



Squelch Tales

A Bi-Monthly Publication By The San Diego Repeater Association, Inc.

September/October 2010

Update on Proposed San Diego Antenna Ordinance

Earlier this year the San Diego City Planning Staff had developed a proposed ordinance to include Amateur Radio antenna structures in the city planning and permitting code. SANDRA's May membership mailing reported on the proposed ordinance and asked members to contact their councilmen and voice their opinions on the proposal.

The main elements of the proposal were:

All ground mounted antennas and support structures would require a building permit, as well as any roof mounted antennas that require modification to the roof support structure. This is a Process 1 (Ministerial) review by staff, for compliance to codes. Wire antennas are exempt from the permit process, if they do not require a support structure.

Antenna heights are limited to the height of the base zone (30 feet) for the Claremont Mesa Height Limit Overlay Zone, Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone, any historic zone and Planned Districts. Heights in other residential zones vary from 24-47 feet (typically 30 feet) depending on the zoning.

Proposed antennas and support structures meeting the above criteria, including height restrictions, would be approved by planning staff. However, sufficient design and construction detail has to be submitted so that staff can verify that all building codes have been met.

Application for a non-conforming use permit for antennas not meeting the above criteria utilizes the normal "process two" portion of the permitting process, requires the amateur to pay all the planning expenses and also requires an \$8,000 deposit against those costs. Additional deposits are in \$5,000 increments until the process is complete. The amateur would be responsible for providing all the engineering data for the installation, prepared by a California



licensed Engineer (PE). The amateur would also have to have neighbor approvals. Even with the above satisfied, the planning department could still reject the application at their discretion.

The proposed ordinance came to the City Council in February and met strong resistance from members of the amateur community in attendance at the meeting. The City Council eventually referred the ordinance back to staff for further work and consideration. There has been no public action on the proposed ordinance since that meeting.

Squelch Tales has attempted to determine the current status of the proposal and what might be expected in the future. The city process is not terribly transparent and contact with the public is done through employees who's job it is to communicate with the public. Squelch Tales spoke with Jeffery Powell, Communications Advisor to Councilman Carl DeMaio and Linda Pfeifer, Communications Officer

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Monthly SANDRA Swap Meet and Breakfast

The official SANDRA meeting schedule includes four membership meetings (one per quarter) and seven Board of Director meetings each year. The Board of Director meetings are also open to the membership and occur in months without a membership meeting, resulting in one meeting in every month except August. However, there is another SANDRA meeting which is not an official membership meeting, occurs every month and arguably draws larger attendance than the official meetings—the monthly Ham Radio Swap Meet and SANDRA Breakfast, the first Saturday of each month at the Santee Drive-In Theater.

Squelch Tales attended the swap meet and breakfast September 4th of this year. The swap meet is located inside the Santee Drive-in theater, part of a much larger swap meet of people selling everything from cabbages to clothing at this weekend event. At first we were unable to locate the ham radio area but eventually found it in the south west corner near what would be the concession stand on movie night. The ham radio section consists of a variety of equipment of a wide range of vintages and operational statuses, arrayed over a group of four to five long folding tables and presided over by their equivalent vintage owners. There is truly a wide range of gear available from military surplus and commercial equipment of various conditions and ages, to junk box collections of parts. Squelch Tales attended the swap meet out of purely academic interest but wound up

walking away with a Dayton inductively coupled AC volt/ammeter and an AC/DC 0-140 volt power supply. There was a very attractive junk box complete with two small Gunplexer units, microwave diodes and home built horns going for a ridiculously low price. Unfortunately, the office is already full of stuff that the XYL banished from the house and garage, adding to it would probably be a political problem. There was also a very tempting Variac which we are hoping will still be there in October. The swap meet opens at 6 am requiring a \$1.00 entry fee for purchasers. The ham radio group retires to the Ranch House Restaurant by 9 am for breakfast. If you would like to sell at the swap meet the entrance price fee is \$16.00.



ABOVE: Setting up equipment for swap.

