

**Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, December 8, 2021, 6:30pm**  
**remote/virtual meeting via Zoom/conference call**

**Members present:** Kevin Brown, Lisa Cutting, Duncan King, Elin Ljung, Bartshe Miller. **Members absent:** Ronda Kauk.

**Public attendees & presenters:** Mono County: Justin Nalder, Bentley Regehr, Wendy Sugimura. Public: Paul Ashby, Lynn Boulton, Kevin Brown (D&S Waste), Margaret Eissler, Ruth Garland, Chris Lizza, Ilene Mandelbaum, Dave Marquart, Connie Millar, Essra Mostafavi, John Ljung, Jake Suppa.

**1. Call to order & pledge of allegiance:** 6:31pm

**2. Public comment:** None.

**3. Review minutes from October 13, and November 10, 2021:** Kevin moved to approve minutes from October and November as presented, Bartshe seconded, approved unanimously.

**4. Supervisor Gardner's report:** Mono County redistricting will wrap up next Tuesday at the Board of Supervisors meeting.

The County's [strategic planning survey](#) will remain open into January; everyone should fill it out.

Covid: Mono County has some of the worst numbers in the state at 65 cases per thousand. The numbers tripled from the middle of November due to additional tourists; when tourists come up here we don't count their cases but they transmit Covid to locals. Get vaccinated, get a booster, wear masks. Learning about the Omicron variant though Delta variant remains biggest concern right now.

Yesterday at the Board of Supervisors meeting there was a good review of lots of housing initiatives. It's still a struggle to get things done and hire staff. County will be allowing RVs on commercial property to house workers; also talked about allowing RVs on residential property although that's more complicated; talked about loosened requirements for foundations for manufactured homes that would make them less expensive to construct without compromising strength, etc. [Encourage everyone to watch that part of the meeting](#). Kudos to Bentley and Wendy and Community Development staff who continue to work on housing items despite being busy with many other things.

**5. Chair's report:** Anticipating needing to travel a lot next year and so will not be standing for any RPAC officer position. Encourage current members to consider being an officer. Many people who regularly attend RPAC meetings would make great RAPC members, please consider applying to join.

**6. Members' reports:**

Elin, Kevin, Lisa: attended the housing committee meeting; nothing else to report.

Bartshe: Thanks to Mono City and Lee Vining Fire Department volunteers and Mono County EMS for their professionalism, dedication, work on a recent difficult call.

**7. Inyo National Forest update (Stephanie Heller):** Not present.

**8. Mono Basin Fire Safe Council:** Concerns about maintaining fuel breaks around communities; USFS and BLM are not stepping up to continue mowing. Next meeting is December 15 at 5:00pm.

**9. Mono Basin Housing Committee:** Reminder—this committee is the Mono Basin Housing Committee and is not affiliated with the RPAC.

Bob talked with Elsa Jimenez of DWP today and she remembers meeting with Bob about land for housing two years ago; she needs to talk to Adam Perez about the idea (he replaced Clarence Martin, who retired); Bob reminded her that Mayor Garcetti agreed to lease DWP land for \$1.

Elin and Ilene met with Danielle Dublino, Eastern Sierra Unified School Board member. She provided some information from a recent conference about the complex process of selling or leasing school property for other uses, including housing. It's happening throughout California as schools lose enrollment and want to generate money from their property, so there is a road map for doing so, but it's quite complex.

Kevin is drafting a survey for residents and a survey for employers to quantify housing need.

Ilene is compiling parcel info for every property in Lee Vining to determine which dwellings might be vacant, where infill could occur, where ADUs could be possible, etc. Committee is refining that information and will also compile information about Mono City as well.

Lisa is connecting with a former Nevada County Supervisor to see how Truckee handles housing issues.

**10. Update on proposed D&S Waste transfer facility (Kevin Brown, Essra Mostafavi):** Essra, consultant to Kevin, gave a presentation about the project. Kevin also gave an explanation of the project. After the presentation they took questions from the RPAC and public.

RPAC members inquired why the Land Use Designation must change for this project; answer is that when an applicant is proposing a use (industrial) that is not consistent with the current LUD (rural residential) the County looks for an LUD under which it would be appropriate; LUD must be compliant with General Plan. Concern that the LUD stays with the property through future owners and there are lots of other industrial uses that would not be appropriate; in theory a use permit should take care of any inappropriate future uses. Wendy also said it's possible to discuss narrowing the scope of the LUD with the applicant.

The public had concerns and questions about the number of trucks, where they are coming from and going to, increasing noise and emissions, etc. Kevin and Essra expressed a willingness to mitigate those factors as much as possible with several ideas (enclosing the generator in a building or adding more batteries so the generator doesn't run as long, modifying a berm to reduce noise, etc.).

This process is just beginning: Mono County must review the CEQA document that was submitted using a third-party review; if it does remain a negative declaration there will be a public comment period; public input will be possible before the Planning Commission; LUD change would include a public hearing at the Board of Supervisors.

Thank you to Kevin and Essra for attending RPAC and being so open and informative about the project!

**11. Update on proposed Conway Ranch grazing lease (Justin Nalder):** This past grazing season went well. The Hunewills have requested a longer grazing season next year, and have also requested to graze

the Bowl Meadow. Looking at how livestock get over to the Bowl Meadow, historically sheep would cross Wilson Creek but need to keep cattle away from the creek now. Considering allowing the cattle to cross the creek twice during the season; also considering a bridge, trucking cattle to the meadow, crossing creek on the highway. The Hunewills put out fewer cows than they were allowed to this past year. If they increase it wouldn't be more than limit established in the lease which is determined by the grazing management plan. Evaluations would determine if the grazing is too much; bare ground is not a desirable conservation value and so would avoid that.

Fences have not been laid flat because they aren't multi-strand barbed wire—they are high-tensile electric fences instead—and they won't blow over in the winter nor impede wildlife movement. Justin has requested they leave the fencing open at access points near the ranch houses and let down fence or put in gates at other places.

Question about a group doing biological surveys in the grazing areas—email Justin about it closer to the time people would like to do that and it could be possible.

The County still has a standing proposal for community agriculture within the former aquaculture area; that proposal is in draft form with County Counsel.

**12. Review draft support letter of federal recognition for the Kutzadika'a Tribe (Elin Ljung):** Deferred.

**13. Review and adopt resolution to meet virtually until January 12, 2022 (planning staff):** Unanimous vote in favor of adopting the resolution.

**14. Information items (planning staff):** See the project updates chart here:  
<https://monocounty.ca.gov/rpac-mono-basin/page/mono-basin-rpac-meeting>.

Ray Pok of SCE sent Bentley some information about SCE's vegetation clearing efforts in the north Mono Basin; Bentley shared a map of the area west of Highway 395 around the old Filosena Ranch house. Bartshe expressed concern about historical artifacts there that should not be disturbed nor made visible without vegetation covering them. The Mono Basin Historical Society has done work to stabilize that property and would be interested in work going on out there. Duncan will contact the Historical Society and pass along Ray's information.

**15. Upcoming agenda items:** Nomination of RPAC officers; letter of support for Kutzadika'a Tribal recognition; Mono Basin Bear Committee report (Bob cautions that we should be careful about violating the Brown Bear Act); Visitor Center berm update; Lee Vining skate park; Caltrans Lee Vining Rehab Project (March 2022); Mono Basin Community Plan sixth review – develop list of prioritized connectivity/transportation projects; SCE Lee Vining hydro relicensing at next public input stage.

**14. Adjourned to next meeting, January 12, 2022: 8:12pm**