



Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board held on October 4, 2023 6:00 P.M. Spanish Springs Library (7100 Pyramid Lake Highway)

1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM [Non-Action Item]

Bruce Parks, Brandon Partain(absent), Sharon Thygesen, Bradley Young, Bonnie Billings, Shannon Martell, Adam De Merit(absent)

A quorum was established.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE [Non-Action Item]

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – Comment heard under this item will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the agenda. The Citizen Advisory Board will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the CAB as a whole.

Tom Green – He is running for County Commissioner of District 4. Our country and way of life are under attack. He is worried that we will not be able to say under God in the pledge of allegiance soon.

Mark Newmann – There is a new elderly services guide. Under the RTC, there is a service to get 60 dollars a month in a taxi, uber, or lift account. Participants expressed concerns about the challenges of finding information on the Washoe website and the reliance on 311 operators for assistance.

A presentation on website navigation is mentioned to be scheduled in the near future.

Alan Munson – He refers to an article by a Nobel Prize winner that challenges the idea of a climate emergency. Climate change is not caused by cars. Alan discusses the impact of water vapor, clouds, and the sun on Earth's temperature, emphasizing their significance compared to CO2. Alan Munson expresses concerns about the validity of climate change claims and presents arguments against the notion that human activities are the primary cause.

Mike Villanueva - He shares his perspective on climate change, mentioning the cyclical nature of climate variations and the minor warming trend. The speaker mentions that unbiased evidence shows that neither droughts nor major storms have increased. The speaker states that the average trends of ice sheets are essentially static. The speaker mentions that sea levels have risen slightly for about 8,000 years since the glaciers melted.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES – General community updates from public safety representatives; including but not limited to Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, Washoe County Sheriff's Office, and others as such. [Non-Action Item]

TMFPD Christopher Black –

A total of 197 incidents of which 3 were fire-related. The speaker provides information about recent incidents, green waste dates and locations, and open burning. Those dates for green waste can be found on the website www.tmfpd.us or by calling 775-326-6000. Curbside chipping is available for those in need. Open burning will open in December.

Washoe County Sheriff's Office

He discussed recent crime trends in the area, including vehicle burglaries, garage door kick-ins, and theft of construction materials. They emphasized the importance of taking precautions such as locking vehicles, removing valuables, and reporting suspicious activities. They also mentioned the availability of crime data on the Washoe County Sheriff's Office website.

The speaker presented the sheriff's vision for the next four years, which includes four strategic pillars: protecting life in Washoe County, community engagement, leveraging technology, and professional development. They highlighted specific goals related to addressing homelessness, reducing traffic fatalities, expanding mental health programs, and collaborating with county resources.

They mentioned the goal of strengthening community trust and office transparency by providing information through CAB meetings and the Freedom of Information Act. He discussed increasing community engagement by participating in various events and showcasing resources to the public. He mentioned the goal of leveraging technology to improve crime analysis and effectiveness, including the use of camera trailers for identifying crime trends.

The speaker discussed the plan to implement a new CAD system with RMS and jail management system to replace the existing Tiburon system. The speaker discussed enhancing the quality of training and expanding the mental health outreach program to reduce incidents involving mental health crises. The speaker mentioned the agency's focus on professional development and generating leaders through programs and training.

Catalytic Converter thefts are down after the implementation of the deterrence programs.

The lack of parenting and issues with the juvenile justice system are raised as concerns. Instances of underage individuals obtaining alcohol and committing crimes are discussed. We have limited space for how many children we can hold at Jan Evans.

The trend of loss prevention policies in stores allowing thefts and the potential dangers associated with it are expressed as concerns. The county has hired additional officers and is working to fill vacancies. This is a national trend that is not only impacting Washoe County.

Concerns were raised about the impact of new housing developments on the workload and the increasing number of apartments in a small area.

The department will be fully staffed after the next ten officers are done being trained.

- 6. WASHOE COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY** – A presentation by County Sustainability Manager Brian Beffort about the County’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and improve the quality of life for everyone in the County. [Non-Action Item]

The speaker discusses various initiatives to reduce energy consumption in county facilities, such as switching to LED light bulbs and upgrading inefficient equipment. The speaker mentions that reducing greenhouse gases is one of the county's strategic priorities for the current fiscal year. The speaker highlights the availability of technology that can help clean the air, lower energy prices, and improve quality of life.

