

# Minutes Community & Infrastructure February 21, 2005

Members of the Community & Infrastructure Solution Group Present:  
Kate Wilson, Jack Eackman, Julie Pfingst, Erin Hayes, Dick Fast, Kay Reeves, Al Malinowski.

Meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm.

There was no public comment.

Good discussion where everyone brought their action plans:

Kate brought a copy of the Growth & Development Solution Groups' outline for their Action Plans. There were 10 to 12 points listed. Each person on the G & D group will eventually sign on to one of the actions. Two plans have been started: assuring water availability and establishing a satellite office here in Big Sky. It was discussed that some of their action plans do overlap with our concerns and that we may want to team up with the G & D group on certain plans.

Our committee felt 10 to 12 action plans was more than we wanted to take on. We want to focus on a few main actions.

Steve was missed.....

## **Action Plans:**

### I. Al's Action Plan:

Compile costs: what are the costs to run the community now and compare the costs if Big Sky was incorporated.

- a. What are we really spending? What are the parameters?
- b. We need to define Big Sky owners
- c. Define Big Sky borders
- d. Use a 12 month period

Need to acquire information:

Costs of:

The districts

BSOA

Association dues

There are tons of assumptions that must be defined. We need to think in terms of our broadest boundaries: use maps to breakdown the area.

## COSTS = FACTS

Cost is not the only side of this.... the most important action is to gather facts.

On a longer-term basis, we need to create more mediums to disseminate these facts.... need to gather the facts and spread the word.

### II. Erin's Action Plan

Hire an outside entity to gather these facts.

### III. Kate's Action Plan:

- To compile what it currently costs to run the infrastructure we have in place vs. what we could spend by consolidating as an organized central body.
- Meet with Ken Weaver
- Launch a PR campaign for what our group is doing, so that we can educate and get support.

### IV. Kay's Action Plan

Local self-rule appears to be the path we ought to travel. There is a strong sense within the group that we currently lack the ability to control our own destiny. In the meantime, the pace of development is accelerating at a rate faster than the Gallatin County Planning Department appears able to keep pace with. [Add another sentence or two on concluding thoughts.]

At the same time local self-rule has some identified issues: Boundaries, tax effects and voting rights. Each of these requires further analysis to identify potential solutions.

We propose to proceed with further study of the case for local self-rule.

## **Action Plan Draft**

We volunteers can do some of the fact-finding. The ad hoc community group studying the issue of secondary education in Big Sky can serve as some inspiration and can also, most likely, provide us with some figures and guidelines for the process we should follow in gathering information. Other issues probably require more expertise or knowledge. The Local Government Center at MSU should be our first stop.

## **Responsibilities**

TBD

## **Resources**

Ourselves, especially those with time on their hands, MSU, MT League of Cities and Towns and Resort Tax when we've exhausted the aforementioned.

## Timeline

Presumably action by the Montana State Legislature will be necessary before the issue can be placed before local voters, meaning we have a little less than two years to gather facts, gain community support, and get a statute passed.

Kay recommended we review the higher education committee fact book.

We need to get our hands around this issue:

Should we or should we not incorporate?

What are the advantages & disadvantages?

We need to identify the services we receive if we did incorporate.

How broad do we want to make this problem?

1. Lack of Facts
  - a. Cost study to maintain existing infrastructure – hire an outside entity to do this.
  - b. What are we paying right now, as individuals? What's the average cost per person?
2. Lack of Central responsibility
3. Perceptions of remote, disconnected governance from Bozeman and Virginia City.
  - a. Need a better government formation
4. Lack of knowledge regarding politics and governance

It was that it is time to contact Ken Weaver, as he has a lot of information and knowledge that we could benefit from.

Because there is a lack of central responsibility that makes us feel like or at least gives a perception we have a lack of self-determination. We lack the ability to speak as a single voice.

Jack recommendation for an Action Plan:

V. Foundation for a Better Government - this is a transition vehicle, a citizen foundation. The “watch dog” of the community.

- The community needs to catch up with us.
- This group needs to keep the Big Sky quality of life in mind
- Investors into our community are putting their faith in people they don't know. This elected organization would help keep momentum going.
- This is similar to the league of women voters....impartial..... a rational way for people to come together and discuss differences, community issues, etc.

- A forum where there would be regular public meetings.
- This group would shine a spotlight on issues.
- Key is clear, concise and timely communication
- This organization would need to apply for funds from Resort Tax to ultimately support a full-time employee. Note: this group does not have to be a 501-C3 or a non-profit organization to obtain Resort Tax funding.
- This is a good environment to help dispute the facts.
- Need to have people who live here make decisions for the best interest of Big Sky.
- Jack stated that this is a working laboratory for 2 years. This will give us the time and facts we need to say yes or no for incorporation

**Goal:** Form the entity – form the organization – establish regular representation. When issues arise outside of Big Sky that will affect us, people and organizations will have someone to call here in Big Sky.

Dick recommended Fort Peck and Colstrip be interviewed because they just incorporated under unique circumstances.

It was decided that we would ask Steve Johnson to contact Ken Weaver, since he has already established a relationship with him, and ask him if he'd be available to meet with us in March.

Kate will contact Jon Holtzman and let him know the direction we are moving in.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.