



Storey County Planning Commission

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, March 3, 2016 6:00 p.m.

Virginia City Highlands Fire Station

2610 Cartwright Rd, Virginia City Highlands, Nevada

Larry Prater - Chairman

Virgil Bucchianeri - Planning Commissioner

Pamela Smith - Planning Commissioner

John Herrington - Planning Commissioner

Jim Hindle - Vice-Chairman

Ron Engelbrecht - Planning Commissioner

Kris Thompson - Planning Commissioner

All items include discussion and possible action to approve, modify, deny, or continue unless marked otherwise.

1. Call to Order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Discussion/Possible Action: Approval of Agenda for March 3, 2016.
5. Discussion/Possible Action: Approval of Minutes for December 17, 2015.
6. Discussion Only/No Possible Action (Master Plan Amendments): Discussion and comments from the commission, staff, and public regarding existing and potential future land uses and development patterns in the county and its communities. Discussion will include a review of draft Master Plan Cover Table Contents Resolution, Chapter 1 Framework of Master Plan, Chapter 2 Background, Chapter 3 Vision Mission Principles, Chapter 4 Land Use, Chapter 5 Population, Chapter 6 Housing, Chapter 7 Economic Development, Chapter 8 Transportation, Chapter 9 Public Services and Facilities, Chapter 10 Water and Natural Resources; and other chapters of the draft master plan. Public participation is encouraged. Copies of the master plan draft may be obtained from the Planning Department website at <http://www.storeycounty.org/521/Updates>, at 775.847.1144, or from planning@storeycounty.org.
7. Discussion/Possible Action: Determination of next Planning Commission meeting.
8. Discussion/Possible Action: Approval of Claims.
9. Correspondence (no action)
10. Public Comment (no action)
11. Staff (no action)
12. Board Comments (no action)
13. Adjournment

Notes:

Note: Additional information pertaining to any item on this agenda may be requested from the Planning Department (775-847-1144).

- Note: There may be a quorum of Storey County Commissioners in attendance, but no action or discussion will be taken by the Commissioners.

- Note: Public comment will be allowed after each item on the agenda (this comment should be limited to the item on the agenda). Public comment will also be allowed at the end of each meeting (this comment should be limited to matters not on the agenda).
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Certification of Posting

I, Lyndi Renaud, on behalf of the Storey County Planning Commission, do hereby certify that I posted, or caused to be posted, a copy of this Agenda at the following locations on or before February 23, 2015: Virginia City Post Office; Storey County Courthouse; Virginia City Fire Station 71; Virginia City RV Park; Mark Twain Community Center; Rainbow Bend Clubhouse; Lockwood Community Center; Lockwood Fire Station; Virginia City Highlands Fire Station; and the Virginia City Highlands mailbox buildings.

By Lyndi Renaud, Secretary



STOREY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

THURSDAY - December 17, 2015 - 6:00pm
Storey County Courthouse, District Courtroom
26 South "B" Street
Virginia City, NV 89440

MEETING MINUTES

CHAIRMAN: Bret Tyler

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Jim Hindle

COMMISSIONERS:

Virgil Bucchianeri, John Herrington, Larry Prater, Pamela Smith, Ron Engelbrecht

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1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:05 P.M.
 2. **Roll Call:** Bret Tyler, Virgil Bucchianeri, John Herrington, Jim Hindle, Larry Prater.
Absent: Pamela Smith and Ron Engelbrecht.

Also Present: Planning Director Austin Osborne, Planner Jason VanHavel, Deputy D.A. Keith Loomis, and County Commissioner Lance Gilman.
 3. **Pledge of Allegiance:** The Chair led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 4. **Discussion/Possible Action:** Approval of Agenda for December 17, 2015.

Motion: Approve Agenda for December 17, 2015 **Action:** Approve, **Moved by** Commissioner Herrington, **Seconded by** Commissioner Hindle, **Vote:** Motion carried by unanimous vote (**summary:** Yes=5).