The speaker emphasized the importance of food security and expanding community gardens to increase access to healthy food. They discussed the need for urban forestry to combat the warming climate and mentioned the availability of trees. The county adopted the Green Recovery Plan, which covers greenhouse gas reductions and investment in transportation. They discussed the need to switch the county fleet to alternative fuels and work on alternative transportation.

A participant raised concerns about the limitations imposed by the energy company on the number of solar panels that can be installed. The speaker mentioned the advancements in solar panel technology, battery backup systems, and other related systems. The speaker expressed optimism about upcoming changes in policies related to solar panels and other technologies.

There is frustration expressed about increasing energy costs despite investments in green energy. Replacing all light bulbs in the county would cost \$20 million with a seven-month payback period.

Citizen - Every time NV Energy invests in Green Energy, our costs seem to go up. If this is all a hoax, what happens?

Answer – What if it is a hoax and we just make the world a better place? If you do not want to invest in any of these programs, you can cut the cord with NV Energy.

- 7. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (RTC) UPDATE** – A representative from RTC will be present to provide an update on projects in the Spanish Springs/Sparks areas. [Non-Action Item]

Paul Nelson started his current job in July of 2022 after a 21-year career in broadcast news. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from the University of Nevada, Reno in 2001. Paul enjoys being part of the transportation process in his role at RTC. He has lived in both Reno and Sparks over the past 26 years and has seen the transportation system adapt as the area has grown.

The RTC is the metropolitan planning organization responsible for transportation system planning over the next 25-30 years. They also operate public transportation and handle engineering and construction of roads. The total cost of the projects is estimated to be around \$800 million, with the possibility of increasing due to inflation. Ongoing projects include preventive maintenance, four-street reconstruction, Oddie Wells construction, and Pyramid improvement phase one. Future projects mentioned include the immigrant highway intelligence corridor, Pyramid Highway, Highland Ranch intersection, Sparks Boulevard capacity, Vista Boulevard, and Pyramid widening.

The Sparks Boulevard project is estimated to cost \$71.4 million. The north phase of the project, estimated to cost \$65 million, will involve widening the road to three lanes, roadway rehabilitation, and improving the shared-use path. The south phase of the project, which went from Gregg Street to the I-80 ramps and Lincoln Way, was completed earlier this year for \$11 million.

The Pavement Preservation Program in 2023 will focus on 14 different streets in Sparks. The program includes cracked seals, patching, and slurry seals, covering approximately 200 miles.

Improvements include adding a right-turn lane and upgrading traffic signals at specific locations. Fiber optic communications are being installed on various roads to enhance the reliability of traffic signals. The Sparks Intelligent Corridor is a pilot project that uses real-time notifications and traffic signal changes to manage incidents and improve traffic movement.

Future projects from 2026 to 2030 and beyond are also part of the metropolitan planning. The current metropolitan planning covers the period from 2021 to 2025, including specific projects and private development.

The discussion included various transportation projects such as widening the Highland Ranch, the Pyramid 395 connector, Pyramid Highway widening, the widening of McCarran Boulevard, and multi-modal improvements. The collaboration with the county, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, and utility companies for the transportation projects was discussed. The preferred route for connecting Pyramid Highway to Blanton Drive was mentioned.

The fixed route system, with around four and a half million trips per year, primarily for work, was discussed. The flex ride service, providing on-demand curb-to-curb service similar to Uber, was highlighted as an important addition to the RTC. The Vancouver partnership between RTC, enterprise, and businesses was mentioned. The areas currently served by Flex Ride were mentioned, including Spanish Springs, North Valley, Somerset, and Verdi. The Senior Ride Taxi Box Program, offering a \$60 subsidy every month for transportation, was discussed.

The congestion on Pyramid Highway and the plans to alleviate it were discussed. The Pyramid connector project, which aims to divert trips from Pyramid Highway to 395, was mentioned.

Citizen - The widening of Pyramid Highway from two lanes to three lanes is creating a double bottleneck in each direction. The long wait time on Highland Ranch Road to make a left-hand turn on the Pyramid Highway is mentioned.

