



**MINUTES
TOWN OF CAMP VERDE
WORK SESSIONS
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
473 S. MAIN STREET, SUITE 106
WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2019 AT 5:30 P.M.**

No public input taken at this meeting.

1. Call to Order

Mayor German called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

2. Roll Call. Council Members Buck Buchanan, Joe Butner, Bill LeBeau, Jessie Murdock, Robin Whatley; Vice Mayor Dee Jenkins; and Mayor Charles German.

Dignitaries Present: Yavapai-Apache Nation Chairwoman Jane Russell-Winiecki, Federal Highway Administration Karla Petty, Federal Highway Administration Environmental Coordinator Rebecca Yedlin, Copper Canyon Fire & Medical District Fire Chief Terry Keller, District 2 Supervisor Tom Thurman, District 3 Supervisor Randy Garrison, Yavapai County Public Works Director Dan Cherry.

Also Present: Town Manager Russ Martin, Town Clerk Judy Morgan, Community Development Director Carmen Howard, Deputy Town Clerk Virginia Jones, and Recording Secretary Marie Moore.

Mayor German acknowledged Chip Davis in the audience, from Congressman Tom O'Halleran's office.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor German led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Work Session. No legal action to be taken.

4.1. Discussion regarding but not limited to Yavapai County Build Grant for the Verde Connect. A multi-agency discussion and update. Representatives from the following agencies may be present: Yavapai Apache Nation, Yavapai County, Federal Highway Administration - Arizona Division, Copper Canyon Fire and Medical District.

Yavapai County Public Works Director Dan Cherry presented Council with a PowerPoint Presentation regarding the Verde Connect process. The presentation covered the planning process, NEPA process, what happens without the Verde Connect road, General Plan Character Area compatibility and Opportunity Zone report. Dan Cherry spoke of studies starting in 1990, 1993, 1999, 2009, 2012 and 2016 that all identify the Verde Connect road as necessary. Mr. Cherry explained the purpose of NEPA and the process followed, including data gathering and public scoping, public meetings, public hearings and final design and construction.

Mr. Cherry explained the purpose and need for the project and what happens if not built, regional impacts, travel and emergency response times, traffic

congestion, fewer transportation choices for regional travel, increased cost in delayed construction, the loss of the \$25 million Federal BUILD Grant Funding and the impact of higher vehicle emissions and consumption of fossil fuels. Mr. Cherry explained that Cornville road is constrained and widening through the community of Cornville will impact the existing development negatively. There currently are intersection congestions issues to take into consideration at State Route (SR) 89A/SR260 that could be alleviated as well.

Mr. Cherry further explained the local implications resulting in existing and future regional planning efforts having the appearance of being less valid, increased local funding needed to maintain existing infrastructure, growth will continue and local agencies would be responsible for future improvements. The area will continue to have bifurcated communities and vehicles will continue to traverse the Verde River at various, unmanaged grade crossings. There would also be a lost opportunity for mitigating flooding problems for Middle Verde area and the likelihood of high speed broadband extension to Middle Verde is diminished.

Mr. Cherry indicated that the Verde Connect project and the Town of Camp Verde's General Plan Character Area show compatibility. Mr. Cherry spoke further of the Middle Verde cemetery and trail 19a, preservation of lands along Verde River, prevention of enclosure of natural environment within town boundaries, Middle Verde Character Area and 260 West Character Area compatibilities.

Mr. Cherry further implied that using federally funded infrastructures to support the economic opportunity zone will increase accessibility as well as attraction for potential new businesses in the vicinity.

Karla Petty, Arizona Division Administration of the Federal Highway Department spoke of the NEPA Process, and the timeline of the studies completed by spring of 2020. Once technical studies are completed, there will be a Public Hearing held sometime in the spring and summer. Following the public hearing, a final decision will be made. In the process, prior to advancing the project to design and construction, the build grant must be signed between Yavapai County and ADOT. It is anticipated in September of 2020 and cannot be done prior to the NEPA Agreement.

Mayor German questioned if there is a matrix involved when considering the NO Build option. Rebecca Yedlin of the Federal Highway Department explained that there is no matrix. Mayor German asked if there is a negative impact on a receiver of the build grant for returning the grant unused. Karla Petty explained that the grant is discretionary and that there were 91 projects granted and 12 were given the full funding of \$25 million; Yavapai County being one of the receivers. It is unknown if there is a negative impact, but a part of the application screening process is the past history of grants received and used, so that should be taken into consideration.

