



### **Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board**

DRAFT: Approval of these draft minutes, or any changes to the draft minutes, will be reflected in writing in the next meeting minutes and/or in the minutes of any future meeting where changes to these minutes are approved by the CAB Minutes of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board.

The regular meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held on May 11, 2023, 6 p.m. at the Gerlach Community Center, 410 Cottonwood, Gerlach, NV 89412, and via teleconference.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM** – Tina Walter, Christy Evans, Brandy Wilber, Allen Nash, Russell Bierle. Absent: Elisabeth Gambrell, Andy Moore

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – The Pledge was recited.

**3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT** –

Marjory Reynolds spoke about the opportunity to preserve the views with S.R. 34 as designated as a scenic byway through BLM or through NDOT. There are funds available. It would help protect Guru Road, have kiosks, pull-outs. It would help with other things in the area. She said she attended a meeting last week with a national representative who is aware of the Black Rock desert. She said she would work with him on the grant. We have support from Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Friends of Black Rock, Marne Benson, and hopefully, support from the CAB. Kristy Evans asked about the process and who do you appeal to make this official. Ms. Reynolds said she isn't sure of the process but wants to preserve the scenic. We want the CAB buy-in or even the GID. Ms. Walters asked her to keep us posted. Mr. Nash asked if it would protect it the whole way up until it ends. Ms. Reynolds said she wasn't sure but thinks we could decide where it should go, if that may be Soldier Meadows, which is another opportunity. Mr. Nash said he is concerned about the petrified forest and should be included. Ms. Evans said it sounds great and thinks others would be interested.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS OF MARCH 9, 2023** (for possible action) – Kristy Evans moved to approve the minutes of March 9, 2023. Brandy Wilber seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**5. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES** – A Washoe County Sheriff's Deputy and/or members from the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Fire Department may be available to provide a general community update on public safety (non-action item)

Deputy Burns said routine services and business. He said we are building the schedule for upcoming events. Ms. Walters asked if there would be additional deputies. Deputy Burns said the same amount for 2017 and 2018. Ms. Walters listed the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Burning Man. He wasn't sure what was going to be staffed. Ms. Evans asked when additional staff came up. Deputy Burns said approximately two weeks before the event. Mr. Nash asked if Saturday night coverage won't happen until August. Deputy Burns said 24-hour cover would happen 1.5 weeks before the event. Mr. Nash said the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is also a big event. Dave Cooper said they have applied for an organized event for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. He said we have the option to work overtime. He was told in the past it was in another county and would handle the Gerlach side of service. Ms. Reynolds said the high desert plan is coming up and taking comments for those types of protections to show support and put it on their radar.

**6. PROPOSED LANDS BILL** – Washoe County staff and/or staff from [U.S. Senator for Nevada Jackie Rosen's office](#) will provide a general overview of the proposed [Washoe County Lands Bill](#). [non-action item]

Kate Thomas, Washoe County, provided a Lands Bill update.

Ms. Evans thanked Ms. Thomas for the update. She asked if the parcels identified on the map on the website were final. Or can we provide feedback? Ms. Thomas said the parcels on the website are the result of meetings of everyone coming to the table. This is the starting point. There are discussions of economic development adjacent to Gerlach. Ms. Evans said important recreation areas border our town; there is controversy around it as it's wrapped up in the Ormat debacle. She asked how to make that recommendation. Ms. Thomas said you could email me or the email on the website if you know the areas that want to be conveyed to the local government for a purpose. Ms. Thomas said there are a lot of areas the BLM is looking to get off their books due to maintenance. She said she was happy to help with the process. Ms. Evans asked who reads the emails. Ms. Thomas said Rosen's office, D.C. Staffers, and we go through those. For those who don't have access to a computer, we will have a nice display with those maps. We will promote that once we have a date – looking at Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup>. We will have Candee send that out. Ms. Evans said she would email her. Mr. Nash said the mineral leasing and withdrawal noted above the Granite Banjo wilderness would be off limits to recreational use. Ms. Thomas said I don't believe so but didn't sit in those discussions. She said she would take a look to see how it's depicted. She recommended he submit a comment through the website.

Mr. Cooper said regarding mineral leases, I know the friends of Nevada Wilderness recommend the whole south Playa be removed from mineral entry. That is already in the resource management plan for the area for BLM and hasn't been implemented it. That will be subject to rights since lithium claims are in the south Playa. That is close to my house, which is a concern. We need to look at the Recreation and Public Purposes Act for portions of the south Playa next to private property next to where we are proposing the Gerlach Community Trail. We should have it in the works. We need to see the mineral withdrawal of all federal minerals in and around Gerlach. There should be a buffer zone of one or two miles. We need to discuss and look at it. He said he would submit comments. All of this is subject to valid, existing rights and mining claims to protect our community and view shed. We could look at the Passion point of the granites – part of it is designated for recreation area, more than BLM. It could go to Washoe County to become a park to help protect it. It's subjected to valid, existing rights. There may be a process where leases could purchase those leases from the company. He said he would work with Friends of Nevada Wilderness to get the comments in.

