

OAK CREEK CANYON TASK FORCE MEETING
Vultee Conference Room, Sedona City Hall, Sedona, AZ
Friday, December 12, 2008 – 9:30 a.m.
Summary Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 a.m. by Co-Chair Barry Allan.

Participants: Barry Allan – Co-Chair; Rex Bergamini – Pender Engineering; Matthew Capalby - ADEQ; Edessa Carr – U of A Extension; Kurtis Harris – Harris & Associates – arrived at 9:45 a.m.; Gary Johnson – SFD; Judy Lewis – Pine Flats Property Owners’ Association; Nancy Scagnelli – Sedona City Council; Amina Sena – U.S. Forest Service; Morgan Stine – Co-Chair – arrived at 10:03 a.m.; Ernie Strauch – Keep Sedona Beautiful; George Tice - Secretary-Treasurer and David Tracy – Public Works Advisory Committee.

2. Approval of Minutes: Oct 10th meeting

Co-Chair Allan: Asked if there were any corrections or a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION: *George Tice so moved. Rex Bergamini seconded the motion. VOTE: Motion carried eleven (11) for and zero (0) opposed. (Harris and Stine not present)*

3. Treasurer’s Report

George Tice: Reported a balance of \$8,226.75 and all bills are paid. David Tracy asked what “CBS” grant stands for and Co-Chair Allan acknowledged the City of Sedona’s support.

MOTION: *Judy Lewis moved to accept. Rex Bergamini seconded the motion. VOTE: Motion carried eleven (11) for and zero (0) opposed. (Harris and Stine not present)*

4. Round Table status reports - (a) Update on Education Grant, (b) Update on Washroom approvals, and (c) Update on Watershed Improvement Plan grant application

David Tracy: Reported RFP proposals for the creekwalk’s 30% to 100% design are being evaluated. Councilor Scagnelli explained Council did not pick the route through L’Auberge, because of ADA questions, neighbors’ concerns, etc. David explained the proposed use of concrete was part of the initial design’s shortcomings, so they are seeking a better design. Cedars and Arroyo Roble are the only properties who have not agreed. As an Arroyo Roble owner, Judy Lewis expressed a willingness to promote it. Co-Chair Allan suggested the inclusion of dog-waste stations. Rex Bergamini expressed interest in the RFP details and Co-Chair Allan explained a potential connection to the possible Oak Creek Watershed Improvement Plan grant for the task force. Matthew Capalby indicated ADEQ’s Section 319 Water Quality Improvement Grants (WQI) might apply, if it enhances or protects the impaired waters of Oak Creek, but it may have to be the next cycle.

Judy Lewis: Indicated they are working with the Forest Service to see if they are shutting off their location and how that might affect their own water, as far as freezing.

Councilor Scagnelli: Reported that Eric Levitt has moved to Janesville, Wisconsin and Alison Zelms is the interim City Manager. Budgetarily, Sedona is in better shape than many cities, but the City is tightening the belts, so there probably won’t be a lot of new projects. The creekwalk is going forward, because of the reallocation of Heritage Grant funds, but some positions are on hold, and that may include the Water Quality Specialist; she will check.

Kurtis Harris: Reported on major SR 179 activities, including the connection of a lot of storm drains and a push to get everything in from the “Y” to past the Inn at Oak Creek. Next is the construction of roundabouts at Schnebly Hill and Canyon, and the excavation by Morgan Wash, but the major work should be done by May. A fault runs across Oak Creek and bedrock ranged from 10 ft. to areas where they never hit bottom on the east abutment side. He is pushing for soil mattresses on the Tlaquepaque slope, and invasive species control is between the National Forest and ADOT, but the thought is to let them grow and remove them prior to seeding. As far as protection of the area west of the bridge, the retaining wall is finished and the rest is out of ADOT’s right-of-way, but he is requesting a sacrificial scour wall from the existing retaining wall into bedrock, along the Tlaquepaque slope. Rex asked about the business property owner’s Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and Councilor Scagnelli indicated she will check; it may on hold.

Gary Johnson: Explained when they have assignments elsewhere, they get reimbursed for crew time and equipment, and they purchased a brush truck with that money. They will be completing wildland training, and there is a new Board of Directors. With the expected drop in property taxes, they are taking steps to mitigate that impact; one step is reconsideration of the Chapel station. Also, addresses will go from Hwy. to State Route 89A and 179, which impacts the 911 center; he heard the direction also will be included and Hwy. will be the suffix, but he isn’t sure. They have asked that addresses in Oak Creek Canyon remain as is.

Ernie Strauch: Indicated as a new KSB officer, he learned that he would be taking over as President immediately rather than in January; they probably have an interest in becoming involved in the task force, as KSB’s Mission Statement is, “Keep Sedona Beautiful promotes conservation of the greater Sedona area and, by all practical means, seeks to preserve the unique natural environment and to enhance the quality of life for future generations”. Ernie pointed out the litter lifters play a significant role, and KSB was formed in 1972.

