

SEELEY LAKE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
March 1, 2010 – SEELEY LAKE HISTORICAL "BARN"

PRESENT: Jon Haufler, Diane Weatherman, Gary Pelletier, Walt Hill, Carol Evans, Addrien Marx

ABSENT: George Frasca

PUBLIC: 9 plus Chris Stout for recording of meeting

ADMINISTRATIVE ASST: Kris Gullikson

Meeting commenced at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES: Marx moved for approval of minutes from the February meeting. Hill seconded. No changes. All in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Weatherman reported bank balance of \$9782.75 after 2 bills were presented and paid. The balance of the two CD's is #1663: \$2334.20 and #1664: 2392.33. The CDs were renewed at 1st Valley Bank for one year at 1.5% interest. There was a question on a billing from Clearwater Realty for the Community Hall for \$75.00. She will contact them on that. It was pointed out that may have been for the CRC meeting on Air Quality made in error.

MOTION: Weatherman motioned for approval of the Treasurer's Report and Pelletier seconded. All in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS: Correspondence from: Ron Cox (2) one on Land Use Plan and another on Travel Network, James Moose in reference to the LUP, and USFS requesting comments on Colt Summit Project.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT: Marx provided an update on newsletters for February and complimented Gullikson on her work. Chris Stout gave an update on the recording of the meetings and the progress. He stated that unless the Council purchased much more expensive equipment, the quality of the current recordings was probably not "internet quality" suitable for posting on the web. He is converting the files to an .mpeg format for storage. He suggested use of a jump drive to store the files temporarily and then transfer them to the newly purchased portable hard drive for permanent storage. This will also provide a back up. Discussion on purpose of recordings; Council chose to keep recordings for reference only. Gullikson will keep external storage records.

OLD BUSINESS:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: Weatherman read her report as follows:

A meeting was held on February 10th at Littlebirds to further discuss ways to stimulate the Seeley Lake economy. A presentation was made by Karen Pratt based on the article "The Maine Way." The article chronicles the struggle of several small towns in northern Maine and the way they recreated their economy through the best use of the natural resources. The community came together as volunteers to build a lodge, promote a healthy lifestyle for children and attract world class athletes to their trails for winter sports. There are many correlations between those communities and Seeley Lake. This community is blessed with incredible natural resources for all seasons and an abundance of public land. A lively discussion ensued concerning a number of issues involved in moving forward and the history of the Olympic class ski trail system that already exists here. Pat O'Herron from Rural initiatives and Mary Allen from REDD were in attendance and gave valuable insight into possible grant programs and funding sources that might be accessed. A feasibility study was mentioned as a starting point, using grant funds and matching local funds. A long range wide scope plan was encouraged as a means of obtaining future funding. The need for more immediate projects was discussed, especially the need for a warming hut near the trail to accommodate skiers and children that are being taught to ski by the recently formed Venture Club. Our current trail system has benefited from the dedicated work of the ski club and others and also from funding from the annual OSCR race. The recent Biathlon attracted 68 participants and about 200 spectators to our area. The meeting was adjourned, a date for the next meeting will be announced. An initial workshop meeting for interested committee folks is set for March 4 at 2:30 at the Barn, with a public meeting to follow.

***New meeting dates were set for the second Wednesday of each month.

Upcoming meetings: March 10 and April 14th. 2:30 at the Barn.

Discussion on alternative winter recreation and the need to develop the trails for multi-use. Marx reported that trails in the Helena National Forests have been closed to XC skiers because of the Pine Beetle outbreaks, so therefore the Seeley area has much more potential for attracting the regional market skiers.

TRAILS COMMITTEE UPDATE: Pelletier reported on the meeting of Feb. 15th. Six projects are up for current discussion; - Sect. 36 (High School hill) toward Airport. Scoping letters are currently being reviewed by MT DNRC.

- Elaine's Way, Boy Scout Road, Seeley Lane; all are in need of signage. Missoula Co. is planning to meet with committee members on site March 12th.

- Seeley Ranch easement- no responses have been received from the property owners to the north.. Next steps will be discussed at the next meeting. Scott Smith will be in attendance.

Pelletier mentioned the "Contract Guidelines class" he attended on behalf of the Council. It was sponsored by Missoula County and presented to all area-wide Community Councils. More discussion later in meeting.

Discussion on trails with Dave Sharbonno, Ken Kronsperger and Ron Cox all contributing.

Next Meeting: April 19- 6 pm at the Barn

AIR QUALITY: Evans reported on the CRC Air Quality meeting held in Feb. Many residents had asked why the Council was doing this study. Evans reported she explained that the Council did not initiate the monitoring, but that Missoula Co. is mandated to provide clean air for all citizens. CC is the "go to" agency that represents Seeley Lake and that is why the Air Quality Committee (made up of local residents) took on the job to research and be proactive for the community in advance of any EPA involvement. She stated that it was unfortunate that the DEQ's data were picked up by local and national media and presented as an inaccurate portrayal of air quality in Seeley Lake. Evans stated the County was not responsible for that. The DEQ in Helena is responsible to put out data from readings and this information is posted on their website.