Answer - Five Ridges is supposed to be widening the bottom of Highland Ranch Road starting this fall. The traffic analysis from five years ago showed no need for expanding or extending the Sparks Boulevard extension. The long-term vision is being updated to reevaluate the need for widening Sparks Boulevard north above Arlington.

Citizen - What is your biggest priority in Washoe County for highway improvements?

Answer - The long-term focus is on the North Valleys and the Spanish Springs area due to the growth. The county and RTC are finding ways to deliver on opportunities for road improvements. Phase one of the Pyramid Highway improvement is currently ongoing.

Citizen - The speaker raises the issue of left turn lanes being located off to the side instead of in the main traffic flow. This confuses and leads to cars stopping unnecessarily. They suggest exploring solutions such as installing lights across the road.

Citizen - The speaker expresses concern about the lack of visibility on the road. They suggest that better road markings, particularly during dark and rainy conditions, would greatly improve safety.

Answer – We will look into that.

8. CAB MEMBER/COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS — This item is limited to announcements, requests for future agenda items, or discussion by CAB members and/or Commissioner Andriola. [Non-Action Item]

Member - We would like a presentation and an opportunity to speak with NV Energy.

Member - She mentions the Lands Bill and suggests discussing its connection to ongoing projects in a future meeting.

Commissioner Andriola - Announcements are made regarding an upcoming presentation on elections by the Secretary of State and the need to gather questions in advance. The County Manager also highlights the importance of advocating for the needs of Pyramid Highway and I-80.

County Manager Brown – When you talk to the governor’s office or NDOT, make sure you highlight our needs here on Pyramid Highway and I-80. I have seen how they get lobbied. That is where the decisions are made. You need to make your voice heard.

The Washoe County Board of County Commissioners will be having a workshop, a strategic plan workshop. There will be a discussion about the county's role in augmenting or administering behavioral health in the region.

The objective of this day is to get feedback from the commissioners that staff can use to set the priorities for next year's budget. The objective of this workshop is to receive an update from staff on strategic plan initiatives that were reported in January.

Bruce Parks – 85 percent of NDOT's budget is spent in Clark County.

9. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT** – Limited to no more than three (3) minutes. Anyone may speak pertaining to any matter either on or off the agenda. The public is requested to submit a Request to Speak form to the Board Chairman. Comments are to be addressed to the Board as a whole. [Non-Action Item]

Citizen - A resolution was discussed that has not yet become a bill, and concerns were raised about its potential impact on ranchers, mining, and recreationists. The public was informed about an upcoming presentation and the fact that comments on the website were hidden.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 7:45p.m.

Meeting Summary

The Spanish Springs Citizens Advisory Board Meeting began with roll call and general public comment. Concerns were raised about website navigation and the reliance on 311 operators for assistance. A presentation on website navigation was scheduled for the future. The topic of climate change was discussed, with Alan Munson expressing skepticism and presenting arguments against the notion that human activities are the primary cause. The speaker also discussed sea levels, ice sheets, and the lack of evidence for increased droughts and major storms. Public safety updates were provided, including information on recent incidents, green waste dates, and open burning. Concerns were raised about recent crime trends, including vehicle burglaries and theft of construction materials. The speaker emphasized the importance of taking precautions and reporting suspicious activities. The sheriff's strategic plan was presented, focusing on protecting life, community engagement, leveraging technology, and professional development. Community engagement and technology initiatives were discussed, as well as personnel development and the juvenile justice system. Concerns were raised about parenting and the impact of new housing developments on workload. The county's sustainability efforts, including reducing greenhouse gases and implementing green recovery plans, were highlighted. Concerns were raised about limitations on solar panel installations and

increasing energy costs. An introduction of Paul Nelson, his background, and his role at RTC was provided. An overview of RTC and current projects, including road construction and transportation planning, was given. The Sparks Boulevard project and the Pavement Preservation Program were discussed. Traffic engineering and intelligent transportation systems were mentioned, as well as metropolitan planning and future transportation projects. The fixed route system, flex ride service, and senior ride taxi program were highlighted. The congestion on Pyramid Highway and plans to alleviate it were discussed, as well as the widening of Pyramid Highway and the Sparks Boulevard extension. Agenda items and announcements included appreciation for RTC and the Washoe County Sustainability people, the Lands Bill, and upcoming presentations on elections. The Strategic Plan Workshop and general public comment concluded the meeting.