SCCC Board meeting 10.17.23

Old Snowmass Fire Station Annex and Zoom

Board members present: Ned Andrews, Judy Frey, Judy Lovins, Sierra Flanigan, Johno McBride, Chris Collins, Pete McBride, Jill Sabella

Board member on zoom: David Chase

Guests: Kathy deWolfe, Martha Ferguson, Sharon Caulfield

CONSENT AGENDA

The Minutes of the August 15 meeting were unanimously approved.

The Treasurer’s Report of August 2023 showed $31,734.45 in the Unrestricted account and $9,490.51 in the Water Studies account for a total of $41,224.96. Expenses for August were $175.15 reimbursement to Judy Lovins for the Night Sky meter, $1,108.81 reimbursement to Chelsea Congden for Water Studies printing, and $212.25 to Great American Insurance Co for the D&S insurance installment. The total balance minus expenses is therefore $39,728.75.

The September report showed $31,347.05 in the Unrestricted funds and $8,381.70 in the Water Studies fund for a total of $39,728.75. There was neither income nor expenses.

ANNUAL PICNIC REVIEW

This year’s Caucus picnic was held at Johno McBride’s home and was a big success with 60-70 Capitol Creek valley guests attending the cookout, bonfire and star-gazing. Johno and Pete organized and hosted the event and with Katie McBride, donated McBride meat for burgers and sides. Chris donated the keg and wine, Molly helped with the organizing and picnic supplies, and Judy Frey set up her telescope on the high platform for star and Saturn gazing along with guest John Kneeler. Donations given at the picnic location were $405, which will be reflected in the treasurer’s report given at the December Board meeting.

CAUCUS BOARD ELECTION

Ned said the annual board submission deadline is November 10. The voting done on Constant Contact will close 30 days later on December 10th and the results will be announced at the caucus meeting December 12. Both the November and December meetings will be on the 2nd Tuesday of each month instead of the usual third Tuesday of the month.

EPSTEIN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

At the November 14th meeting Mitch Haas, land planner, will make a presentation on the residential development of the approximate 300 acre Epstein ranch (formerly Wieben ranch) which will be submitted to the County.

DARK SKIES COMMUNITY UPDATE

Martha reported that she and Sierra had met with Chris Lane of ACES (Aspen Center for Environmental Studies) about establishing an educational program in the valley schools (Aspen, Basalt, Carbondale and New Castle) about Dark Skies.

David is communicating with Jeff Hall of the Lowell Observatory about making a presentation on Dark Skies as part of a guest speaker series. Hall facilitated in making Flagstaff the first Dark Skies designated city. Sierra said Hall may make a presentation to ACES staff and also the possibility that TAKAW will host an event lecture on Dark Skies.

Night light readings have been taken with the caucus’ new light meter at three locations - the Conoco parking area, Little Elk Creek Avenue, and the monastery road. On the Bortle light scale the Conoco had a 5.5-6 class reading which is “suburban bright”; Little Elk Creek had a class 4 reading which is “rural suburban”; and the monastery road had a class 3 reading, which is “rural sky”.

The meter reads from an arc in the sky - straight up so there is no low light measured. Light readings will be taken 2-4 times a year in these same locations.

Martha said we are making headway in curbing light pollution through education and working with the County in updating their lighting code. County lighting code enforces that light trespassing is not allowed and that outdoor lights must be pointed down with a shield, and HOA’s are to enforce County regulations.

To get an official designation - which Martha said we hope to have in the spring - there has to be 1. a distinct geographic area; 2. work with the local lighting code; and 3. have an education program on light pollution to get the information out to the public.

Recourse for light abusers is to report the situation to the County lighting officer. There is consideration that a letter from the Caucus with dark sky information could be sent.

CAPITOL CREEK WATER FLOW

Ned spoke about our new water meter/gauge which was recently installed in Capitol Creek near the confluence with Snowmass Creek, on the corner of Judy Frey’s property. This is below the Boram White ditch which serves LEC. The gauge was obtained from the CWCB (Colorado Water Conservation Board) to give a legitimate water measurement which our Board can easily access. The gauge measures water by the pressure of the water in the PVC gauge pipe and also records the date. The depth is then converted into flow amount. The Roaring Fork Conservancy measures quality of the water and is respected by the CWCB to give accurate quantity results as well.

There are 50 plus water rights on Capitol Creek but presently only the senior rights presently get water.

Ponds use irrigation water and have to get “storage rights” for any other water source.

PITKIN COUNTY LAND USE CODE AMENDMENTS

After over a year’s community participation in the County’s Growth Management Plan work, P&Z has proposed a maximum of 9250 sf housing limit in Pitkin County. Several caucus master plans have a maximum house size of 5750 sq ft, those being Brush Creek, FryingPan, Basalt urban, and Snowmass Capitol Creek. Sierra and Johno were participants in this growth management planning for over a year and thanks to them for their participation and work.

The final vote by the BOCC will be November 16, 2023.

FUNDRAISING

The caucus decided to do a fall fundraising letter by email using Sierra’s new well-researched caucus area resident list. Judy Lovins and Sierra will spearhead this year’s letter. Vicki Treece who has done the fundraising effort the past several years was discouraging about results from sending a mailed letter because it has been the same donors who annually give and also the time and expense of a mailed letter Vicki felt was not worth the effort and that an email effort was more efficient.

Meeting was adjourned.