

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom and in Person at the Barn

Meeting Called to Order: By Tom Browder at 6:00

Roll Call: Council Members Present: Tom Browder, Quinn Carver, Bruce Friede, Sally Johnson, Gage Seeley, Garry Swain, Richard Westin. Absent: Sharon Teague.

Announcements:

- Chairman Browder shared that in January the Missoula County Commissioners passed an ordinance that states the SLCC positions will no longer be determined by election, but will now be by appointment. As each council member's term expires they can request to be considered for appointment by the county commissioners. Browder shared that the SLCC has been in existence since 1988.
 - Question from the audience: If they can't find someone to appoint from Seeley are they going to appoint someone from Missoula? Answer from Browder: He's not sure, but suspects that the bylaws state that all council members must reside in the district.
- Browder also shared that it has been a struggle to coordinate calendars for a candidates forum on one night prior to the midterm elections. Therefore, as they request it the council will grant candidates time to speak at the meeting of their choosing. All candidates are welcome.
- Browder shared that the Seeley area Chamber is holding an event in the west wing of the foundation building as an intro to the community and a way to meet business owners.

Minutes:

- Motion to accept the minutes was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

- The secretary did not receive a copy of the March Treasurer's report to include in these minutes.
- Motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Re Treasury, Browder stated that with the transition from an elected to appointed council, the county may take possession of the SLCC funds. In lieu of having our own funds, any expenses incurred by the SLCC will be presented to the county who will then pay them. This information came through the chief administrative officer Chris Lownsbury.

Introductions: None

Guests and Speakers:

- **Reggie Spaulding**, House District 92 candidate, did not appear.
- **Kristen Baker Dickenson**, Unit manager of DNRC based out of Clearwater Unit, came to the meeting to discuss the December wind damage on the unit. They have not been able to salvage the downed trees due to the difficult weather conditions this winter. Without freezing weather and snow cover the typical harvesting couldn't happen. Anyone with questions can call the unit and she would be happy to visit. Baker Dickenson stated that she hopes to attend more council meetings in the future. She introduced **Kyle Carpenter**, one of Montana's service foresters. Carpenter shared that if any landowners in the area have hung up trees or hazardous trees they can call him and he can help them find solutions. The same goes for diseased trees. He can be found by googling Montana service forester and using the map to find our area.
 - Browder asked about the 50/50 tree thinning reimbursement project. Carpenter stated that they work with Clearwater Resource Council to provide assistance. Missoula County is also providing fuels mitigation help in the Seeley area.
 - Browder asked if there was any hope in getting an emergency exit for phase 1a through the Hill 16 area. Baker Dickenson stated that they cannot provide a secondary access route because they already have a legal access route through other means. DNRC cannot grant an easement if an exit already exists.
 - Some discussion was had regarding the burner located at Roundwood North and if that is a viable solution for people still trying to deal with slash and debris from the August wind storm. There was discussion about who could move the wood and the cost. Browder suggested that a grant might help.
 - Sally Johnson gave a nod to the Blackfoot Clearwater Neighborhood Watch group and their assistance with cleanup in the area.
- **Don Peavey & Walker McDonald**, Seeley Lake Skate Park, reviewed the history of the movement to get a skate park in Seeley and the board makeup.
 - Dave from Exact Image is donating \$1000 for advertising and promotion.
 - AJ Miller from Seeley Electric volunteered to build a website for the effort and to help with electrical, etc.
 - Peavey hopes to turn the park over to the county once it is completed so it would go under the county insurance and support for major maintenance.

He recognizes that some of the everyday maintenance will have to be handled locally.

- Peavey asked the SLCC for a letter of support and to help facilitate a meeting with the Missoula County Commissioners.
- Browder stated that the SLCC would write a letter of support for the project to the Seeley Lake Skateboard Association.
- Peavey stated that it didn't seem feasible to form a 501c3 for the project, but instead for the first time ever the Montana Skate Park Association will be the fiscal sponsor for the project.
- They hope to have their big kick off during the 4th of July.
- They also plan to take local kids to various skate parks in the state so they can experience the parks and share their input for the Seeley park.
- The group has 10 skate boards, helmets, and gear already.
- They have applied to be a group that benefits from Change Your Pace.
- Browder suggested that they also apply for Missoula Gives.
- The group is still looking for property for the park. They need ½ to 1 acre.
- Browder asked how long construction would take. Peavey stated about 18 months. They hope to be completed by July 2028.
- Peavey also mentioned the possibility of another weekend event that would bring people to Seeley. Perhaps combine skating, pickle ball, etc.
- Peavey also mentioned that Phillipsburg has a skate park, a pool, and a lighted hockey rink and is a great example of what a community can do.
- Question from audience: Can the park be used in the winter by snowboards? Peavey said he's sure some kids will figure out a way. The park could also be used by bmx bikes or scooters.
- **Charmon Bernstrauch**, Blackfoot Clearwater Neighborhood Watch (BCNW), reported that they received the grant they applied for from the Seeley Lake Foundation and have ordered signs and pamphlets.
 - They are making their list for crisis bags and will do the shopping for those soon.
 - In February the group met with Crime Stoppers to explore collaboration.
 - They have updated forms for reporting suspicious criminal behavior and drug activity. The forms have a link to a website, a phone number, and a QR code.
 - Browder asked about the crisis bags. Bernstrauch explained that the bags will have items (clothing, hygiene, baby formula and diapers, etc.) for people of all ages that might be in need. For example, if a house burned down. They plan to provide these for the Seeley fire department, the Condon fire department, and the sheriff's office.