No public comment.
 5. **Discussion/Possible Action:** Approval of Minutes for October 15, 2015.

Motion: Approve Minutes for October 15, 2015 **Action:** Approve, **Moved by** Commissioner Hindle, **Seconded by** Commissioner Herrington, **Vote:** Motion carried by vote (**summary:** Yes=4) **Abstain:** Commissioner Prater.
 6. **Discussion Only/No Possible Action (Master Plan Amendments):** Discussion and comments from the commission, staff, and public regarding existing and potential future land uses and development patterns in the county and its communities. Discussion will include a review of draft Master Plan Chapter 4 Land Uses;

Chapter 5 Population; Chapter 6 Housing; Chapter 8 Transportation; and other chapters of the draft master plan. Public participation is encouraged. Copies of the master plan draft may be obtained from the Planning Department website at <http://www.storeycounty.org/521/Updates>, at 775.847.1144, or from planning@storeycounty.org.

Planning Director Osborne: The Master Plan draft should be completed by March and ready for the approval process. There will still need to be a District Attorney review, first and second readings, and community input required but the document will be there in draft form in its entirety. All communities in the county will have a chance to comment on the final draft.

Vice-Chairman Hindle: Chapter 9 Facilities seems very detailed. Is that standard?

Planning Director Osborne: NRS (Nevada Revised Statutes) doesn't require that we have a facilities plan because we are a small county; however, it's important to include in the plan because it answers the question of how many people potentially could live this county, and what the county would do if its capacity is met. It is a necessary planning element, and the details shown in the draft are necessary.

Vice-Chairman Hindle: It meshes well. We aren't planning parcels and development that we don't have resources for.

Planning Director Osborne: Staff is trying to keep the Master Plan as clean, easy and understandable as possible for the reader. The chapters have bits of data, and lots of narrative with an appendix that contains all the details.

Planner VanHavel: An example of some of the chapters fitting together and complimenting each other is the Water and Natural Resources chapter. This chapter develops the logic behind a developer needing both paper water rights and wet water rights before that development can move forward with the planning process.

Vice-Chairman Hindle: You have the format now and it all integrates together. Now it's just going through and making sure the data you have is consistent.

Chairman Tyler: Our biggest resource and biggest problem is water.

Planner VanHavel: Water is discussed in the Population chapter, the Housing chapter, the Natural Resources chapter, Land Use chapter, and the Economic Development chapter.

Planning Director Osborne: There are sixteen hundred parcels in the Highlands that could be developed with residences. We have to do something or else it will be one building permit after another until the state engineer determines that no water exists for building and puts a stop to permits.

Chairman Tyler: Isn't that a state decision?

Planning Director Osborne: They can let it go pretty far.

Planner VanHavel: Compared to some of the dire places around the state, Storey County isn't in bad shape, but it could be. Topography-wise, we are in a very precarious situation compared to everybody else around us. Nothing drains into this county. Everything drains out.

Vice-Chairman Hindle: Besides the little reservoirs we have up here for fighting fires, what else do we have?

Commissioner Prater: Gave an example of pumped-storage hydroelectricity (PSH), which is a type of energy storage used by electric power systems. The method stores energy in the form of gravitational potential energy of water, pumped from a lower elevation reservoir to a higher elevation. Long Valley was looked at as a potential location for PSH but it didn't have enough natural drainage.

Commissioner Herrington: Asked Commissioner Prater if the summit of Geiger Grade was reservoir friendly?

Commissioner Prater: Explained that a reservoir needs to be long and deep. Geiger Grade is steep and deep.

Tom Zachary, Mark Twain resident: Mr. Zachary once attended a meeting where they were voting to approve the Virginia City Highlands development. A realtor and a hydrologist claimed the area received 12 inches of annual rainfall. Mr. Zachary knew there wouldn't be any water if they built out.

General discussion between board members and staff about water drainage.

Planning Director Osborne: Each community's water services are discussed from Chapter 9 Public Services and Facilities.

