

SCC MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Snowden Community Council is to represent and be actively involved in the welfare, environment, and orderly growth of the community. The Council will be advisory to such bodies as the Klickitat County Planning Commission and the Klickitat County Board of Commissioners. (SCC By-Laws rev.08/2024)

Snowden Community Council Meeting Minutes 01.08.2025 (02.04.2025)

Council Members present: Steven Banks, Robert Conner (Fire Commissioner), Roger Gadway (Chair), Chuck Kliesh (Treasurer), Tom Montag (Fire Commissioner), Lloyd Olson (Vice Chair), Sherry Walston. Absent: Fred Greef, Chris Stein. There were 9 additional Snowden Community members present.

Roger called the **Meeting to Order** at 7:00pm. The December 04, 2024 DRAFT **Meeting Minutes** were approved as submitted (previously, by email).

Treasurer's Report: Chuck reported that the current SCC account balance is \$2,803.76, which reflects no funds incoming or going out, and an accrual of \$0.07 interest. Hearing no objections, Roger pronounced the Treasurer's Report approved as presented.

Additions to the Agenda: None.

Old Business: Consideration of SCC Letter supporting KLINK-NET's bid to provide Snowden internet service:

Roger reminded the group that the deadline is coming on January 15 to get a letter of support for KLINK-NET's bid to the Washington State Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program, for federal funding to provide infrastructure for improved internet access in Snowden. Chuck moved and Sherry seconded the motion to approve the SCC letter of recommendation for KLINK-NET. Highlights from discussion included that 1) KLINK-NET is frank about what they can and cannot do, 2) they are committed to what they can do; 3) they are successful so far with their (as yet unfinished) project in Trout Lake; 4) It is customer-friendly that KLINK-NET only requires a month to month contract from customers. The motion passed unanimously. Roger will draft a letter to the BEAD office in support of KLINK-Net's bid, and send the draft letter to Snowden Community Council members for their input. Silence from the Council will be taken as approval, and Roger will send the letter to KLINK-NET to be part of their bid.

Communications Committee: Bea reported that the Committee had recently met to discuss whether the Committee claims editorial control of the SCC website and FB group – and they agreed that they did. Therefore, any material provided to the Committee by Council Members (or members of the Community) will be held to Committee standards of clarity, being concise, and appropriate. Appropriate would mean aligning with the SCC's Mission Statement. (However, some think the Mission Statement itself might need some revising.) Any changes to submitted material will only occur with the author's approval. The Committee will generally post a link to non-Council information that is of interest to the Snowden community, rather than posting the non-SCC content.

Broadband Committee: Roger reported that he had talked to Shane Milburn of KLINK-NET, who is confident that BEAD funding (the State program that funnels federal dollars for providing broadband access) will remain in place; and the first round of ISP bidding for funds will take place in late January, 2025, followed closely by the second round to pick up areas not bid on – and then a third round that will negotiate for any remaining stragglers to be picked up. BEAD will release funding only when ALL project areas are claimed by ISPs. Hopefully, by this Summer, 2025. It was noted during discussion that sometimes when the power goes out, we

lose land line service. CenturyLink (CL) is required to have battery capacity to keep our landlines functioning, especially during a hazardous situation when the power is out.

CenturyLink Update: Bea reported she recently learned that, after their 2024 petition to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) was denied, CenturyLink (CL) has made a second petition to the WUTC to be de-regulated. CL's "settlement" offers to do more to help "some" of their customers to change to an alternative ISP. In many cases – there is NO alternative to CL service. Jenn suggested that if CL is sincere in assisting their customers find alternative – they should give their current unused fiber in Snowden to KCLICK-NET. If their settlement offer is approved, CL would be free to raise rates even more, but more likely, DROP many of their rural customers, which would include some Snowden residents who have no alternatives to CL for landline/internet connection. The last day to submit public comments is (tomorrow) January 09. Information for making comments is on the SCC website and FB group. Bea believes that public comments are what protected CL customers from being dropped on CL's first attempt; and that our comments are vital to protecting ourselves this time too.