SANDRA Repeaters

| Callsign | Location | Input | Output | Callsign | Location | Input | Output |
|----------|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|---------|---------|
| WB6WLV | Mt. Otay | 146.040 | 146.640 | WB6WLV | Mt. Laguna | 444.200 | 449.200 |
| WB6WLV | Mt. Otay | 222.600 | 224.200 | K6GAO | Hi-Pass | 144.680 | 145.280 |
| WB6WLV | Mt. Otay | 444.500 | 449.500 | W6SS | Lyon's Peak | 146.865 | 146.265 |
| WB6WLV | Mt. Otay | 1270.300 | 1282.300 | K6AIL | Sharp Hospital | 147.285 | 147.885 |
| WB6WLV | Mt. Laguna | 147.750 | 147.150 | WB6WLV | San Diego | 442.320 | 447.320 |
| WB6WLV | Mt. Laguna | 222.460 | 224.060 | | | | |

All SANDRA repeaters use PL 107.2



Buyers and sellers survey the available items under the watchful eye of SANDRA 3 Year Member-at-Large, Chuck Wood WD6APP (second from the left).

Following the swap meet, starting about 9:00 am, is the SANDRA breakfast at the Ranch House restaurant, just down Woodside Drive at 11510. The SANDRA group gathers in a back room reserved for the event, and attendance is impressive. The meeting is completely informal and consists of many simultaneous conversations creating quite a din. The food is good and plentiful adding to the waistslines of attendees. Squelch Tales spent an enjoyable one and a half hours hearing about the history of the Otay repeaters with SANDRA's John Austin and Chuck Wood. {SQ}



Breakfast at the Ranch House Restaurant.

Minutes, SANDRA Board of Directors Meeting July 1, 2010

Meeting was called to order by vice president Stogie, KG6JCW.

Ken, WA6OSB presented the Treasurer's Report.

Bayard, K6GAO, member-at-large will handle lease renewal at the Hi-Pass site.

The SANDARC representatives – stated SANDARC needs approval of a movie projector up to \$1000. Bob W2IRI made the motion to approve the request and Stogie, KG6JCW seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The ARRL Convention early bird registration had been extended to the end of June 2010.

Carl, KJ6BSO has volunteered to help Herb, KF6ROX our Squelch Tales editor with the publication.

SANDRA's Christmas Party will be Dec.9, 2010 at 7pm in Rooms 401 & 402 at the San Diego County Education Center.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbie Flinn – WA6URS
SANDRA Secretary

Minutes, SANDRA General Meeting September 2, 2010

The meeting began at 7pm. We had 14 members present and 1 guest, Henk KG6ZTN.

Bob W2IRI gave a presentation to the membership with a tour of M. F. J. facility and a tour of Ameritron amplifiers.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbie Flinn - WA6URS
SANDRA Secretary

Ordinance

Continued from page 1

for staff working on the project. Ms. Pfeifer requested an email with specific questions to be answered. An email was sent asking what the current status was in laymen's terms, what possible paths the proposed ordinance could follow from this point and what was most likely to happen next. As of this writing, no answer was received from Ms. Pfeifer.

Jeffery Powell was more forthcoming. Mr. Powel said that the Council President Pro Tem had not placed the proposed ordinance on the city council agenda, effectively placing it on hold. He further said that a number of council members had received enough negative input that they were reluctant to act on the issue. Unless the Council President Pro Tem places it back on the agenda, nothing can happen with the project. This process is similar to the U.S. Congress where the Speaker is responsible for setting the agenda. The problem with being caught in this legislative purgatory is that there is no finality, it could stay buried for long periods of time and be revived at any time in the future. The one positive note is that the proposed ordinance is currently dormant because of the strong showing of the amateur community. Ham's voices were heard by the San Diego City Council. Mr. Powell told me that Carl DeMaio is against the proposed ordinance because he values the work Hams do during emergencies – he has heard us. -{ST}-



Profile: Mt. Otay Repeater

Otay is a fitting subject for this first profile because it is not only SANDRA's largest repeater site but the only amateur owned and operated repeater site in San Diego County, making it arguably the most important amateur operated repeater site in the county. SANDRA currently offers repeaters at output frequencies of 146.640, 224.200, 449.500 and 1282.300 from the Otay site. There is also packet equipment on site with 2M (145.090) at 1200 baud and 440 at 96K baud.

The current antennas are mounted on 60 foot and 40 foot Rohn 65 towers. All the receive antennas are mounted on top of the 60 foot tower and the transmit antennas are mounted on the 40 foot tower. The antennas are omni-directional, vertically-polarized antennas each with a gain of approximately 6 dBd.



