

TONOPAHA TOWN BOARD

PUBLIC WORKSHOP MINUTES

DECEMBER 17, 2014

Town Board Chairman Horace Carlyle called the workshop to order at 7:02 p.m. Also present were Duane Downing and Tom Seley; Janet Hatch and Ron Kipp were absent. Twelve others were in attendance. Chairman Carlyle led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Public Comment None.
2. Presentation: USDA-Town of Tonopah Opportunity Community Discovery Meeting

Sarah Adler, State Director for the USDA Rural Development Nevada, presented the "Opportunity Community" initiative. She introduced David Foster and Cheryl Couch who also work for the USDA. Ms. Adler explained that the program helps build communities from the ground up. The USDA inquires what a community wants and needs and then the USDA establishes how they can help.

Ms. Adler had the board members and attending residents complete a short questionnaire inquiring what is "on the front burners" of the community. Everybody filled out their passions and pressure items. The results were collected and presented on a whiteboard. Passions were topics such as economic growth, energy efficient housing, tourism, and small business thriving. Pressure items included topics such as cleaning up the town, health care, education, and job creation.

Town Manager James Eason stated that without health care or education nothing else will flourish. The hospital and schools are what keeps people in town. Vice Chairman Duane Downing addressed the issue of Nye County and the State of Nevada not funding Northern Nye County schools enough. This statement initiated a discussion on funding going to Pahrump instead of Tonopah. Chairman Horace Carlyle noted the lack of teacher or parent involvement in town matters. Sarah Adler pointed out all the positive aspects of the Town of Tonopah like the Solar Reserve Project, the local newspaper, the hospital, hotels, and restaurants. Joni Eastley pointed out the lack of volunteers in all areas. Sarah Adler suggested changing this with a leadership program that would have people participate in meetings for the BOCC, BLM, etc. Horace Carlyle stated the Town of Tonopah needs to attract developers who draw people into town with projects such as retirement homes.

Wendy Seley suggested having a beautification day where the entire community gets involved. Duane Downing noted that the City of Las Vegas has DUI convicts clean up. James Eason explained that a community service program is already in place and that the Town of Tonopah works closely with Justice of the Peace Jennifer Klapper in this matter.

Michael Lach suggested the Town Ordinance be changed to have uninhabitable houses moved out. People need to see the positive side of Tonopah with a clean Main Street and welcome signs on both sides of town. Joni Eastley explained that the Tonopah Development Corporation used to do systematic clean-ups. Sarah Adler suggested reviving the TDC and added that the Town of Tonopah could get free labor for clean-up projects through the NCCC if the Town provides free housing for a time period of approximately 6 to 8 weeks.

Sarah Adler inquired whether the USDA should hold the same discovery meeting with the Junior and Senior class of Tonopah High School and whether there was a Career Day at the school. Everyone was in favor of asking the students of THS what their passions and pressure items were and it was stated that there used to be a Career Day years ago. Dian Wickenden noted that the lack of funding is not the main problem of the schools, but that the lack of leadership is.

David Foster asked whether engaging the new editor of the newspaper in promoting the Town of Tonopah was a possibility. Tom Seley suggested having a report on the library to make it more attractive. Sarah Adler proposed using empty or cleaned up lots to display art.

Wendy Seley inquired whether the Town has a self-guided tour that tourists can go on. Joni Eastley affirmed this. Sarah Adler stated that having the map as an app for smart phones would make it more attractive for a lot of people. The app could have an audio guide and lots of pictures. Michael Lach expressed that he thinks more people would visit Tonopah if they knew what was here. David Foster suggested promoting the star-gazing more.

Horace Carlyle voiced concerns about reduced revenues because of the construction of Solar Reserve being completed and people leaving town. Michael Lach proposed promoting Tonopah as a green community using reclaimed mine sites as solar fields.

Wendy Seley suggested that the High School work with the hospital to look at the viability of starting a CAN training program. Joni Eastley added that an EMT certification will be offered to the students as well. Duane Downing noted the possibilities students have with an EMT certification and that EMTs have a good income.

Sarah Adler inquired how many residents are homeowners. James Eason estimated the number to be around 70%. Wendy Seley explained more people would build houses if there was better access to contractors and material.

David Foster explained that the Nevada Rural Development Council had been inactive for a while and that they are now picking up their work by finding out what they can do for communities. Sarah Adler asked what types of businesses would be attracted to operate in Tonopah. Wendy Seley suggested a distribution center. Duane Downing said any business that services travelers would flourish in Tonopah. James Eason stated that Tonopah is already a switch-out stop for truck drivers.

Sarah Adler proposed having a Forest Service/BLM training facility and using the opening of Solar Reserve as an opportunity to promote the Town's ideas. She suggested starting with a beautification day. Deputy Town Clerk Kat Galli stated that the High School Booster Club has already planned a beautification day for the school. James Eason explained that a beautification day for the town has been planned for before Jim Butler Days.

Duane Downing stated the Town of Tonopah needs to focus on outdoor recreation since it is very ATV friendly and it is one of the only towns where it is legal to operate ATVs on paved roads.

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Sarah Adler suggested having ATV events and having a tourism experts do a workshop with the Town of Tonopah.

Sarah Adler asked which organizations the Town could reach out to in order to help with planned projects such as a beautification day. Suggestions were the Rotary Club, Lions Club, VFW, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. She proposed having a challenge between the different clubs. Everybody picks a different area that they want to clean up or beautify and they bring their own material. James Eason explained that the Town already had the idea of having a contest who can fill more black garbage bags and asking the businesses in town to donate door prizes.

Sarah Adler explained that this meeting was just the beginning and that the work will be continued in 2015. Horace Carlyle thanked her for her professionalism and ideas.

3. Discussion: Capital Projects Workshop: All Town Department/ Tonopah Public Utilities


Horace Carlyle suggested item #3 be rescheduled for the first meeting in January 2015. He tabled the Library Board of Trustees Agenda and also suggested it be rescheduled to the first meeting in January 2015.

4. Public Comment None.

5. Adjourn Workshop was adjourned at 9:44 p.m.



Minutes transcribed by:

Kat Galli



Approved:

Horace Carlyle, Chairman



Duane Downing, Vice Chairman

Ron Kipp, Clerk

Janet Hatch, Member

Tom Seley, Member

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