- Canyon GID (general improvement district) is the water service provider for Lockwood. Commercial expansion into Mustang is likely to occur in the near future as development happens in that area.
- The Storey County Water System is the municipal water service provider for Virginia City, Gold Hill and Silver City (Lyon County). The utility obtains raw bulk water from the Marlette-Hobart Water System, which is owned and managed by the State of Nevada.
- The Tahoe-Reno Industrial GID is the water service provider for McCarran and the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center. Three additional wells are being developed and are expected to be online in 2016.
- Residents in Mark Twain and the Highlands obtain water via private domestic wells. Many wells have required deepening one or more times over the past decade. Sharing services with outside jurisdictions, reducing housing density through regulation and incentives, and providing for transfer of development rights to parts of the county where population growth may be more appropriate.

Vice-Chairman Hindle: Painted Rock has been a big part of our discussion about growth. Shouldn't it be mentioned in the water section of Chapter 9? Isn't it up to the county to define a water resource ahead of time?

Planner VanHavel: Painted Rock is addressed in the housing section by stating that it has potential for a housing development to be built there. The policy in the water section is that any developer, who isn't tapping into an existing water system, needs to bring both wet water rights and paper water rights to the table.

Planning Director Osborne: Exactly, and cited Questions 1 and 2 passed by the county voters in 2009, which requires that developers prove paper and actual water for proposed developments before the application for a residential subdivision. Chapter 4 Land Uses references Painted Rock and water.

Chairman Tyler: Is Painted Rock its own watershed?

Planning Director Osborne: It is part of the Truckee Watershed and Basin 83, like most of the remaining River District and Highlands.

Planner VanHavel: Perhaps a developer could work with TRI-Center and work out an arrangement for purchasing water.

General discussion between members and staff about where water would come from for Painted Rock.

Commissioner Prater: Had once proposed an idea at a Virginia City Highlands Property Owners' Association meeting that could reduce density and conserve water. When a vacant lot comes up for sale, give adjacent property owners first right of refusal.

Chairman Tyler: Is there any way we can make an incentive for that?

Planning Director Osborne: Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) is an incentive-based program that would reduce density and conserve water. Douglas County does it and it works for them. A developer could, for example, buy 200 one-acre parcels in the Highlands, put a conservation easement on the land, and then the

developer could get bonus units allowed in Painted Rock or another community in the county that has a reliable municipal water system.

Commissioner Herrington: Couldn't an incentive for an owner to buy an adjacent lot be a tax break?

Planning Director Osborne: I really can't answer that. I don't know all the parameters for TDRs and tax benefits. Providing tax abatement could be problematic. The county still has services that must be provided to its communities, and abating residential property and other taxes would leave the county unable to pay for needed services, including infrastructure, fire and law enforcement, etc.

Commissioner Prater: A lot of the homes that are having problems started out mining water as opposed to hitting an aquifer and then eventually their water ran out.

Chairman Tyler: Talked to someone recently who had to deepen their well two hundred feet at a cost of \$33,000, and this was the third time it had to be done.

Planning Director Osborne: Our current 1994 Master Plan talks about Cottonwood Springs being a potential source of water for the Highlands.

Discussion of wells and aquifers in the Virginia City Highlands.

Planner VanHavel: The Economic Development chapter is ready for public unveiling. It sets the tone that economic development is something that is long-rooted in Nevada history and Storey County has embraced this philosophy. The fact that we have more jobs than population shows that the county is succeeding.

Planning Director Osborne: Population-wise, we are the oldest county in Nevada. We need to try to build our communities to attract young families. We can do this through mixed-use and unique planning of our communities, including Painted Rock, Virginia City, and Lockwood.

Commissioner Prater: Presented a map showing a possible route by which the north and south parts of the county may be connected. The proposed route would connect Virginia City, TRIC and Lockwood. The route uses existing roads or trails within Storey County.

Chairman Tyler: Does it go around the 40 acres of the Highlands?

Commissioner Prater: It comes in through Long Valley and would go through portions of the 40 acres. Long Valley road has an easement along those parcels. It would connect to Mustang Road and not Canyon Way.