- The Pathfinder has offered the group a weekly column in the paper. The details/topics for the column are in the development stages, but they hope to feature cold cases from the area.
 - Two board members have stepped down, so they will be filling one position soon.
 - Bernstrauch also shared documents regarding property cleanup, homeless encampments, and a volunteer form. The documents explain what the group can help with and what they can't. If they can't help, they will direct folks to the proper agencies.
 - They are planning their public safety fair and hope to set a date at their March meeting. They are hoping that they can have the fair May 30th on the Elementary School fields.
 - They are hosting a child exploitation presentation at the Seeley Lake Elementary School gym April 16th at 6:30pm. Guy Baker will be the presenter. (bio provided to the SLCC by Bernstrauch)
 - July 11th the BCNW group is hosting its first biker poker run. It will be a 170 mile ride starting at the Filling Station in Seeley and ending at Grizzly Young Harley Davidson who is sponsoring the event. There will be food, raffles, and prizes for high and low hands.
- **Quinn Carver** provided the USFS Update on behalf of Kevin Dougherty who couldn't attend the meeting.
 - Current work on the district includes prepping campgrounds, prescribed burns, getting piles ready to burn, training for crew and firefighters.
 - The Highway 83 project will start after spring breakup is over and things dry up.
 - Planning continues for the Monture/McCabe project which spans from Kozy Korner to Ovando Mountain.
 - They are also inventorying roads looking for blow down prior to reopening.
 - Browder asked Carver to speak about the Forest Service land off School Lane and back towards Tamarack that could be redesignated as administrative and could possibly be used for workforce housing. Carver stated that in the new proposed forest plan there are 10 acres near the Wolf Ridge Apartments and 10 acres behind the SSHS football field that are designated as administrative. But, the current funding issues and changes at the Federal level might affect that idea going forward.
 - Question from the audience: Is it possible to lease that ground for that purpose? Carver: The Forest Service doesn't lease ground, it would have to go under permit.

- Question from audience: Can administrative land be permitted like outfitters or like Holland Lake Lodge? Carver: There is some recent legislature that has allowed permitting to the county for housing. As an example, in Colorado a permitted ski resort also had employee housing all under the same permit.
- Discussion continued regarding the USFS land in Seeley and the potential for residential housing.
- **Carrie Sokoloski**, Seeley Lake Sewer District, shared that the district received a \$10 million community project funding grant and they are waiting to receive their packet of information on the specifics of the grant.
 - This Friday they are having a meeting at the foundation building, and Congressman Ryan Zinke who was instrumental in getting the funding for the project will be making a presentation. The community is welcome to attend.
 - The next matter of business is to decide on a piece of property. Two pieces have been identified. One was in our preliminary engineering report. This piece is owned by Kevin Wetherell and is directly south of the hotel next to Corey's Market. They've also been in communication with Pyramid Mountain Lumber and they would be willing to sell the district a 10-acre piece. Both property owners have given their permission to begin work to determine if the properties can be used. The county may be able to help with the costs of digging test wells and monitoring groundwater.
 - Question from the audience on the amount of the grant. Sokoloski explained that the grant was for \$10 million and that the grant is open for reapplication every year.
 - Sokoloski also explained that they just completed applying for an additional \$19 million provided for from that grant program. They are continuing to find and apply for grant funding that they are eligible for.
 - Question from audience: I thought that the \$10 million was allotted, not a grant. Sokoloski: Explained that this grant is not your typical cyclical grant, but rather almost a grant for a pet project of our representatives. A representative can nominate projects that they feel are important to a community in their area that may not have other grant funding. If there are funds available they can be allocated to one of those projects.

Public Comment On Non-Agenda Items:

- Question from the audience regarding the letter of support from the SLCC to the Missoula County Commissioners regarding the Health Department seeming to ignore the issues in Seeley Lake. Browder stated he would look for the letter. He

also reiterated that the county's response might not always be what we hoped it would be.

Agenda Items:

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Montana State University agronomists still want to come to Seeley and put on an educational presentation on gardening. SLCC will invite a representative to the next meeting to share more information.
 - Bruce Friede said that we could also invite the weed district to share the event.

Adjournment:

- Motion to adjourn made and seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Meeting adjourned 7:23 pm.

Next meeting will be Tuesday April 14th, at the barn at 6:00 with pizza at 5:30.