

**Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, October 14, 2020, 6:30pm**  
**remote/virtual meeting via Zoom/conference call**

**Members present:** Duncan King, Chris Lizza, Elin Ljung, Ilene Mandelbaum, Bartshe Miller

**Public attendees & presenters:** Bob Gardner, Wendy Sugimura, Bentley Regehr, Gordon Martin, Paul Ashby, Lynn Boulton, Dennis Domaille, Margaret Eissler, Connie Millar, Ray Pok, Jeff Wyneken

**1. Call to order & pledge of allegiance:** 6:34pm

**2. Public comment:** Paul Ashby voiced concerns about an unpermitted [HipCamp campsite](#) where the owners want approval for 4–5 more campsites on the site; will be a [General Plan amendment request](#); Paul has fire concerns about more campsites there because he stays in the area and is interested in purchasing land here

**3. Review minutes from September:** Two small corrections on item 10 – the Mono City access road mentioned goes east, not south, to Cemetery Road. Elin moved to approve with the corrections, Ilene seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**4. Supervisor Gardner's report:** Tioga Inn hearings have taken place during the last two days. Mono County adopted a resolution recognizing racism as a public health crisis, go online to read the full resolution, it includes action items for training and creating a commission on justice, equity, and inclusion. County took the first step to look into micro grids which could include solar panels on the new civic center in Mammoth, thanks to Lynn Boulton and Don Condon for bringing the micro grid presentation to the Board of Supervisors.

**5. Chair's report:** Attended various meetings over the month. Next Mono Basin Fire Safe Council meeting on November 9 will be a home hardening Zoom presentation, advertising widely for people to attend, it's the best thing we can do to protect our homes at the moment to prevent embers from getting in, please spread the word.

**6. Members' reports:**

**Chris:** Neighbor to the north of Chris's house cleared a bunch of brush. Would like the role of the RPAC in specific plans to be agendized again. Planning Commission meets tomorrow, will include a public hearing for resolving the sign issue at Meadowcliff Lodge near Coleville, workshop on the Regional Transportation Plan.

**Ilene:** Thanks to Bob for perseverance, stamina, and thoughtfulness throughout the Tioga Inn process. At the Tioga Inn hearing today was very disappointed to hear the comments of fellow RPAC member Chris, who denigrated the Mono Lake Committee and those commenting and impugned the integrity of Santiago Escruceria, which was disrespectful and unnecessary. To claim you no longer have a conflict of interest is disingenuous because you continue to express an opinion; when the Tioga Inn comes before the Planning Commission again you will have to recuse yourself and leave us without a representative. Ilene would ask you to consider resigning from the Planning Commission. To say that the Mono Lake Committee is insincere in representing a position that is echoed by thousands of people is a conflict in

your continuing representation on the Planning Commission. Mono Lake Committee employees do not have a financial stake in the Tioga Inn project.

*Chris's response:* Super conscious of conflicts of interest, always reveals his conflicts, everyone must reveal potential conflicts. Didn't impugn the Mono Lake Committee and didn't intend to denigrate any employee.

**Elin:** Thanks to Bob and Wendy for continuing work on the Tioga Inn. Would like the housing subcommittee on the agenda for next month.

**Bartshe:** Thanks to Bob for your thorough thoughtful, tireless engagement on the Tioga Inn issue, appreciate the work that all Supervisors and staff have done, appreciated Bob calling out the breach of decorum that occurred at the Tioga Inn hearing this afternoon, which was an unfortunate incident.

**7. Inyo National Forest update (Gordon Martin):** Forestwide closure has been lifted, Region-wide fire restriction still in effect (no open campfires allowed anywhere on the forest right now). The Inyo put in a closure for the west side Wilderness Areas and Reds Meadow because of the Creek Fire, which is getting rambunctious and spreading along the Middle Fork of the San Joaquin River, have a plan for that with increasing personnel, don't expect it to come our way but watching it closely. Got good reports on the Bassia removal burn that happened at Twain Islet that is was helpful for the gulls. Looking into conducting a prescribed fire at DeChambeau Ponds. Bob asked if Wilderness Area closures would be lifted soon and Gordon said they will remain in place because of increased Creek Fire activity today. Lynn Boulton inquired about tampering at DeChambeau Ponds and Gordon explained that situation.

**8. Mono Basin Fire Safe Council:** Met on Monday, October 12. Scheduled a home hardening Zoom meeting for November 9 at 6:30pm with Stan Nelson from CalFire and others; will be recorded so people can watch it later. Mono City is doing great keeping the green waste dumpster filled and kudos to the Mono City Fire Department for picking up the tab to dump it when needed. Fire truck with the banner in Lee Vining could be adjusted so that the banner is easier to read.