The Otay site was built and is maintained to commercial broadcast specifications by SANDRA volunteers. It is important to recognize that the site was built and is maintained by volunteers. Likewise the equipment, towers and building materials were donated by volunteers – this is truly an amateur owned, operated and maintained facility. The facility does not currently have battery backup power, but it is planned for the future.

In late 1978 SANDRA was searching for a repeater location. The SANDRA Board of Directors authorized then president Wayne Bamford (W6PDA) to arrange for a U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lease and develop a repeater facility owned and operated by SANDRA. In 1979 Wayne succeeded in obtaining an initial 10 year lease from the BLM for a site on Otay Mountain (the lease has been subsequently renewed several times and is currently on a 30 year term). The site was 100 yards off of the nearest road with a 150 foot vertical rise. The lease didn't allow for the use of any mechanized building machinery on BLM land, so all building materials, concrete, concrete blocks, towers and equipment had to be hand carried to the site by SANDRA volunteers. The site was designed and built

by volunteer labor and supervised by Wayne. The facility took more than a year to complete, opening in May of 1980 with the two HBX 54, free standing, 50 foot towers and equipment for 146.640, 224.200 and 449.500. The 1282.3 machine and packet radios were added during the 1980s after equipment was donated to the club. Several SANDRA members that were involved with the building of the site are still active in SANDRA today, they include: Barbie Flinn (WA6URS) club secretary, Chuck Wood (WD6APP) Club Member at Large, Ed Flinn (WA6YVX) and Vance Belliston (W6SS). The site currently runs on AC mains, with no battery backup. However, a battery box suitable for 4 deep cycle batteries has been donated and installed and is waiting for a donation of batteries to fill it up.

The site remained stable until the Santa Ana season of the year 2000 when both towers were lost in the winds of that year. The repeaters were kept on the air by mounting temporary antennas to the building. Subsequently, 100 feet of Rohn 65 tower material was donated which was used to put up one 60 foot and one 40 tower, which is the current configuration. The site was upgraded to be compliant with commercial specifications. Erection of the towers, antennas and hard line took nearly two years, while the site operated with the temporary antennas. Many involved with the development of the Otay site look in retrospect at the catastrophic events of 2000 as a blessing in disguise, because it supplied the impetus for the dramatic improvements to the site.

Today Otay is the jewel in the crown of SANDRA repeater sites. Along the way other amateur groups have asked to be able to site equipment in the SANDRA Otay facility which has been granted. However, today all the equipment bays are full and there is no remaining space for repeater additions. Therefore, SANDRA does not currently envision adding new equipment, other than maintenance replacements.

This is a site operated and maintained by SANDRA volunteers. Their many hours of work and the generous donations of equipment by local Hams and commercial two-way radio companies are a blessing. -{SQ}-



Squelch Tales

SANDRA, Incorporated
San Diego Repeater Association
P.O. Box 81103
San Diego, CA 92138

SANDRA NETS

Sunday 8:00 P.M. Mt. Otay Repeater
Wednesday 7:30 P.M. Mt. Laguna Repeater

GUIDELINES SUMMARY

SANDRA, Inc. operates their repeaters for service in the San Diego area. The policy of the organization is that the repeaters are available for all licensed amateur radio operators to use so long as applicable rules and regulations are observed, whether members of SANDRA or not.

SQUELCH TALES

SQUELCH TALES is published bi-monthly by the San Diego Repeater Association (SANDRA, Inc.), a corporation dedicated to the promotion of amateur radio. Distribution is free to members.

Newsletter exchanges are desired and solicited. The right to edit material with regard to format, suitability and style is reserved. Ads are \$50 per full page, \$27 per half page and \$15 per quarter page. Business cards are \$8. Artwork is due by the first week of the month to the P.O. box. Liability for errors in copy is limited to the printing of a correction in the subsequent issue. Permission is hereby granted to reprint items from SQUELCH TALES in other amateur radio newsletters, provided credit is given to SQUELCH TALES. Opinions or editorials are not necessarily the position of the Board or the organization of SANDRA, Inc.

SANDRA MEMBERSHIP & BOARD MEETING

The SANDRA membership meets the first Thursday in the Months of March, June, September and December. Meetings start at 7:00 P.M. and are located at the San Diego County Education Center, 6401 Linda Vista Road, San Diego. Board meetings take place immediately following each membership meeting and additional Board meetings take place in July and October. All SANDRA members are encouraged to attend.