Edessa Carr: Explained she went on a field trip with the task force in November to see the projects being done. She is the Water Resource Education Program Coordinator, and they would like to partner with the task force in terms of education; she would like to start another Master Watershed Stewards Program for Yavapai County, although their boundaries are really watershed boundaries. Co-Chair Allan stated it is timely, because the task force hopes to be stronger on educational outreach. Edessa indicated the training would probably be classes tailored to the needs of the Master Watershed Stewards, but they have provided speakers, with limited staff. She works to implement Arizona Project Wet’s water education for teachers, so they have discussed engaging high school students for some monitoring.

Matthew Capalby: Expressed interest in partnering to protect and preserve the interests of Oak Creek, as an impaired and threatened waterway, and be informed of upcoming projects, so they can work with them during the design process; water quality is as important as water quantity. ADEQ is looking at impacts 100 miles away for the Little Colorado and this watershed, and almost anything businesses do can have an impact. There is about a 1,200 year cycle with about a 40 year drought, and 1,200 years ago, the Colorado River went dry for 2 years; some believe we’re in one of those cycles now. He talked with Alison, Eric and Mayor Adams regarding the 319 grant, but he doesn’t know if an application was submitted; they are broad and can include illegal dump sites, etc. Ernie Strauch pointed out that one reason for the creekwalk was to help minimize informal use for water quality improvement. Matthew indicated they have grave concerns for the creek, in regard to septic tanks, etc., because the collective impact is significant. Kurtis noted that Oak Creek includes the entire list of beneficial uses and Matthew explained a selling point to businesses is the potential

impact of an E Coli spike at Slide Rock, because people won't come up from Phoenix that day. In 1996, Lake Havasu City closed some of their public beaches and it took until 2001 to return to their prior revenue numbers. Two of the biggest issues are stormwater and septic tanks, and they have grant programs and/or loan programs to help. There are springs in Oak Creek Canyon that were registering high Nitrate levels a year or two ago, and they were coming from Munds Park, so that is how intertwined the waters are. Oak Creek is now an "Outstanding Water", which is like the top 5% and a higher standard than a "Unique Water", because of the threatened and impaired status of the creek. There have been a lot of efforts to minimize the impacts on the creek, but it still happens at a problematic level. There are only 3 in the state; San Pedro, the upper part of the Gila and here. Co-Chair Stine asked about management plans for ADOT's drainage systems along Oak Creek and Kurtis indicated in February, ADOT will have its own MS-4, but he will ask.

Rex Bergamini: Reported that through the 319 grant, he is conducting educational classes for the middle and high school students and he expects some good volunteers from it and the ability to expand into monitoring, which the next grant may cover. By working with the Master Watershed Stewards, we also may be able to implement some hands on monitoring in Sedona and possibly Mingus. He will be ordering the doggie-waste stations for installation in February or March, and get the trailhead ambassador students in the field. West Sedona School is also considering letting the middle school students earn some high school credits for their involvement in the program, and he represents NAU's lab at these meetings now.

Co-Chair Allan: Announced the web site is up and running and we are tying into search engines; a graduate student is translating several pages into Spanish, and he is developing a library, if anyone wants to add something. He will post the library index on the web site. The next phase budgeted is the marketing phase, which includes the Hispanic community, plus some local advertising. Any task force member can provide a profile, and we would like for your web sites to link to us. Regarding the Watershed Improvement Plan grant application, it is in the review process and we assume everything is okay.

Co-Chair Stine: Reported he will meet with the Forest Service's Engineering Department in late January on the restroom facility, RRM should be ready with their building at that time, and the manufacturer should have their treatment module on the proprietary product list with ADEQ then. The Visitors' Center should be open around March. He asked if the 319H monies are at risk. Matthew indicated it was still substantially funded in the last cycle at \$1.7 million, and it may benefit from the stimulus package; at the state level, some programs may be reallocated to other agencies, but their management has been very efficient.

5. **Old Business**

Co-Chair Allan: Indicated that Lee Luedeker emailed him that a bat collected at Red Canyon Ranch 3 weeks ago tested positive for Rabies.

6. **New Business . . . (a) election results, (b) next meeting date**

Co-Chair Allan: Announced Judy Lewis was elected to the board and Charlie Ester and David Tracy were re-elected; there was a tie between David Tracy and Joe Swavely, and Joe did not wish for to be considered in a run-off. The next meeting day is February 13th.

7. **Adjourn**

MOTION: *David Tracy moved to adjourn. George Tice seconded the motion. VOTE: Motion carried twelve (12) for and zero (0) opposed. (Sena not present) The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.*