Commissioner Prater: It's almost a straight shot from TRIC to Virginia City. And half way through, there's an intersection that would take you northwest up to Lockwood.

Planning Director Osborne: A concern with a "north-south connector" is the Highlanders, and having Geiger Grade-type traffic going through that community and opening up the back country to unwanted development. It's not a short cut. It wouldn't be advantageous to use, except, perhaps, for emergency access. People from Fernley wouldn't use it to get to Carson City because USA Parkway and other routes would be more practical.

Discussion about the map and connector road between staff and members. Discussion also included connecting TRI Center and Painted Rock to a north-south connector route.

Planning Director Osborne: When the Master Plan was developed in 1994, Lockwood was the principal community in the north part of the county, and the Master Plan suggested studying the potential for connecting it to the south. Now we have TRI-Center, Painted Rock, and other parts of the county for which a connector may be more beneficial. This should be reviewed and considered for study.

Chairman Tyler: This is the best route I've seen [referring to Commissioner Prater's presentation]. The only problem I see is the 40 acres.

Planner VanHavel: Most of these 40 acres are owned by one person, and I bet he'd welcome it. He targeted those lots knowing that Long Valley was going through there.

Chairman Tyler: What is going to stop major development?

Planning Director Osborne: There is only one home per 40 acres allowed in that area. Changing that density is not appropriate and not allowed.

Commissioner Prater: The road would take you past the Cottonwoods [Cottonwood Springs], which I think has great potential to be a county park. The petroglyphs would be better accessed and protected by this road and it could be set up as a county park too. With access like that, the state may even be interested in turning it into a state park.

Planning Director Osborne: As it states in Chapters 4 and 9 of the draft Master Plan, it is recommended that the state provide a full-time ranger station at the petroglyphs. But, before such a station is developed, it is advised that maps are not given out to the public and that access to the site is barricaded from public vehicle access. Once a contract with the state or other agency is in place, then we can consider better access.

Commissioner Prater: Whenever you mention a north-south connector road, everyone visualizes a freeway going right through the Highlands. Other than a few homes in the 40 acres and Long Valley, it is undeveloped along this route.

Planning Director Osborne: It is important to maintain a strong connection between the communities of the county and the county seat where government services are located.

Deputy D.A. Keith Loomis: Political consideration is really not an element of a master plan.

Planning Director Osborne: The current 1994 Master Plan states that the historic authenticity of Virginia City, including feeling of place and its function, should be preserved to the extent possible. Maintaining government services in historic buildings helps preserve the purpose of those buildings and the town, and, thus, the experience that visitors and scholars have. We need to preserve the historic integrity of the community and its buildings for residents, visitors, and scholars. The draft Master Plan is careful to exclude politics.

Discussion returns to the possibilities of a connector road between staff and members.

Planning Director Osborne: I met with the Storey County School Board of Trustees about the concept of a regional education center. They were highly receptive to the idea in Painted Rock where such a school could tie well into the companies at TRI-Center. They gave me some suggestions including pre-kindergarten facilities. They want to keep the two elementary schools, one in Lockwood and the other in Virginia City. Painted Rock would have its own elementary school, and also a high school that would serve all northern county communities, including Painted Rock. The school board was very happy with the idea and they are going to write us a letter supporting the elements of the Master Plan pertaining to education and schools.

Commissioner Prater: Tim Sweeney, an architect in Reno, has an idea for a technical education campus at TRI-Center. I told him to make a presentation before the Planning Commission when he has completed his current project. A technical school would create a joint venture where companies such as Tesla can develop their personnel instead of having to go out and find qualified personnel.

Chairman Tyler: There is a union training facility at TRI-Center that could also be integrated into this education plan. Would that be a partner or competition?

Planning Director Osborne: It could be a partner, or part of a vocational program. They certainly have the facilities.

Planning Director Osborne: Schools like this are what the Master Plan is talking about it. It doesn't just need to be one facility in the middle of Painted Rock; there could also be satellite facilities in the TRI-Center area.