**9. Discussion on the Lee Vining SCE Substation (Ray Pok):** Ray responded to a list of questions that Bentley sent to him

- seed mixture/revegetation: working with Caltrans on the seed mix, Caltrans determines what types of seeds would be appropriate; they have approved a seed mix; covered under the Caltrans encroachment permit for the access to 395.
- Highway 395 access road: don't intend to continue to use the access but there is some space intended to use to store snowcats and seasonal vehicles; not additional vehicles, just those that have been stored on site in the past.
- public access: equipment occupies a much smaller area than the entire property; don't intend to fence the entire property, just the area where the equipment is located; normally a fence line would encircle the entire property; there isn't much room for public access onto the property because of liability and safety concerns; Ilene – will there be public access across the creek using the old bridge? It's the only creek crossing aside from the highway. For decades the public had then used a road to the US Pumice site and the east side of Lee Vining Creek; road has been obliterated and would have to be restored. It's important to preserve this historic pedestrian access and important to the community. Ray - if the crossing is on SCE property, probably not but will check.
- visual intrusion for lines and poles near Pumice Plant: took the scenic highway into consideration but the scenic highway designation is from Highway 120 and extends only 1,000 feet so equipment and substation itself are outside that buffer. Ilene – don't recall those lines

were going to be permanent; very visible from US Pumice site looking west; would like to examine that again.

*Ilene:* Extreme amount of grading and alteration of the landscape never came up in your presentations to the RPAC and the community; if we had been aware of the extent of that alteration there would have been serious objections to the design of the project; we would have requested a much more thorough examination of the alternatives and mitigations; not confident that there will be a good level of revegetation and restoration of that landscape which is highly erosive in its current condition; demolition of Andrews' house and changes in that area were never brought to the community's attention.

*Ray:* Completion date has been pushed back from late this month to summer 2021 due to personnel being called away for fires. Would be happy to take a tour of the site with the RPAC when SCE's travel restrictions are relaxed a bit.

*Paul Ashby:* Seems like revegetation efforts with seed mixtures at this time of year would not be successful; recommend a system like that used north of Lee Vining with netting and plugs and saplings; Nora or Robbie at the Mono Lake Committee could help consult as well as the California Native Plant Society.

*Lynn Boulton:* Going up along Utility Road there's a dirt road that parallels Utility Road and comes out at Utility Road closer to Highway 120; had a sign that said "Edison road no trespassing"; is that road going to remain closed to the public or will it be reopened now that branches and tree cutting have been completed? Ray – walking the line between public access and unwanted dispersed camping; trying to discourage illegal uses but not close it completely.

*Chris:* Thanks to SCE for all the vegetation management this year, which will make a difference in fire safety. Echoed Ilene's concerns about the proliferation of equipment and infrastructure. Fencing with barbed wire and razor wire is not compatible with our community; is it possible to get that removed from the location where it was just put in, across Highway 395 from the substation? Ray will look into it. Duncan and Ilene think it was related to undergrounding/transformers; the wide swath of graded land over there should also be revegetated.

*Duncan:* Described the need for a site visit as a matter of urgency. Ray will escalate the request to his supervisors to travel here.

## **10. Discussion on pedestrian connectivity in Lee Vining: Deferred.**

**11. Discussion on issues related COVID-19:** Bob reports that new cases have been found in northern Mono County (north of Conway Summit) with people who do not live in Mono County but work in the County. We're in the second-best tier with no danger of going into a worse tier nor improving into the best tier. No significant change in any COVID-19 guidelines for our county right now. Chris inquired whether ski areas could be shut down statewide like amusement parks have been shut down statewide; Bob has not heard anything about that. Talked with Julie Brown about June Mountain's plans for the winter.

## **12. Information items:**

- RPAC members Chris, Ilene, Bartshe, and Kristie have terms ending this year; need to renew those members at a future meeting if they want to continue on the RPAC. We could also agendize something about recruitment for more RPAC members since we have open spots.
- Accepted the Hipcamp application mentioned during public comment.
- Got a pre-application for another campsite concept off of Cottonwood Canyon Road (28 campsites), which will be on the LDTAC agenda in early November.

- There's another idea for a campground concept in that area; keep an eye on the LDTAC agendas for a first chance to get a look at those items.
- Haven't heard anything further on the May-Lundy mine proposal.

**13. Upcoming agenda items:** Mono Basin Community Plan, RPAC membership extensions and recruitment, RPAC's role in specific plans, housing subcommittee

**14. Adjourned:** 7:53pm

Respectfully submitted by Elin Ljung, filling in for Kristie Nelson, Secretary.