

**TOWN OF PATAGONIA**

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEETING MINUTES May 2, 2023, 6:00 P.M.**

**Zoom Meeting I.D. 957-511-4862 Password 338501**

1. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6 P.M.
2. ROLL CALL: Present were Gerry Isaac, Patrick O’Neal, Georgette Larrouy, Nancy McCoy, and Steve Finch. Laurie Monti attended via Zoom. A quorum was present.
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 4, 2023, MEETING

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2023, meeting was made by Georgette Larrouy, seconded by Nancy McCoy, and approved unanimously.

1. CALL TO THE PUBLIC A. R. S. §38-431-01(H): AT THIS TIME, THE PUBLIC WILL ONLY BE

RECOGNIZED TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS LISTED FOR PUBLIC INPUT PURSUANT TO TOWN

CODE SECTION 2-5-6. ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC IS ALLOWED TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE,

SUBJECT TO A REASONABLE TIME SET BY THE COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO THE ARIZONA OPEN

MEETING LAW. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CALL TO THE PUBLIC, INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF

THE COMMITTEE MAY RESPOND TO CRITICISM MADE BY THOSE WHO HAVE ADDRESSED THE

COMMITTEE, MAY ASK STAFF TO REVIEW THE MATTER, OR MAY ASK THE MATTER BE PLACED ON

A FUTURE AGENDA. HOWEVER, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE SHALL NOT DISCUSS OR TAKE LEGAL ACTION ON MATTERS RAISED DURING AN OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS THE MATTERS ARE PROPERLY NOTICED FOR DISCUSSION AND LEGAL ACTION.

Robert Gay expressed concern about effect of sediment from the construction of the Cross Creek Connector washing down into a pond on Gary Nabhan’s property and adversely effecting endangered species there.

Carolyn Shafer provided the Committee members with printed material that included updates from the Santa Cruz County Advisory Panel on Hermosa Project, information she presented to the Santa Cruz County Supervisors about the Hermosa Project, and the Nature Based Restorative Economy study.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO SEND FINAL VERSION OF P & D ANNUAL REPORT TO TOWN COUNCIL.

Motion to approve sending the final version of the P & D Annual Report to the Town Council was made by Steve Finch, seconded by Gerry Isaac, and approved unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. PROJECT UPDATE—MELANIE LAWSON COMMUNITY SPECIALIST, SOUTH32/HERMOSA

Melanie Lawson, on Zoom, presented an update with slides. The pre-feasibility selection study indicated that South 32 will be able to provide battery grade manganese processed in the United States. Site exploration work is continuing. Improvements to Harshaw Road are continuing. Clearing and demolition on the Cross Creek Connector road is beginning this week, and the estimated completion date is November 2024. The proposed long-term route would leave the mine site on Flux Canyon Road and then closely follow the Kinder-Morgan gas line to SR82. A workforce study has been done. At peak operations, 800 to 900 workers will be employed by the mine across the County. Ms. Lawson then answered questions from community members.

In response to Chris Werkhoven: Manganese has been designated by the USGS as a critical mineral, so South 32 is accelerating its mining efforts to meet this need. Manganese deposits are on the South 32’s patented sites, and the company is working to get the required state permits to mine these deposits.

In response to Diana Nash: On the proposed Kinder-Morgan gas line route, there would be 35 trucks peaking to 85 truck sone way per day for zinc concentrate. Truck traffic for manganese output has not been determined. A traffic study will be out this week which will have information about other mine traffic that will be using this road.

In response to Laurie Monti: The Cross Creek Connector would exit right on SR82 taking mine traffic to I10. There are ongoing discussions about building a bike lane for Harshaw Road. A joint study with Town on potential flood risk from discharge during floods showed nothing of major concern. There is also a current regional flood study with the Flood and Flow Committee and the County. A well-monitoring program of wells within a five-mile radius of the mine site gathers water quality and quantity information. Concerning housing, South 32 is trying to hire locally and is in discussions with Santa Cruz County about affordable housing across the County.

In response to Nancy McCoy: The Cross Creek Connector is expected to last less than ten years. After that, all heavy traffic in and out of the mine will use the proposed gas line road. Regarding Robert Gay’s concerns during Call to the Public, South 32 will send their storm water pollution prevention plan to Gary Nabhan and Laurie Monti and will be monitoring road construction for sediment run-off issues.

In response to Patrick O’Neal: Trucks will turn left off the proposed long-term gas line road if product is going to Mexico. South 32 is considering placing a manganese processing plant in Santa Cruz County, but probably not at the mine site. Traffic studies will be done to determine traffic impacts at the intersection of SR82 and Grand Avenue.

In response to Ron Robinson: South 32 doesn’t know for sure but will try to avoid going through Patagonia. Ms. Lawson does not believe that the current agreement with Santa Cruz County will let them use the Cross Creek Connector after an alternate route is established.

In response to Carolyn Shafer: The County was not awarded a grant for an inter-modal process facility in Rio Rico. South 32 is wrapping up an economic feasibility study to determine other potential users. Ms. Shafer also responded to a comment by Ms. Lawson that water coming out of the mine site will not go into the same aquifer from which it was taken.

In response to Andrew Anderson: A team is looking at the possibility of using SR82 to SR90 to I10 for mine traffic. South 32’s use of water is not consumptive; water is being recharged and put into the ground. Wells are monitored quarterly. South 32 will not leave people without water quality or quantity.

In response to Mary Skye Schoolcraft: ADOT regulates SR82, so a safe wildlife crossing or other improvements must get ADOT approval. South 32 will continue to work with the Town on affordable housing needs.

In response to Charlotte Lowe: Melanie Lawson lives in Vail.

Ron Pulliam expressed concerns about the spotted owl and the dewatering of the pine trees in its habitat.

1. STAFF OR MEMBER REPORTS: AT THIS TIME THE TOWN STAFF OR A COMMITTEE MEMBER MAY REPORT ON ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE. SUCH ITEMS MAY NOT BE ACTED UPON BY THE COMMITTEE AT THIS TIME, BUT MAY BE SCHEDULED AS A FUTURE AGENDA ITEM.

Town Manager Robinson provided each member with a written report on infrastructure projects: a description

of upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant; the receipt of grant money for the drainage improvements to Fourth Avenue and McKeown to Costello Drive; a Coronado Development update; and the future installation of new equipment at Richardson Kids Park.

1. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: AT THIS TIME THE COMMITTEE MAY BRING FORTH TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS AND SET THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

There were no topics for future agenda items. The next meeting will be after the 6 PM Public Hearing for the Patagonia General Plan on Thursday, May 25. (This meeting was rescheduled to be held after the Public Hearing for the Patagonia General Plan on Tuesday, May 23, at 6PM.)

11. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn was made by Patrick O’Neal, seconded by Gerry Isaac, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 PM.