Planning Director Osborne: The Master Plan says that this board and the Board of Commissioners must require that the developer pays for the facilities or substantial amount of the facilities.

Chairman Tyler: Are we looking at a population of 8,000 for Painted Rock?

Planning Director Osborne: I'm basing the estimated population off of the potential for 3,400 homes in Painted Rock. It could be higher or lower depending on the average household size.

Commissioner Herrington: Is it mandated that there be affordable housing for low-income families?

Planning Director Osborne: Storey County, as a small county, is not required to have a comprehensive affordable housing plan, but affordable housing should be included in the Master Plan. There is currently an abundance of affordable homes in Storey County.

Planner VanHavel: In the Housing chapter, I did an analysis for affordable housing. Based on our income and the cost of owning a home and the average cost of renting, we have by far the most affordable housing in northwestern Nevada. We are an anomaly in northwestern Nevada because only about 5% of our dwellings are rentals, whereas the surrounding counties are right around 20%, however, our vacancy rate is about 20%, versus 5% in neighboring counties. The private market place does not demand rentals in Storey County.

Commissioner Herrington: Are you just looking at Virginia City or county-wide? The northern part of the county doesn't have a market for rentals.

Chairman Tyler: Only if you bought your home before a certain date could it be rented out.

Planner VanHavel: Those numbers are for the whole county.

Planning Director Osborne: In a development like Painted Rock, the developer will likely propose to build more affordable homes first, then phase into higher-income homes as the development progresses. Painted Rock under the draft Master Plan will also be a mixed-use community, which inherently contributes to affordability.

Planner VanHavel: The new transportation authorization bill FAST (Fixing America's Surface Transportation) was passed. Congress designated Interstate 11 between Las Vegas and Reno. Before that it was only designated between Las Vegas and Phoenix. Where's the alignment going to be now that it's designated? Staff met with NDOT (Nevada Department of Transportation) recently and I asked why couldn't I-11 go through Storey County and tap into I-80 through the industrial park? The people we talked to weren't the decision-makers, but we think we made a good enough impression for them to take the idea back to the decision-makers.

General discussion on possible I-11 routes through Nevada.

Planner VanHavel: While we were talking to NDOT we made them aware of the Lockwood interchange issues.

Chairman Tyler: NDOT was at the Lockwood on-ramp yesterday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. observing traffic. Stated how dangerous it is trying to merge onto I-80 west, and emphasized how bad it is when two trucks are driving next to each other. There is nowhere to go.

Commissioner Prater: Suggested signs be posted advising trucks to stay in the left lane from USA Parkway to Sparks.

Planner VanHavel: That would be within the RTC's (Regional Transportation Commission) jurisdiction.

Planning Director Osborne: It would help get NDOT to move faster on improvements if people in the Lockwood community wrote letters over a long period of time detailing the issues with the Lockwood on-ramp.

Chairman Tyler: I think a good solution would be to have a merging traffic sign on the right side of I-80. Then traffic would know that when they go under that overpass, there will be cars getting on the freeway.

Planning Director Osborne: The next chapter to get rolled out is Cultural Resources. We don't have the resources yet to write a comprehensive cultural resources plan. Right now the cultural resource chapter deals with everything from the Comstock Historic District to the petroglyphs and other archeological sites in the county. I'd like to spend the next year or two developing or updating the existing cultural resources plan with this planning commission, the Comstock Historic District, Rock Art Foundation and other groups that have been involved in historic preservation planning. The initial chapter will lay the foundation for a future comprehensive plan. The existing mining ordinance created by this commission has findings that were developed in many workshops, and those findings should be integrated into this element of the master plan.

Vice-Chairman Hindle: Mining is a part of the cultural resources chapter?

Planning Director Osborne: Cultural Resources is not mining. Mining is in the land use chapter. The current Master Plan recognizes the detriment that unregulated mining can cause to the historic district's land and structures. The Cultural Resources plan says the county should take direction in preserving the historic district. The existing Master Plan, and the new one with better language, explains that the Historic District's jurisdiction is buildings and structures and that's it, not landscapes or mine tailings. The county needs to fill the gap in order to plan for protecting historic landscapes.

