



Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held on September 15, 2022, 6 p.m. at the Gerlach Community Center, 410 Cottonwood, Gerlach, NV 89412, and via teleconference.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM – Elisabeth 'Schatzi' Gambrell, Tina Walters, Andy Moore, Kristy Evans, Allen Nash (via zoom)

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – There were no requests for public comment.

Lina Tanner, Burning Man Project, said she has a draft letter regarding the Ormat Exploration project. She said she emailed it over. She wanted to keep everyone in the loop. Comments are due on September 19th. There are instructions on the planning website. She said we provided four main comments: We didn't feel the schedule for comments should have been longer to collect more input; we felt the alternatives addressed in the EA should have been more robust; we felt BLM didn't analyze it under the EIS process which would have been more appropriate, and we went through environmental and cultural items that still needed to be addressed. She said Kayla Capland in Government Affairs sent it to the CAB members. Please reach out if you have any questions. Please submit your own comments if you have any you want to submit individually.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF AUGUST 18, 2022 (for Possible Action)

Motion: Elisabeth Gambrell moved to approve the minutes for August 18, 2022. Andy Moore seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

5. NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB HOW-TO – Washoe County staff to provide a walk-through of the Neighborhood Development HUB and how to use the platform. (non-action item)

Due to technical difficulties, this item was postponed to the future meeting.

6. WASHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE – General Community Update (non-action item)

Deputy Burns said the burn went smoothly, and uneventful compared to years past. There wasn't a lot of crime. He said the shift schedule was good. He spoke about broken-down vehicles waiting for tow service. Ms. Evans said she noticed speeding. The semi trucks were speeding through Gerlach. Burning Man posted something about speeding, so I know they are aware. She said she hasn't seen so many people camp in-town after exodus. She said she also noticed them parked in the post office parking lots. The Deputy said we gave them a timeline to move.

7. WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE- Washoe County Commissioner Jeanne Herman may be available to provide updated information on discussions and actions by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). (Non-Action Item)

Jeanne Herman said she wanted to check in to see how Burning Man went for you. She said our information wasn't coming through. Soon you will have better broadband thanks to Manager Brown. She said they are working on the Envision2040 Plan. She said the planner is excited about Gerlach. You gave him a lot of great information. She said she loved the picture of the fire truck in front of the fire station.

Mr. Moore asked if she was aware of the Ormat project. Commissioner Herman said she hadn't heard any recent things. She thought they were having issues with one of them, which would hold them up. Mr. Moore said they aren't following the EIS; they are doing an EA. They aren't answering our basic questions about what happens to a community when you put an industrial site surrounding the community. We are concerned it will impact our water and wreck this town. The noise level will make

Gerlach uninhabited. They are moving forward with exploratory work. It's one step toward moving on. As our elected officials, we feel your voice is heard. Commissioner Herman said she would come up and meet with you about this. Ms. Gambrell said well, site 19, and when this process started 3 years ago, us as a CAB and community, that well was dug years ago. It wasn't productive, and they never did anything to cover it up. It's just ugly scenery with a scar and metal pipe with a fence around it. People ask when they will restore well 19. They keep giving lip service right outside our town. They put 23 exploratory wells, which will make 24 exploratory wells on the way to the Black Rock Desert, our biggest tourism draw. They have never answered the question – where is the bond money to make sure you have funds in perpetuity to maintain the sites and put them back into nature? They don't answer our questions. We want to make sure they have the right money and the right people. There will be concrete pads. It needs to be screened. Commissioner Herman requested to have Ormat at the next meeting. Ms. Evans said it's BLM land they are proposing to do this work on. It's a BLM process. It's not Washoe County land but applied for Washoe County permits. Ms. Gambrell said we requested an EIS. Ms. Gambrell said we have til September 19 to submit comments which is not enough time. She asked Commissioner Herman to contact them and asked for more time. Ormat has not come out to explain their new plan. Commissioner Herman said she would call Ms. Gambrell. Scott is the representative, but he doesn't have the answers. We want to get someone who can answer the questions. Mr. Moore said we requested engineering staff but have not heard back from them. We had Burning Man right in the middle of the comment period.

Marnie Benson, Director of Government Affairs for Burning Man, said Lina Tanner is our senior advisor. She provided our final comments to the EA. We are happy to provide a copy of our comments with our concerns. She said we published those on our website today as well. She will provide a link to the browser.

