

Bluff Town Council
Tuesday, March 19, 2019
Bluff Community Center at 6:00 p.m.
190 N 3rd East
P. O. Box 324
Bluff UT 84512

Regular meetings are held every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at the Bluff Community Center.
Requests to be on the agenda may be submitted to Ann Leppanen at least 4 days
before the meeting.

Minutes

The meeting started at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call Mayor Ann K. Leppanen, Luanne Hook, Brant Murray, Linda Sosa; Jim Sayers excused absence

Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2019

Hook motioned to approve, Sosa seconded, all voted in favor except Murray, who abstained.

Introduction of Bryan Torgerson, SITLA Resource Person

Torgerson, SITLA resource specialist for the Southeast Utah area updated the Council on the possible solar farm lease on Bluff Bench. The lease is for 2,000 acres, is near transmission lines, a transfer station, and on a relatively flat area. It is typical for the size to shrink after the engineering study and archeological survey. There are also financial hurdles and other studies, such as wild life and environmental issues must be addressed before approval by SITLA.

Leppanen expressed concern that we had not been informed by SITLA because it is in Town and Monument boundaries. We learned about it from a County Commission meeting. Torgerson regretted that they had not contacted the Town and while SITLA is not required to work with the Town or Planning and Zoning, they will work with the Town. Murray does not like the idea of an industrial area at the entrance to our town and the effect that could have on tourism. He asked if it would use water, Torgerson thought it is photovoltaic not water. Josh Ewing asked why several oil and gas leases were taken back when they were found to be in the Bears Ears Monument and why are we different? Torgerson explained they were small, scattered pieces of land as opposed to the Bluff Block, a more valuable piece because it is large. Leppanen spoke with a SITLA representative who said they were treading carefully because of the Monument. Ed Dobson asked about an erosion study: the USGS or a similar entity will be involved. Murray stated that it is not best for our citizens and hoped it could be placed somewhere

else. Mary Gilliam, PhD geologist and land use specialist, had maps that showed the location in relationship to drainage patterns. A large disruption of the soil had the potential of draining down Cow Canyon into Bluff Dwellings. Jared Barrett was concerned about possible canyon flooding and wanted the concern passed on. Dudley Beck asked about tax advantages to the Town. SITLA land is tax exempt but vertical infrastructure maybe taxable. Is the power produced taxable? The land is used for grazing but that is just a placeholder until a use comes along that has more money potential. Leases are long term, 20 to 50 years. Some projects never happen. Torgerson encouraged the Council to send all their questions and concerns to him and he will pass them on and work with us.

Old Business

1. Update on award status of Federal grant to UDOT for improvements on State Hwy 162) (Hook)

This should awarded in three weeks.

2. Bluff Dwellings Request for Off-Premise Retail Alcohol Permit (All)

Bluff Dwellings is asking for two permits. The first is for beer and wine that will be served to guests at their banquet facility and room service. This is regulated and permitted by the State. The second is to sell craft beer to guests and the public from their lobby Food Pantry. This requires the Town to have an ordinance, license, and permit in place for them. Leppanen explained that we are willing to do this but a lot of work is needed.; we want well thought out policies. Research with the State and similar small towns led Leppanen to Stephne Hanson, Licensing & Compliance Specialist, Off-Premise Beer Program Manager. She is will to come to Bluff and Leppanen suggested a work session with Robert Olge, of Bluff Dwellings and the Council. Leppanen will contact Hanson and set this up, sooner rather than later.

3. Rocky Mountain Power and Municipal Energy Use Tax (All)

Jim Clayton of the Tax Commission called Sosa today to say he has received the paperwork from us and we will start receiving disbursements of 3% on Rocky Mountain Power bills in July. Tomorrow the Council has a conference call work session with Rocky Mtn. Power to identify customers within our boundaries.

4. Waste Management Proposal (All/Helgerson)

Murray reported the Helgerson is waiting in some information's and wants to reschedule for next week.

5. CDBG 2nd Public Meeting: Request to Change the date from 4/16 to 4/9/19

(Leppanen)

The hearing will be 4/9/2019 at 7:30 after our regular meeting at the Community Center.

6. Congressman Curtis' Town Hall on 3/21/19 (Leppanen)

The Council will meet with the Congressman Thursday at 3:30 at the Bears Ears Education Center. We will set up the Community Center for his Town Hall and gift him Ellen Meloy's book, "Eating Stone," A Navajo interpreter has been arranged and at least 100 people are expected. The Congressman is having another Town Hall at the Mexican Water Chapter Friday morning at 10:00.

7. Status of Request to San Juan County to use the Bluff Library for Planning and Zoning (Leppanen)

Leppanen's letter of inquiry was met with rejection; a meeting must be during Library hours and a Librarian present. The BWW may be an exception on both counts, since they meet there once a month. This was tabled until next week.

8. Status of Community Impact Board Request (Sayers)

Sayers has a meeting March 25th.

9. Population Count by the Kem Institute for Sales Tax and Road Money (Leppanen)

Our population count is 262.

10. P&Z, Roads, Water Reports

Sarah Burak is the Chairman and representative from P&Z. She will sometimes have a substitute and will focus on P&Z issues at meetings. She asked what kind of information and updates the Council will need from P&Z and vice versa. Leppanen suggested that the more detailed both entities minutes are about information pertaining to both the Council and P&Z issues it will facilitate communication and possibility save time. Burak stated the future meeting will be held in the Community Center. Hook is working on finding a transcription solution to meet ADA requirements.

Several Council members thanked the group for their dedication and hard work.

13. Code of Conduct and Communication between Members (Leppanen)

Leppanen gave a reminder of the importance of personal conduct at meetings for the Council, P&Z, Roads, volunteers, and the audience, under scoring the need for transparency and civil, polite behavior. She stated that even gestures such as eye rolls or hand gestures could be considered offensive to the public or each other. Perceived lack of respect is something we want to avoid.

New Business

11. Report on San Juan County Commission Meeting on 3/19/19

No one from the Council was present.

12. Taxes - TRT, Tourism (Hook) Airport, Resort (Murray)

Hook prepared a summary detailing taxes available to the Town and recommended we write resolutions to ask for them. She and Leppanen will work together on them.

Included are the County and Municipal TRT, Resort, Restaurant, Zoo,

Telecommunication and Energy. Leppanen received an inquiry about a tax increase on cellular phone rates and after research found that this is from the State. The Town sales tax has been going to the County and will be disbursed to the Town starting at the end of June; there have been no tax increases. There will be a 3% increase from Rocky Mountain Power starting in July. Wes Shook reminded the Council about the campground outside of town and airport fees.

13. Code of Conduct and Communication between Members (Leppanen)

Addressed earlier.

14. Capital Improvement Plan (Leppanen)

This is necessary for our CDBG and Leppanen is working with Jade Powell on it.

Other Business

Leppanen received information about a meeting Saturday at 11:00 at White Mesa about the fiber optic easement needed across White Mesa to connect to the southern schools. She stated the importance of this and suggested attending the meeting and contacting Commissioner Maryboy.

Adjourn 7:35 p.m.

Linda Sosa Recording Officer