Land Use Committee: Eric reported that we are going into the new year with two (of three) new County Commissioners on the Board (BoCC). The Land use Committee will meet next week to determine priority issues. Eric says he received notice of a short plat near Pearce Rd. that does not raise any issues – but the LU Committee should acknowledge to the County that we appreciate receiving them as requested, and that we are paying attention. Roger explained that the Planning Director (Scott Edelman) has received a grant to fund additional staff to work on updating the Comp Plan. The County's priority in this revision is to create a clear policy for siting new solar panels. The Planning Commission will be revising the Comp Plan starting in mid-February, with assistance from new Planning staff. It may take 2 years to complete the entire Plan; or perhaps only part of the Plan will be addressed. The policy for public participation and dates of activity on the revised Comp Plan are, as yet, unclear. John Bonn reminded the group that the SCC has plans to invite the Planning Director Scott to attend one of our meetings, and suggested the Council think strategically about the best timing for requesting this visit. There are two positions open on the Planning Commission; Chuck Henschel (Snowden resident) has applied, but so far has heard nothing back. Jenn announced the new BoCC will address filling the PC vacancies in their work session tomorrow (January 09) – and that she will be attending in case anyone wishes to accompany her. Also, the proposed, newly revised Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) will be discussed at a Planning Commission public hearing on January 21. The CAO is one of very few topics that the State Growth Management Act, administered through the State Commerce Department, assumes any authority over, in our "partial planning" Klickitat County. It is important that the Snowden Community Council pay attention and make comments.

Community Wildfire Prevention Workgroup. Roger and Steven said that they had talked and agreed that the Community Wildfire Prevention Plan Working Group have moved on to where now they need to re-form as the Community Fire Preparedness Committee (modeled after the Citizens Advisory Committee to the new Regional Fire Authority). Their responsibility will be to both study ("get into the weeds" of) the Plan, help design and execute the process of implementing the Plan, and explain it step by step to the community at large. Those already part of the Work Group are Steven Banks, Larry McCollum, Will Lyons, Dustin Chambers, and Chuck Henschel. Others that wish to join are Sherry Walston and Bea Lackaff. Anyone else interested in joining (or stepping back from) this committee, or with more questions should contact Roger Gadway (crgadway@gmail.com) who, as Chair, is responsible for committee appointments. Topics for immediate attention when the committee meets include a community questionnaire and getting up to date- maps of possible Snowden evacuation routes available to the community.

New Business: None.

Fire Commissioner's Report: Tom proudly announced that the new West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority (WKRFA, or RFA) is officially up and running as of January 01, 2025 invite He invited everyone to their monthly meetings, in person or on zoom, the third Monday of every month at 6:30PM at the White Salmon Fire District Office, or on their website for zoom invitation information. The former Fire District #3 (now operating through the RFA) must maintain the FD#3 Board of Commissioners through the life of their Operating Funds Bond, which expires in 2036. The FD#3 Board meets the 3rd Thursday of every month at 6:00PM and invites the public (see the KCFD#3 website for more information).

Bridge Commission Report: Eric reported that the New Bridge Authority (NBA) is progressing, and currently involved with aligning the design engineers, their cost estimates, an independent cost estimate, and integrating these with WADOT and ODOT staff and expectations. Last summer (2024) actual borings were done in the Columbia River channel at the sites of the designed new bridge pilings. They discovered that bedrock, especially on the Oregon side, lies much deeper than originally thought – requiring a new design and cost estimates. Also, when the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore MD was struck by a barge in March, 2024, the disaster killed 6 people and shut down the Port of Baltimore for 11 weeks. This re-focused the New Bridge Authority's attention on preparedness and preventing any mishap involving the new Bridge, as there will be heavy barge and cruise ship activity going around and under it. There are many increases to construction costs including new design work, inflation in the cost of materials, construction, and infrastructure. However the Bridge Authority is optimistic, looking for new grants and funding opportunities, and continues to coax promised funding from both Oregon and Washington state DOTs.

For the Good of the Order: There was discussion about: 1) concern over area brush management, especially regarding the highly flammable and invasive Scotch Broom. 2) Snowden residents already facing loss of their house/fire insurance, and what can be done to prevent this; and 3) Steven explained about a fire suppression "home defense system" that he has recently become involved with, and that is available for sale. (For more information, see Steven's business FB page: Northstar Wildland Fire LLC)

Hearing no further comments, Roger **Adjourned** the meeting at 8:34PM)

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Bea Lackaff

(SCC Secretary (Pro Tem))