**7. RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANT OPPORTUNITIES** – Washoe County's new Sustainability Manager, Brian Beffort, will provide an update on Renewable Energy grant opportunities with Washoe County. A draft letter of support will be shared for official adoption by the CAB. [for possible action]

Brian Beffort introduced himself and provided an update on renewable energy grant opportunities.

Ms. Reynolds asked what does this look like? Solar panels, windmills, geothermal? Ms. Beffort said you have abundant renewable energy resources with the sun shining, wind, and hot water below your feet. One of the projects for this prize would be doing a resource analysis to see the best combination. He said he likes micro-wind, not big turbines, but little ones. Geothermal is a unique resource for local benefits. It remains to be seen. We could contract with Desert Research Institute or UNR. Mr. Nash asked what support you need to make that analysis happen. Ms. Walters said she would read the letter aloud and send a copy. We can sign it. Mr. Nash said it sounded like a good idea, but it sounded like a monorail, and need to know how to move forward. Mr. Beffort said it's a competitive process with first-round prizes. The project during that round would be to develop an application for additional funding. And then create a plan to make this happen. We are starting the conversation. We have a lot of great resources. We are moving towards this goal even if we don't get this award.

Ms. Evans said to clarify Brian is aware of grants for sustainable energy for rural communities, so we are a potential recipient. The letter before us asks if the CAB wants to show support for the application so the donors know there is general support and commitment to the partnership. Mr. Beffort said there would be site visits to follow. There would be a need to convey the findings to the rest of the community, which would be the CAB in assisting with that communication. Mr. Biele said Gerlach would be an attractive location for this; limited government entities are up here. It would be a quick approval and on to the next stage.

Ms. Wilber asked if Empire fit into this. She said they are a little different than Gerlach. Mr. Beffort said we are not including Empire in this application. He said one of the attractions of this application is the 120 in Gerlach. He said it's a manageable laboratory. He said we could include Empire in another application for Energy Shed for an energy system.

Ms. Evans said she personally supports this and can do whatever to rally the community.

Ms. Walters read the letter: *To whom it may concern, I'm writing on behalf of the Gerlach Citizens Advisory Board to express their support for the Washoe County application for the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Clean Energy demonstrations (the OCD), energizing rural communities prize. As Washoe County's representative, a local body in Gerlach, I can say with confidence this project aligns with the needs of our community and enjoys community. The abundant sunshine, wind, and geothermal power, Gerlach is uniquely suited to become a model of what is possible using the application of modern renewable energy storage and smart grid technology to support energy reliability and climate resilience. With the majority of our older residents on fixed income, Gerlach would greatly benefit from the equitable application of energy technology. The Gerlach CAB supports Washoe County's goal to reduce greenhouse gases gas emissions to net zero by 2050. This project's focus will inform both Washoe County and the world on how existing technologies and partnerships can be deployed to reduce emissions meaningfully in even the most isolated rural communities. If we could do it here, we could do it anywhere. Washoe County in their outreach to coordinate with community members in Gerlach, the regular public in CAB meetings will be a perfect place for community members to learn about and provide feedback on this project. We look forward to partnering with Washoe County and other project partners to bring this important project to fruition.*

**MOTION: Kristy Evans moved to approve the letter as written and have Tina Walter sign for the CAB. Allen Nash seconded the motion which carried unanimously.**

**8. GERLACH TRAIL INITIATIVE UPDATE** – Hear the most recent update on the progress of the [Gerlach Trail Initiative](#), which is a collaboration of multiple partner organizations seeking to develop a multi-use trail from the community of Gerlach across the Playa to County Route 34. (non-action item).

Dave Cooper provided a presentation.

Mr. Nash asked what this Board or individuals can do to promote to move forward on this proposal. He said I think it's wonderful, and the art trail should go through there. Mr. Cooper said to provide support to the concept and committee and support the sale of the 38 acres, which is key for putting it together. Talk to the GID board members. The County will come in and ask for recommendations. It's a matter of support and participation in the trail planning committee.

Jack Phillips asked what happened to the Art trail that was supposed to happen years ago. Mr. Cooper

said the Art trail is alive and well. He said the County had contracted with an artist for a design that was rejected by the community. Nobody liked the design. The county held off because there was no place to anchor it. It was supposed to be up by Guru Road, but it's by the Ormat property. Gabrielle is looking at the GID property next to the gas station, which is 38 acres which is the beginning of the Gerlach and gateway to Black Rock desert. They will have to come up with other artwork. The other end is in Verdi. They already have artwork. The Art trail is still alive and can be finished on our end.

A public member asked about the terms for this parcel from GGID? How are you looking to acquire? Mr. Cooper said outright purchase. They could sell to another government entity. It would be easy. He said it would have to be surveyed and assessed to see the value.

Deputy Burns asked a clarifying question about crossing the highway. He asked if there will be a crosswalk, sky bridge, or something to safely get people across the highway. Mr. Cooper said that will have to be decided in the planning. It would have to be a lit crosswalk. He said we could tunnel under it. It goes into Ormat's field. The obstacles can be overcome.

Mr. Nash asked if art can be submitted for the art trail if the other proposal wasn't accepted. Jack is a premier artist here in Gerlach. Mr. Cooper said it's a good idea. Ms. Walters said we could contact Gabbi about soliciting local artists.

