SCCC Minutes 4.18.23 Draft I

Snowmass Fire Station and Zoom

Board members at Snowmass Fire Station: Ned Andrews, Molly Child, Chris Collins, Judy Frey, Johno McBride, Pete McBride, Jill Sabella

Board members on Zoom: Helene Slansky, Jen Rupert, David Chase

Guests: Martha Ferguson, Steve Child, Garland Lassater, Forest Thomas, Gayle Morgan, Sharon Caulfield

Consent Agenda: March Minutes & Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer’s Report of March 31, 2023 shows $32,502.96 in the unrestricted account and $9,490.51 in the restricted water account, for a total of $41,993.47. The only expense was $250 to the accountant for 2022 taxes.

Chris moved to approve both. Jen seconded. All in favor.

Dark Skies Initiative

Martha spoke about letters requested and received from several local organizations - AVLT, ACES, Aspen Educational Foundation, the Lowell Observatory, RF Audubon, and Jeffrey Woodruff. Martha said she’s reached out to other Caucasus as well, like Emma, Woody Creek and Crystal Rivers. All the letters will be attached to the application to Dark Skies. Also hopefully submission letters of recommendation will come from our local libraries and Chambers of Commerce, as well as the Aspen Ski Corp’s Environmental Foundation. Martha sent out letters describing Dark Sky International’s mission and education about better lighting methods and to light for safety but to keep dark skies. Martha said she will talk to Larissa La Londe at Pitkin County Planning about the County revising the lighting code and being aware of lighting ethics and “smart night-time lighting”. Martha spoke about doing an OpEd in the local papers, with input from Judy Frey and Pete McBride. They hope to have a “star party” as part of the educational component required. Martha said the Dark Skies has no enforcement of violations to lighting - that’s up to the County to enforce.

Master Plan

The revised draft of the SCCC Master Plan is to be considered by the P&Z on May 2. Ned encouraged any Board members who can to attend the County meeting, which will begin about 5:30 on May 2.

Capitol Creek Trailhead

Ned spoke about a conversation he had with a former Maroon Creek Bells Wilderness Ranger about our concerns of the condition of the trailhead and Capitol Lake camping area. Ned was told the Forest Service is aware of these problems and currently with old unfilled positions now being filled its a good time to address our concerns to the Forest Service Supervisor Kevin Werner and ask for a meeting with appropriate staff to consider what can be done.

Similar to what was previously noted in the February 21, 2023 Minutes, their recommendations were to monitor and observe things like number of cars in the parking areas and on the upper road, illegal camping, human waste - taking photos when possible, all to show we are serious about our concerns. It does appear inevitable that soon the Forest Service will have to employ a reservation system.

Johno suggested an effort to raise private funds to give to the Forest Service for amenities like building outhouse, since the Forest Service’s budget is limited.

Chris recommended starting a community foundation, such as Steamboat Springs’ *Steamboa*t *Foundation*” -which Chris commented on in an earlier meeting, where the monies go to the Forest Service for parking and outhouses, etc.

Redistricting County Commissioner Districts

Steve spoke on the three options the County has drawn up for redistricting the five Pitkin County districts that need to be done to accommodate population changes within the districts, to make them within a 5% variance between the most and least populated districts, based on the census that was taken in 2020. This process of having a new census taken and redistricting is done every ten years, mandated by the state. This does not effect the school districts, nor the caucuses. It mainly effects the commissioners’ home locations. Steve said he personally doesn’t agree with any of the three options proposed because he thinks the census is not accurate, but that of the three options thus worked out, #1 is the best because it has the least overall impact. Steve will continue to work on the population numbers within each option and will then recommend to the Caucus how to proceed to voice our concerns to the County.

Proposed Changes to Colorado Zoning Laws : State Bills 23-213 and 23-1255

These two bills are presently before the Colorado General Assembly to address the housing needs across the state.

House Bill 23-1255 addresses regulation of residential housing restrictions, replacing local voters choices with policy preferences of the Colorado General Assembly and thereby disempowering municipal voters from exercising their rights.

Senate Bill 23-213 addresses the expansion of state authority on zoning and lands standards thereby putting it in the hands of developer interests. Opposition claims that local governments are best suited to address the needs of their own communities.

There was discussion of both of these bills proposed by Colorado Gov. Polis which would give the state the oversight of zoning and employee housing, thereby taking the local zoning regulation out of local control and giving it to the state. The growth control regulations would be state controlled. This would increase housing units by allowing multiple units of up to a 4-plex - to be built where single family housing was only allowed previously. It would allow ADU’s for employee housing, but Steve said it doesn’t address low-cost housing. Colorado has always been a local control state and there is a lot of opposition statewide to these two bills. Our Master Plan would have no power over these bills.The bills will be voted on December 31, 2024.

Steve recommended writing our State Senator Perry Will and contacting the State legislators Liz Velasquez and Julie McCluskie.

Chris commented that the core issue of these bills is the dire need to build employee housing, and that HOA covenant restrictions on building cannot be disregarded by these bills.

Pete made a motion that the Caucus prepare letters to the State legislators in opposition to these two bills. David seconded. All in favor.

Public Comments

Molly has planned this year's Caucus’ Spring Road Cleanup for Saturday, May 6th before the spring grasses grow. Meet at the Conoco Park’n’Ride at 9. The focus will be the lower Snowmass Creek Road area and one mile up toward Aspen from the Conoco and down one mile almost to Lazy Glen. She encouraged everyone to pick up trash along the roadside whenever convenient at all times.

Pete addressed the interest and concern in the closing of St. Benedict’s Monastery, and that there are four citizens groups organizing to find a way to keep the monastery and its land as a spiritual center, to protect it and keep it private with conservation easements. The underlying concept is biodiversity, silence and spirituality. Chris said these interested groups - in the early stage of organizing - need to get together for discussions.

Chris expressed concern about the irregular and poor cell phone service in this end of the valley. That the service is back on now but there was virally no service since December 31st.

Molly voted to adjourn the meeting. Chris seconded. The meeting was adjourned.