for coming out tonight and listening to our town. I guess my question for you is, "did you listen, did you hear what we had to say, and are you guys going to take it to heart, or are you just going to ignore us?" We spoke, we've all told you what we want, we've asked you for your studies, we've asked you for your proof. You've shown nothing tonight, you've proved nothing tonight to any of us. If you cared about our community - and you say you care about kids - then you'll change your mind, and you'll do something different. And I hope this information gets back to our supervisor, and I hope he can stop this as well."
- **Nick Chizo:** "I propose to and request permission to provide an opinion on what we have heard and have recorded in the minutes." **Morris:** "I motion that Nick be allowed to do that, can I get a second? (seconded). **Chizo:** "My opinion, for the record, is that the proposed cannabis facility will be a danger and a detriment to our community." **Morris:** "Does the rest of the MAC agree with that statement?" **Nuevo MAC:** Unanimous "Yes". **Morris:** "For the record, that will be on the record for our statement of the Nuvew MAC."

**7:54 PM: Meeting Adjourned.**