Chairman Tyler: Do we have a fair distribution of cultural resources from Lockwood and Painted Rock. Or are we just focusing on Virginia City?

Planning Director Osborne: No. Historic resources and preservation apply across the county and the issue and will be addressed as such. The mining issues will focus mostly on the Comstock.

Chairman Tyler: I understand, but it's just going to benefit the Comstock since there isn't mining any place else.

Planning Director Osborne: Our mining ordinance really focused on "large operations" mining that requires a special use permit. Certain areas in the Comstock Historic District only allow small operations mining. Large operations mining are not allowed in our residential and commercial-residential areas.

Commissioner Prater: There are several stone buildings that I'm sure no one else but me knows exist.

Chairman Tyler: There's got to be other historical areas in the county other than just Virginia City.

Planning Director Osborne: There are, and many of them are identified in archaeological plans completed over the past several decades. There are substantial documents referenced in our existing Master Plan that are probably very relevant today. They just need to be updated.

Planner VanHavel: How old are those walls around the petroglyphs?

Planning Director Osborne: Believed that they are between 9,000 and 14,000. The walls were likely associated with a nearby native encampment.

- 7. Discussion Only/No Possible Action (Future Planning Items):** Discussion and comments from the planning commission, staff, and the public regarding proposals for planning issues to be potentially addressed in future planning commission meetings. Public participation is encouraged.

Staff and commissioners agreed that this item was sufficiently covered in Agenda Item 6 discussion.

8. **Discussion/Possible Action:** Determination of next planning commission meeting.

Motion: Next planning commission meeting to be **tentatively** held on January 21, 2015 at the Virginia City Highlands Fire Station training room at 6:00 p.m., **Action:** Approve, **Moved by** Vice Chairman Hindle, **Seconded by** Commissioner Smith, **Vote:** Motion carried by unanimous vote (**summary:** Yes=6).

9. **Discussion/Possible Action:** Approval of claims – None

10. **Correspondence (No Action)** – None

11. **Public Comment (No Action)** – None

12. **Staff (No Action):**

Planning Director Osborne: No update on the cell tower in the Highlands.

Update on TRIC companies:

- The Fulcrum waste separation building will be implementing dark sky lighting to mitigate potential impacts on the nearby Lockwood community. This facility will initially be separating recyclable materials before the TRI fuel production plant is built.
- Aqua Metals at TRI Center is about a quarter done. They recycle lead acid batteries with no emissions. They are going to hire approximately 70 people at that facility.
- AZZ Galvanizing at TRI Center will be hiring about 70 people. They are about 75% finished.
- Renown Urgent Care will be going in at TRI Center. There will be a dentist next door.
- Switch's pad is being poured. They will have a million square feet of data servers going in over the year.
- Tesla is in partial production.

Commissioner Prater: The new FAST bill that was passed – can any of that money be used for USA Parkway?

Planner VanHavel: NDOT doesn't want to federalize USA Parkway.

Chairman Tyler: What would be the difference between the way it is now, and federalizing it?

Planner VanHavel: It's not up to the federal standards; it would have to be redone.

Planning Director Osborne: We are in the process of getting a USDA rural utility service grant to replace all of the water line that goes from 5 Mile Reservoir to the water treatment plant. Right now it's in an Environmental Assessment (EA) phase under NEPA. We may be digging by March. Also in March we are digging up all the streets in Virginia City in phases to put in new sewer lines. This town is going to be under construction for a year.

13. **Board Comments (No Action)** -

Chairman Tyler: We had a set-back with the community garden in Lockwood. Piping was buried inadvertently by the county. Thousands of dollars' worth of equipment that was put in by volunteers is now underground. I would have pulled the pipes myself had I known.

14. **Adjournment (No Action)** - The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

By _____
Lyndi Renaud