Mayor German asked if the funding can be used elsewhere in the Verde Valley. Karla Petty explained that the funding can only be allocated for the project applied for and must be done by September 2020. If they are not able to meet the deadlines the funds are returned.

Mayor German asked if they are willing to work with the communities as well as the County for any negative impacts and mitigate for the community.

Councilor Joe Butner inquired if the connection to Middle Verde be done in phase 2 rather than phase 1 of the project. Mr. Cherry explained that the purpose and need to change the ordered plan of the project must be met and, therefore, if the connection hasn't been made and it would be revised by USDOT and not someone local. Karla Pitts explained that the NEPA study is being conducted for both phase 1 and phase 2 so there won't be a need for a separate NEPA study.

Mayor German indicated in independent research, changing the scope of the project requires it to go back to the USDOT secretary for review.

Mayor German questioned Yavapai Apache Nation Chairwoman Russell-Winiecki if there are any tribal lands that are affected with the project as it is currently laid out. She indicated that as far as she knows, it does not. Mayor German questioned if there are plans for the Nation to have a new fire house, ambulance and heliport. Chairwoman explained that it has been discussed but is not in the immediate future plans, but it is possible for future consideration.

Chairwoman Russell-Winiecki also expressed that the Nation has received multiple grants and dealt with the NEPA process. In that time, a grant was never turned down or returned, because it is known that in the future a grant will never be received again. Chairwoman Russell-Winiecki also indicated that the Nation was not in attendance to support or oppose the project.

Mayor German spoke with Fire Chief Terry Keller from Copper Canyon Fire & Medical District and asked how the connector road would improve the response times for the Fire and Medical Department. Mr. Keller explained that due to Camp Verde being surrounded by the Verde River and split by the interstate, response times can be drastically reduced and the connector road would allow other agencies to provide backup services to the area quickly to assist the local department when it has exhausted all of its resources.

Supervisor Tom Thurman spoke of the biggest threat being wildfire, using the reservation as an example, that there is only one way in, and one way out is an issue. Terry Keller agreed that there is no escape route for the area, which the connector route would alleviate.

Mayor German questioned that should there be a need for mass evacuation in the area, could that evacuation be conducted in a timely manner without the new Verde Connection road. Terry Keller explained there are too many variables to answer that question specifically but explained that due to the road design being one way in and one way out, it is not a good design from a public safety prospective.

Terry Keller stated that Camp Verde water's main is located behind Steve Coury and if there is a bridge going to be constructed, it would be best to put a sleeve in so that water could be eventually provided to the Middle Verde area.

Councilor Joe Butner indicated that his concern is for the Character Area of the Middle Verde area and questioned if any routes would be changed after the NEPA study is passed. Supervisor Randy Garrison explained that they would be

moving forward with the new route and if any change was made, the entire process would have to be started over.

Tom Thurman explained that there would be slower travel on this route due to the geography; the B2 location is located to reduce noise and allow fiber optics connectivity; with possible flood assistance with Grandpa Wash.

Councilor Bill LeBeau questioned if the bridge would be constructed first. Dan Cherry explained that the bridge is a time consuming project. Councilor LeBeau asked if there is an estimate of what the project would cost and Mr. Cherry explained there is currently not a design yet. Randy Garrison clarified that the grant is not dedicated to a certain part of the project but will go toward the cost of the project in whole. Councilor LeBeau indicated that the original application showed the original route that was opposed by the Town of Camp Verde and the public and questioned if that is now locked in to that route because it was on the original application; how much is the entire project going to cost and how will the remaining cost minus the grant be funded.

Dan Cherry spoke of potential funding sources and that the County is not proposing new taxes to fund it.

Tom Thurman reminded everyone that they are waiting on the NEPA study.

Mayor German thanked the participants and audience for attending the meeting.

5. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.



Mayor Charles German

Attest:


Judy Morgan, CMC, Town Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Minutes are a true and accurate accounting of the actions of the Mayor and Common Council of the Town of Camp Verde during Council Meeting of the Town Council of Camp Verde, Arizona, held on July 31, 2019. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 31st day of September, 2019.



Judy Morgan, CMC, Town Clerk