

Snowden Community Council Meeting 12.06.2023

Council Members present: Robert Conner, Roger Gadway (Chair), Chuck Kliesh (Treasurer), Tom Montag, Lloyd Olson, Jenne Patterson (Vice Chair), Jenn Sharp and Chris Stein. Absent: none. There were six additional Snowden Community members present. With thanks to Fire District #3 for use of the Community Room of the Cherry Lane Fire Station, SCC Chair Roger called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Meeting Minutes for the November meeting were approved as presented. Chuck gave the **Treasurer's Report:** Including last month's table donations totaling \$40.00, and \$0.03 accrued interest, the current balance is \$1,452.97. The Treasurer's Report was approved as submitted. Chuck suggested the Council send a bonus "Christmas Present" to our computer consultant Aaron Klempf, as he consistently provides us assistance without charge.

Correspondence: None.

Additions to the Agenda: Roger requested Eric make a report on the New Hood River Bridge as an on-going agenda item; Roger will give an update on Under Canvas under Old Business; Jenne asked to comment about guest speakers; and Anne Gengler asked to speak about recycling cans in Snowden. Bea will report on requesting a new online GIS map layer from the County, and the status of the new meeting announcement sign.

Old Business: Website Committee: Chair Jenne gave a summary oversight of the website which she and consultant Aaron have established as up and running, with Google Drive available for storage of current, archived, and a huge capacity for future material. (We have so far only used 470 MB of our 15GB capacity.) Website committee members are learning how to keep their assigned pages updated, these pages include the home page, committee activity, archived materials, a page of live links to community resources, Council minutes and agendas. Google Drive associated with the website also has administrative and library space for council members. Jenne encouraged Council members to browse in Google Drive, and throughout the website to become more familiar with accessing and using these resources. Anne Gengler recently joined the committee with advanced online skills and is working on allowing the website to be readily viewable on mobile devices. Jenne moved to give consultant Aaron a \$50.00 bonus before the holidays, in appreciation of his generous assistance. Lois seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Jenne agreed to Chuck's suggestion that we also recognize Aaron's contribution on the website.

Broadband Committee: Jenne reported that Starlink chooses not to participate in the Federal Affordable Connectivity Program, so Starlink will not be eligible for Federal Broadband grant funding. If Starlink is your only broadband option, you will be considered unserved, and therefore eligible for grant funding to improve your internet access. Also, the Washington State Broadband Office has committed that every household will have access to adequate internet access. They began by proposing they would only fund fiber connections; however, they realized that even with generous Federal funding, this will be impossible in many rural areas, and have revised their policy to fund hybrid solutions in harder to serve rural areas (such as parts of Snowden).

Klicknet will be providing improved internet service to the Trout Lake area using both fixed wireless and fiber. This pilot project, according to Klicknet IT and networking specialist Shane Milburn, will occur in the Trout Lake area because residents there were the most responsive in filling out Klicknet's online survey. Roger pointed out that to qualify for Federal funding, an ISP must be able to prove that they have "the capacity to perform", and the success of the Trout Lake project will prove that Klicknet will qualify for funding. Roger further quoted the recent State Broadband Office webinar by explaining that the State intends to divide rural areas into areas

of 1,000 unserved or underserved households, with a mix of both easy and harder to serve hook-ups; and their goal is that every household will have high quality internet service that will meet future needs. In discussion the group re-emphasized that we want State funders to commit to a competitive ISP marketplace including local ISP start-ups, and NOT limit their considerations to big companies, corporations, and monopolies.

There was a question, left pending, as to which internet accessibility surveys we should fill out.

Under Canvas Update: Roger reported that a Judge remanded some key issues with new information back to the Hearing Examiner for reconsideration. One issue is the Western Grey Squirrel that has recently been re-classified as “endangered”. The area Under Canvas targets for development is recognized as scarce prime habitat for this endangered species. Another issue is a new Transportation Report by a professional engineer hired by neighbors to the proposed development. The report evaluated the capacity of Oak Ridge Rd, the only access to the area under consideration, and found the road currently is not even wide enough for a logging truck and car or school bus to pass by each other. It is currently up to the Prosecuting Attorney to recommend, or not, these matters for reconsideration to County Commissioners/the Hearing Examiner. Anyone concerned that these are important issues that need to be reconsidered before approval is granted for Under Canvas to proceed with their proposed development should contact County Commissioners and clearly state their concerns.

Water Tank Report: Roger reported that the tank painting and text are completed! A small celebration was held on November 19, and a group picture was taken that will be sent to The Columbia Gorge News. There are plans to put more past and present pictures of the tank on the website, and hopefully also post Snowden stories pictured on the tank.

New Business: Snowden Map Project: Bea reported that she had contacted the KC GIS Mapping Department to request that they add a Community Council Area Boundary Map layer to their online mapping tool. This would be extremely useful in future planning activities, as with it we can identify who is officially living within “Snowden”, and who is not. Kim Gleason, Director of KC – GIS, explained that our request would be added to an already substantial list. We will call them again for an update in January.

Jenne’s Departure: Jenne announced she is resigning from the Council, and from her positions as Council Vice Chair, and Chair of the Website and Broadband Committees, effective December 15. In response, the Council expressed regret, and appreciation for her hard work, and the great progress she has made towards the Council goals to which she applied her considerable skills and determination. Roger proposed regrouping in January. Chuck announced he will be visiting family in New Jersey, possibly through February.

New Meeting Announcement Sign: Bea and Chuck presented the fact that the current sandwich-board sign that Chuck places along Snowden Rd. announcing our upcoming Council Meeting has become shabby and worn out. A new improved one could be printed on laminated foamcore for \$107. Jenn moved and Lloyd seconded to approve up to \$200 of the Council Treasury to order a new more readable sign printed on weather resistant vinyl. The motion was unanimously approved.

Recycling cans in Snowden: Anne Gengler announced that she will be collecting recyclable cans, deposit bottles, and perhaps other items in the Snowden area, and donate the proceeds to a rotating list of beneficiaries including animal rescue and shelters, veterans, and others. The Council expressed interest, and Anne offered to report back later with more information.

Bridge Commissioner Report: Eric Wilson said that three design teams will be offering proposals by January 23 for the new Columbia River Bridge. A proposal will be selected by the end of February. The Oregon DEQ must

issue an environmental impact / biological assessment of the bridge design. Budgeting for the new bridge requires persuading Oregon and Washington Senators and Representatives to help acquire \$200 million federal dollars; and state politicians to support getting \$125 million from both Oregon and Washington States. Finally, the New Bridge Authority must secure a loan of \$125 million. The Bridge Authority is looking for 4 citizen volunteers to be on the New Bridge Aesthetics Committee, an advisory group which will provide input on how to best develop the new structure that will be a mile long, 54 feet wide, and 90 feet above the river.

Guest Speakers: Roger postponed discussion of this topic until the January Meeting.

Good of Order: No comments.

Upcoming Meetings/Events: None reported.

Roger adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Bea Lackaff, Secretary (pro-tem)