8. BOARD MEMBER ITEMS — This item is limited to announcements and/or requests for future agenda items by CAB members. (Non-Action Item)

Mr. Nash asked Marnie what the comment period was for Burning Man's EIS; she said it was before Burning Man. The comment period was 30 days. We had members from our congressional delegation to extend the comment period, and BLM declined. Ms. Benson said the first thing we ask is to extend the comment period considering the timing and impact on the community and stakeholders. She said we don't know if they will grant the request. She said we want a longer time period for better community engagement. She said she would provide a link to the comment submission process.

Items for Upcoming agenda:

- Update on High Desert Plan – How can we change our designation from other than Medium Density Suburban
- County Roads and Crosswalk – 447/34 Y; can we get some roads addressed
- Winter preparedness panel
- Animal Welfare – Can we adopt living out in Gerlach?
- Hub How-To (rescheduled)

Don Pelt provided an update from Burning Man. He said it was a new challenge since we have never been in Gerlach for Burning Man. He said it went as smoothly as possible. We had a bad car crash. They are ok. He said his standing since 2010 is still no fatalities. Since I've been here, there have been no highway fatalities. We had 44 service calls involving Burning Man between Pyramid and Gerlach. He said we noticed that NDOT put up flashing open-range signs, and we didn't have any cows hit this year. The drivers were watching for them this year. We had a problem with a group of people north on the Black Rock Desert after the Burning Man event with their after-party. We had to deal with that. We tried to contact the group that organized it but didn't hear back. He said he would reach out to BLM if they had permits. He will follow up on that. He said we had seen an uptick in the amount of community members getting checked out at the station. He said we had 17 medical services. He said we hope to

see that continue to increase. It's going well, and we are well-received. We are happy to be there. We got the opportunity to post five full-time positions to help prevent overtime. Ms. Evans said the personnel who were out here were very nice. She asked about fires. Mr. Pelt said we had a couple of fire incidences from dragging chains. We were able to extinguish them quickly. They mitigated the fires rapidly. We had some RV fires, which is not uncommon. Some are older vehicles and idle for a long period of time, and it can happen. There wasn't exceptionally out of the ordinary. Mr. Moore asked about trash issue along roads. Mr. Pelt said we had not had any major complaints for Gerlach, Empire, or Pyramid Lake at this point. There is a normal amount that occurs every year. The Burning Man crews are exceptional at following up and cleaning up that may have been dropped off. Our lake maintenance people put out extra 40-yard dumpsters. Mr. Pelt said we are starting a structural fire fighting academy starting on 27th and running through December 17. Free of charge. He said he sent it to Lisa Nash, the president of the volunteers. Please let the volunteers know about the class. We can provide transportation. Ms. Gambrell complimented his crew and their exceptional work in the community.

Mr. Nash said he is the vice president of volunteers and encouraged community members to volunteer. It's a new paradigm under Chief Pelt. There is training and engagement under Mr. Pelt. Please let them know.

9. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – Comment heard under this item will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the agenda. The public is encouraged to submit a "Request to Speak" form to the Board chairman. Comments are to be addressed to the Board as a whole. (Non-Action Item)

Ms. Benson said she provided three links in the chat about comments, planning, and a press release from BLM on how to submit comments. She thanked Mr. Pelt, and we are happy to be working with Mr. Pelt and the level of service for Burning Man and the Gerlach community. She thanked Mr. Pelt for his comments about trash mitigation. Exodus had a challenge with heat. Vehicles were overheating and had to remove from the roadways safely. We had to work with Sheriff on when we could release cars. There were delays in gas deliveries during that time. She said we appreciate operations working into the late night to make sure people could leave safely. Ms. Walters said Gate road had a lot of potholes. She asked if there was a way to be smoother. Ms. Benson said we are already working on mitigating that. We experienced that and will spend time offsetting that in the future. Ms. Evans said the people in the north of Black Rock are renegade camping. It's disbursed camping. Because of the closer to the Burning Man site, so they picked a site on the other side of the closing order. There is no one in charge. Ms. Benson said each time a northbound vehicle on 34 approached the 8-mile entrance, we had to halt the thousands of vehicles to let the single car go through. There were dozens of cars that went to renegade burn. We analyzed the traffic patterns. BLM decided on an extended closure order. We expressed concerns that the resources required to respond to incidences in the remote part of the NCA would be problematic. When there was a whole other event, we had some concerns about the impacts on the participants and the rest of us. She said there were some impacts on our operations and resources of our public agencies. Mr. Pelt said it put a strain on our resources. He said it's 20 miles north of the 12-mile gate. It put an extended time on our response. They had medical issues that were problematic. There was no law enforcement like we have with Burning Man. It was in Persing County, and they didn't have the resources, which fell on us. He wants to know if BLM knew about the event; it should have had permits and allowed us to be prepared. Ms. Walters said we would add this to a future agenda.

ADJOURNMENT – the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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