**9. COMMISSIONER AND BOARD MEMBER ITEMS** — This item is limited to announcements and/or requests for future agenda items by CAB members and potential general announcements from the county commissioner and county manager. (non-action item)

Ms. Evans said she was on the HUB site recently and discovered a neighborhood for USS storage lot occurred at the end of March. She said she asked herself how she could have missed it. There was a list of people postcards were sent to, and thought she had signed up for District 5 emails to get notified. She emailed County Planning. She said Candee said it was a communication issue. She said she let Candee know that she wanted to follow up on this. Ms. Walters said she didn't know about that meeting either, but did receive a postcard about the same property for June 1<sup>st</sup>. Candee said Roger Pelham is online tonight.

Mr. Pelham, Washoe County Planning, was available to answer questions about the neighborhood meetings. He said notices were sent to 750 feet, 30 property owners. He said the information is available on the website. The neighborhood meetings happen before an application is submitted. The applicant includes feedback from the public in the application for consideration. Ms. Evans said when the neighborhood HUB was introduced to us, you could sign up for email notifications about projects in your area, but I didn't get the email or a postcard. Mr. Pelham said he could follow up with the communication team to ensure you get the information. Ms. Ramos said Kristy was correct. You should have received an email if you are signed up for District 5. She said she apologized on behalf of the Communications Department that that feature of the HUB site was broken. We were sending these out manually to the District 5 and Neighborhood meeting list. It seems that it has fallen through the cracks. She said it's very complicated. We are looking to get this taken care of. We are working with the CSD and Technology team. She thanked Kristy for bringing this to our attention.

Allen Nash asked what development standards you will be using whether it's the High Desert Plan that we all love or something closer to Reno for the USS site for the MOT project on the edge of

the Playa. Mr. Pelham said there are not to set of standards, just one we use throughout Washoe County. Standards could be waived and modified by the Board of Adjustment. We aren't noticed to discuss that project today, but would love for you to call me to get your feedback. He said the same standards apply. He said there might be a different set of standards or philosophy included in the high desert area plan, but we are still months from that new plan or even longer than that for adoption. Mr. Nash said personally and I know of neighbors for standards for Reno to be applied to the high desert with the beauty we have existing. This project isn't the greatest thing, but it's useful. If we throw weird things like landscaping and buildings that look like they belong in Reno. Mr. Pelham said I would love your comments on email. Ms. Ramos provided his email and phone in the chat. Ms. Evans said we need to be careful not to share our opinion about a project since it's not on the agenda. Ms. Walters said we can add it at a future meeting. Ms. Reynolds asked about the process. She said she received the notice and went online to see the application. She asked for clarification regarding providing details when there isn't an actual application yet. Mr. Pelham said that notification was for the neighborhood meeting which happened prior to the applications. There will be a gap between the neighborhood meeting and the actual applications submitted since we are taking the feedback of the public and putting it into their materials. Tina Nash asked if there is a way to have a neighborhood meeting format at the CAB meeting. In a small community, and to have another neighborhood meeting is hard. Can we go back to doing this at the CABs? Mr. Pelham said the Board of County Commissioners meeting where they commented on developments at the CAB meetings, but there is no plan for that at this time. He said he couldn't speculate if or when that may happen. Ms. Ramos said typically every month, at the Direction of Manager Brown, the CAB reviews the HUB to see what is happening in your community and subscribes to receive information. Your Commissioner, Jeanne Herman, has requested development to come back to your CAB. She said the point of bringing development to neighborhood meetings, the developers were strategically changing their dates after the CABs. By having neighborhood meetings, feedback could be given before any formal application is submitted. We are planning to talk about the HUB at every meeting so everyone is aware. Ms. Nash said she was part of the CAB when we lost the developments at the CAB format but understands it considering we only had a few meetings a year. We have meetings once a month and could incorporate it back into the CAB meeting. Prior, the application submissions weren't lining up with our CAB meetings. Mr. Nash said code enforcement drives some of this development. Code enforcement is a public process and could let us know what is going on in our area. Ms. Ramos said she can convey that to our code enforcement team. Mr. Pelham said it's an enforcement process with limitations that we might not know of. Ms. Evans thanked Candee for following up on this and attempting to fix the issue. Thank you, Mr. Pelham for being here.

#### **10. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –**

Dave Cooper said said Gabrielle said there might be some money to bring a farmers' market to Gerlach. The other thing is Guru Road. The right-of-way permit expires this year, and we need someone to take that on. It's not cheap. It's \$500 a year with stipulations. As of now, there is no one to take that on. We need to talk about that. He said he is going to hit up Friends of Black Rock, but what does that mean to have a non-profit handle it? Ms. Walters said we could have a fundraiser and talk about it in the future.

Ms. Gambrell thanked Commissioner Jeanne Herman for supporting permitting coming back before us. Please write, call, and let her know you support her. Also, we will be doing Stewart

Robinson's Celebration of Life on June 18.

Ms. Ramos said she will reach out to Dave Cooper about the right-of-way. We may be able to assist with that.

**ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

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