Evans publicly thanked Caroline Jenkins for doing much of the research necessary to move this project forward and assuage the attitudes of folks in our community that feel intruded upon by government. Jenkins reported on her meetings with Ben Schmidt of Missoula County and "Guy" at the Axeman in Missoula. More involvement on the County's part is needed and Schmidt will be in attendance at the next meeting on March 5th and March 10th. She reported, contrary to what Schmidt reported recently, Seeley will not be receiving a new air quality monitor next year; there is another community the state DEQ feels is in greater need. Also, of concern, Jenkins reported according to Schmidt, the EPA *may* start looking closer at SL because of the monitor readings thus far. This will be subject to pursue with the County during Friday's meeting. The County is concerned about Pyramid if air quality is determined to be out of attainment. Mentioned was made that today was the start of the open burning season. The Seeley Lake Chamber of Commerce is very concerned about reports going out that imply that the air quality throughout the whole town is bad, as this could be having a potential economic impact. It was suggested that a meeting be held with the state DEQ and stop those reports from going out in this way. The state informed Schmidt that they did not have the time nor resources to meet with us on this issue. Schmidt will continue to communicate with them on this and keep us informed.

Evans inquired if the Council would want to be involved in issuing media releases on Air Quality on behalf of the area. The readings for air quality are available on the Helena DEQ website. Raw data shown on this site leads folks to believe that Seeley Lake has poor air quality. Jenkins inquired where reports came from. 2 studies: Libby 80% wood stoves; Missoula 80% came from a mill. Media could have surmised from those two studies that Seeley's poor air quality is coming from the mill and local wood stoves, which may or may not be true.

Funding is the next step at this point, but Evans reported it may be a viable option. Might go along way offering "free stoves", but it remains that they still have to purchase stovepipe, etc. which can be as expensive as the stove itself.

Haufler again mentioned the CARE grants, and Evans replied Mamie at MC will be searching for grant availability and that is her specialty. Mamie informed Jenkins that if an area is 'in attainment' that the funding sources are scarce, but once a community is "out of attainment" that many more options become available. She also mentioned there are a number of foundations that would be willing to assist in solutions for issues such as this.

Hill was dismayed that the state told the Chamber that they did not have time for us. Jenkins said Schmidt will stay in touch with them and us.

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 5, 1 pm at the Barn. This will be a Working Meeting, and interested residents are invited to attend. Haufler will add this item to next month's agenda for further exploration.

LAND USE PLAN: MCC has had two meetings since last SLCC meeting; Feb. 4th (Seeley Lake elementary) and Feb. 24th (Missoula). Next meeting is this Wed. at 6 pm in Msla. The agenda is not yet posted, but Haufler reported from his notes of the last meeting; Commercial Designations, Clearwater Junction, Downtown area-Hospital District, DARLOA and Seeley Lake Estates. Reportedly the Commissioners will break the sections down and deal with each as separate issues.

MOTION: Marx motioned to request the Missoula Co. Commissioners come to Seeley Lake to give an informational meeting at the conclusion of their deliberations to inform the residents of our area on what has been done. Hill seconded. All in favor. Haufler will write an email requesting that.

CONTRACT GUIDELINES by MCC

Pelletier attended and reported on the information gained. The County provided a flow chart (hand out given) for increments of \$ and what it requires for contracts. In a Community Council's case, business may be conducted on jobs of under \$5000 (using a "reputable County vendor"). This may be either a verbal or a written contract. Any jobs over \$5000 would need to go through the County. Haufler requested the SLCC have guidelines for informal contracts spelled out so as to put out larger jobs out to bid locally. He also recommended there be job specifications or general standards to go along with that. Haufler requested a report for next month's meeting from an ad hoc committee formed to make suggestions on these guidelines. Hill volunteered to be on the committee, and Pelletier will chair. John Richards also volunteered to assist. Cox mentioned Carol Koepoke has expansive experience in this area and will be returning soon.

CLEARWATER MEETING SUBDIVISION: Ely and Assoc. presented a plan on Feb. 9th for a 59 unit subdivision at Clearwater Junction. Appx. 10 were in attendance. Discussion and questions asked. The project is now in process with the County.

CANDIDATES FOR POSITIONS: Not 4 positions. Just two with 3 year terms that are up in May (Haufler and Evans). 4 Candidates applied; Jon Haufler, Carol Evans, Ken Kronsperger and Jack Greenwood. This will be a mail in ballot at that time. 2 other positions will be open soon; Diane Weatherman: Appt. by MCC in May and Gary Pelletier: Resign as of end of May. His will also be filled by appt. by MCC with direction on how to apply in April for that position. It was decided to have a "meet the candidates" time slot during the April 5 Community Council meeting where each candidate will have 3 minutes for a short presentation, followed by questions.

Jenkins reported there will be a candidate highlights section in an upcoming issue of the Pathfinder for any/all elected positions. She will send due dates and criteria for bio's to each individual.

NEW BUSINESS:

Colt Summit Restoration and Fuel Reduction Project: Forest Service is asking for public comment by March 10. Council discussed and chose to send a letter.

MOTION: Hill motioned for the Chair to compose a letter of support, carefully worded, to support the project moving forward. Pelletier seconded. All in favor.

SENATOR TESTER - In Missoula

Haufler received notice of a meeting hosted by Senator Tester with Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack. Haufler noted he will be out of town and asked for other Council Members to attend. Marx volunteered, depending on the time and location.

GOOD NEIGHBOR HANDBOOK: Copies of the new handbook by Rural Initiatives were distributed.

Upcoming meetings:

MARCH:

3rd: MCC on SL LUP 6 pm 201 Court House (Commissioners' meeting room)

5th: Air Quality Committee members -1 pm at the Barn

10th : Economic Dev Committee, 2:30 at the Barn

17th: MCC on SL LUP 6 pm 201 Court House (Commissioners' meeting room)

APRIL:

April 5 SLCC 6 pm at Barn including "Meet the Candidate" night. Hill reported he will be absent at the May meeting.

April 19 Rec/Trails Committee 6 pm at Barn

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm