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 05.07.2025 (05.20.2025) Council Members present: Robert Conner (Fire Commissioner), Roger Gadway (Chair), Fred Greef, Tom Montag (Fire Commissioner), Lloyd Olson (Vice Chair). Absent: Chuck Kliesh (Treasurer), Chris Stein, and Sherry Walston. There were 19 additional Snowden Community members present.

At 7:00 PM Roger introduced the guest speaker, Dalton Hedin, Fuels Project Manager for Mt. Adams Resource Stewards (MARS). Dalton described MARS as a non-profit organization, whose motto is "Locally led land conservation and stewardship", that works with property owners in Klickitat County to help manage and maintain healthy and wildfire resistant forests. Dalton's Fuels Management Project is funded by a Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant, a five year project with the goal of creating 1800 acres of fuel breaks (In Klickitat County, west of the Klickitat River). The fuel breaks will be 200 to 400 feet wide from centerline along roadways deemed "primary" for ingress of firefighting vehicles, and egress of residents in case of wildfire. According to the grant, the project must be compliant with a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP) – such as the County's (expired) CWPP, which already includes prioritizing protection of ingress and egress roadways. MARS always prioritizes creating a healthy forest rather than "slash and burn" practices. The fuel breaks would thin forested areas that are too dense, would remove ladder fuels and excessive brush, while being mindful to leave browse and "skips" for wildlife. Besides manual fuel removal, treatment strategies include goats for thinning underbrush, and prescribed burns where appropriate. The work is done in cooperation with and at no cost to private landowners. (Federal lands are exempt from the MARS Fuels Project.) The Fuels Project has been going for 1.5 years, and over 200 acres in the Trout Lake area have already been managed. Before and after photographs of the Trout Lake Fuel Project management areas can be seen at https://sites.google.com/mtadamsstewards.org/cwdg.

Dalton is balancing getting property owners involved with working towards as much acreage as possible under fuels project management, and prioritizing the "most strategic" roadways. He came to the SCC to inform us that the Fuels Project is available to help Snowden become more fire resistant, to spread the word the program is available, and to engage local wisdom to identify roads and property owners that might be interested/most strategic (such as along Bill Moore? Sleepy Hollow? Rds). The grant does not include the inevitable maintenance that will need to be ongoing to prevent the forest from reverting to pre-management risk conditions in 5, 10, or 15 years. Mindful that the younger the re-growth, the easier it will be to manage, that will be the responsibility of landowners, though MARS will be supportive with planning and resources, as available.

Roger suggested that Snowdenites could identify areas of interest, talk with property owners, and Dalton could follow up with a visit and in-depth conversation. The value of skilled local contractors to do some of the work was discussed. Jenn asked if software that models fuel density is available, and Dalton replied that there is the possibility that a fire-corridor spread model could pilot in the Snowden area, and that he would look into it. Regarding the challenge of landowners' ability to afford the work done on their property, Dalton said that each landowner would be in conversation with MARS on an individual basis. Large timberlands under absentee ownership present their own challenges, which are still under consideration. Dalton presented an important

and ambitious project as a 1st round of community-scale wildfire defense, and engaged in questions and discussion with the Council. Roger thanked Dalton for his time and for the presentation.

Roger called the **Meeting to Order** at 7:40pm. The April 02, 2025, DRAFT **Meeting Minutes** were approved as previously presented by email. **Treasurer's Report:** Chuck K. the Treasurer was absent, so there was no report.

Additions to the Agenda: Jenn added the topic of a letter from the SCC to the Board of County Commissioners about their dereliction in allowing the County Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan to be expired, exposing County residents to lack of FEMA support, and a loss of funding opportunities.

Old Business:

Communications Committee: Things running smoothly - no report.

Broadband Update: Roger reported that about 75% of the under-served/unserved broadband project areas, including Snowden, were bid on in the 1st round of bidding by ISPs, to provide affordable, high quality (100MB download, 20MB upload) broadband access to rural Washington State. The 2nd round of bidding to pick up the remaining project areas will be completed on May 16. Any project areas still unclaimed by an ISP will then be negotiated individually. When all areas are (soon) claimed, the results of the entire bidding process will be announced. The standard of service will be fiber to home – unless an area will cost over $7,000,000 to serve 1,000 residences, in which case alternatives to fiber will be used. The sore issue that fiber already exists at our doorstep in Snowden, paid for with public funds, but with no public access came up in discussion. Roger said the State Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program staff are well aware of this past injustice, and are determined that it will not happen again. (The PUD could perhaps exert Eminent Domain to make existing fiber useful, but will not try.)

Land Use Committee: Eric said the issues that are pertinent to the Committee now include: 1) A total of 5, ongoing Community Comp Plan Revision Meetings held by the County Planning Department to gather input on issues of importance to the public when looking towards future development in Klickitat County. 2) Building of the Under Canvas "glamping" development on Oak Ridge Rd. is underway, with expectations to be doing business by this May. There are still many concerns about traffic, water, wildfire, and public safety, as well as serious questions about the County's priorities and process regarding the permitting of Under Canvas. ("Nightly fires and S'mores" --Columbia Gorge Under Canvas website) 3) The County-wide Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP) has expired, there is no visible indication the County is doing anything to bring it up to date. While the County CWPP is expired, we cannot expect FEMA to help County residents in the case of an emergency, and many grant opportunities to build wildfire resilience are unavailable. 4) The Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO), while approved by the Planning Commission, is being appealed by the Yakama Nation, which prevents the CAO from being approved by the BoCC until the appeal is resolved. Sallie provided an update on the Community Comp Plan meetings, reporting that over 40 people attended the Dallesport meeting. In answer to a question about what's going on in Dallesport, Sallie pointed out that, even before the Comp Plan update is complete, Dallesport is recognized as a "prime growth area", and there are already plans for a large housing development to be built there. The chart packs compiled of public opinions at the community meetings should be posted on the County Planning department website soon, to provide the ideas and strength of conviction being presented by the public at these meetings. Sallie said that the County is so far on schedule to meet the grant requirements for the funding for the Comp Plan Update. She reported that some Community Councils are continuing to meet together, to develop a coalition to better present a community voice to the BoCC and Planning Department.

Wildfire Prevention Committee: Dustin reported that the $4,000 micro-grant the Committee applied for (through Jenn) has been approved. A major grant project will be installing a large "Fire Danger Today" sign at the intersection of Wnuk and Snowden Roads, and installing seven smaller "Burn Ban" signs at entry points into Snowden. Dustin showed a map of Snowden with tentative best sign locations indicated. There is still a lot of work to do further identifying and marking best locations for signs, getting permits and utility clearances. Volunteers will be needed for the installation work party, coming up. Other grant projects include the Snowden Evacuation Routes map, which will be mailed to all Snowden residents, and available as a handout. Another micro-grant project will be a Fire Preparedness public event at Mountain Brook Fire Station to be held June 14, and feature experts and information from MARS, and the DNR. Community volunteers will be needed to set up and clean up after this event also. All receipts for the micro-grant will be turned in to the DNR for reimbursement on June 15, and the Committee will begin considering their next goals.

New Business: Jenn moved the SCC write the BoCC a letter urging them to make updating the County's CWPP a matter of the highest priority. Until the CWPP is updated, County residents are ineligible for FEMA assistance in the case of a disaster, and wildfire preparedness funding opportunities are not available to the County. Sandy seconded Jenn's motion, and it passed unanimously. Jenn pointed out that individuals can write their own letters to the BoCC urging them to immediately move to update the County CWPP as soon as possible. Dustin pointed out that in the current County CWPP Snowden is not well described. However, if Snowden creates its own CWPP (as Columbia Rim has done) then our Snowden specific planning will be embedded in the County CWPP, with good information.

Fire Commissioner's Report: Bob thanked the Wildfire Preparedness Committee for their work. He said that White Salmon hosted a Fire Preparedness Public Meeting, and 35 people attended. He stressed the importance of citizens being well informed and well prepared in case of a wildfire emergency. Tom announced that the West Klickitat Regional Fire Authority (WKRFA) has hired a new Captain, Tom Krumbacker, who will begin work June 01, and whose responsibilities will emphasize training of volunteers. A full-time firefighter will also be hired.

Bridge Report: Eric reported that while the Bridge Project is continuing into the final design phase, funding on both the federal and state levels has become shaky. The Washington legislature approved money for the Bridge Project, available only when Oregon will pay its share, which is undetermined. Bonds are being considered to fund building the new bridge. On June 29 we will know more about how funding to complete the new bridge may be obtained.

For the Good of the Order: None.

Hearing no further comments, Roger **Adjourned** the meeting at 8:29PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by

Bea Lackaff

(SCC Secretary (Pro Tem)