



Mariposa County
Department of Public Works

Airport – Cemeteries – Engineering – Facilities
Fleet Maintenance – Parks & Rec – Plant Operations
Roads – Solid Waste – Surveyor – Transportation

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Yosemite West District Advisory Committee

MINUTES

December 12, 2019

Members Present: Members Tom Lambert (Chair), Debra Kroon, Jeff Webb, John Mock, Art Cormier, Malcolm Neal

Members Absent: Neal Misener

BOS Ex Officio Present: Rosemarie Smallcombe

County Staff Present: Darryl Nielsen

Guest/Public Present: Joe Meyer NPS, Christina Rylands Nature Bridge, Frank Dean Yosemite Conservancy, Ted Williams YWPHI, Bert Kroon, several unnamed people

1. Call to order and Introductions:

Chair Lambert called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. Public Comment: It was asked if someone is on standby, will they still be able to join the existing water system if capacity becomes an issue?
Request by community member Ted Williams to discuss trash collection at some point in the meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes: of March 14, 2019 (M) John Mock (S) Art Cormier

4. Discussion and Action Items:

Christina Rylands explained that building a fire station is part of the greater plan for the campus which will include fire science courses. Nature Bridge has already invested \$500,000 in preparing the site. The thought is to possibly have a two-bay station that would house a wildland engine and a structure fire engine. The fire station may be operated by the National

Park Service. Compliance and design of the station is complete, underground utilities are in place. Funding of approximately \$2 million for the station will be worked on in the near future. A fundraising strategy will need to be formed. Supervisor Smallcombe refers to a discussion about raising funds for the Fire Station from the homeowners association. The County Administrative Officer of Mariposa County has agreed to use the County Grant Writer Molly Stephens (has left the county since this meeting) to assist in seeking out available grants. Joe Meyer of NPS said that when built, the plan would likely be to staff the fire station with the fire crew currently housed at Chinquapin during the fire season. Off-season staffing would be considerably more challenging. NPS Boise office would need to release any NPS funds or any NPS commitment. Other funding sources could be applying for a USDA loan which NPS would hold, TOT tax increase (Measure M) funds, for which County could write a Letter of Commitment.

5. Update & Reports

a. Update on plowing for 2019/20: Chair Lambert noted that the community has lost two of its four part-time plow drivers who provide service at night and in the early morning. The community is left with only Lambert and Art Cormier. This means that it is likely that roads will close in big storms and that there will not be coverage from about 11pm to 6am in most cases, and possibly no coverage from 5pm to 8am when the part-timers are away or unavailable. More volunteers are needed.

b. Update on appraisal for possible expansion of the leach field: John Mock comments that in the March minutes Public Works Director Mike Healy stated that there were no funds for expansion but proposed a low interest loan from the Water Agency. He asks Rosemarie if such a loan was approved. An appraisal was completed, and Rosemarie stated that they were in negotiations. YWDAC requested that Supervisor Smallcombe and Director Healy keep the committee apprised of negotiations on price for the land and that Director Healy provide information on how to proceed with evaluating the land in terms of viability for leach field and potential added sewer plant capacity.

c. Update on local well drilling if available: Yosemite Conservancy received a permit for well drilling. Frank Dean President of Yosemite Conservancy hired Walt Bannon to drill a quarter mile from the community well along West Creek adjacent to the road along the main Forest Service road, past the turnoff for the road to the community well. The contractor drilled to 90 feet of soil and then hit bedrock and stopped for the winter. If this well proves promising, it would likely get tested in September or October as the state usually wants well tests during the driest part of the year.

Joe Meyer of NPS reported that NPS has halted their contract with Walt Bannon and has a six-figure amount still left over from the money originally allocated for finding water. NPS is working on NEPA and CEQA compliance in case we get to that point.

Mariposa County Public Works reports receiving applications for water connections from three potential new customers:

- NPS on behalf of NatureBridge NESC
- Scenic Wonders
- Yosemite Conservancy

Rosemarie will send a letter to property owners outside of the subdivision to advise about possibly supplying Nature Bridge with water as it could affect their water in the future. There was much conversation about adding new wells as well as the danger of only having one well for the subdivision. All property owners will get updates as to any correspondence that goes out. Ted Williams asks what will happen to the standby owners if water becomes an issue.

d. Superintendent Reynolds and Yosemite Conservancy, NESC and Mariposa County representatives' updates on work toward a possible agreement to supply water to NESC:

Supervisor Smallcombe reported that Outside Counsel recommends the creation of a second Zone of Benefit to provide water to Nature Bridge. Committee member John Mock asked whether it was possible to create a County ZOB on federal land. Community member Kim O'Neil asked whether this was a prudent approach since the previous attempt to create a ZOB is still tied up in court. Supervisor Smallcombe is having a call with Sean McGuire of the Water Resources Control Board to find out their concerns.

Supervisor Smallcombe stated that there will be a letter going out to all property owners not located in the subdivision to advise them of a conversation that Yosemite West might be providing water to Nature Bridge and a possible creation of a second Zone of Benefit. Supervisor Smallcombe committed to keeping the community informed regarding any negotiations with entities outside the District.

Kristina Rylands of Nature Bridge reported that Provost & Pritchard will update their (P&P) previous water use study. The previous study was based on usage at Crane Flat and was done before any designs for the new campus were submitted. Provost & Pritchard contracted with the County to study the fiscal and engineering impacts of adding the campus to the YW water district. This study is paid for by NPS.

e. Report on status of tree removal around water tanks. Rosemarie spoke with Blue Ridge Services and they will be working in the Yosemite West area after the holidays.

f. PW Utilities Division Staff Update. Darryl Neilson reported that during the PG&E power shut off they lost Influent Flow Meter. When it came back up it spiked and burned out.

g. & h. Accounting of funds in escrow awaiting settlement of Thomas Kroon lawsuit (Dollar amount and fund number). Director Healy reported there is \$40,000 in water and \$40,000 in the sewer accounts. This is fund 322. [Please note that subsequent discussion revealed that Director Healy understood the question differently than the Committee and his answer pertains to a different matter. Further analysis indicates that the new rates resulted in \$336,000 in additional revenue over the period March 2018 through November 2019, compared to the same usage at the old rates. However, this is somewhat offset because the higher rate resulted in reduced usage and therefore somewhat reduced revenue. Due to decreased water usage and the timing of normal recurring expenses, even with \$336,000 additional revenue, the actual accumulated balance in the Fund 322 operating account was only \$266,339 on 11/30/2019, confirmed with the County auditor. Depending on assumptions for coming FY19-20 expenses (but still without any major capital improvement expenses), the Fund 322 balance is expected to grow to about \$490,000 by 06/30/2020.]

Tom Lambert asked why there was no money left in the Professional Services account. Darryl Nielson was not sure, Tom will check with Director Mike Healy.

7. Next Meeting:

a. Agenda items -Ted Williams asked about having dumpsters put in Yosemite West, Rosemarie will follow up. The County has an agreement with Recology. Each property owner pays or chooses not to use them.

b. March 12, 2020

8. Meeting Adjournment:

Chair Lambert adjourned the meeting at 4:25 pm.