

MINUTES
Springerville & Eagar Joint Council Meeting
Springerville Town Council Chambers
418 E. Main Street, Springerville, AZ 85938
June 29, 2011
6:00 P.M.

Springerville Council Present: Eric Baca, Mayor
Dan Muth,
Connie Hunt,
Susie Silva

Eagar Council Present: Kim Holaway, Mayor
Steve Erhart
Byron Smith
Debbie Rogers

Springerville Staff Present: Steve West, Town Manager
Valentina Cordova, Town Clerk
Linda Matthews, Casa Malpais

Eagar Staff Present: Bill Greenwood, Town Manager
Eva Wilson, Town Clerk

Public Present: Becki Christensen Chamber Director, Steve Christensen, Michael Whiting County Attorney, Kevin Burk, Carey Dobson and Joe Sitarzewski.

1. Mayor Eric Baca called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Old Business:
 - Wallow Fire update and discussion regarding its economic impact.

Mayor Holaway and Mayor Baca distributed a handout they'd written asking for council input from everyone. Mayor Holaway explained the purpose of this handbook is to present a case to US Senators and Congressman Gosar, Senators McCain, Senator Kyl and Senator Flake.

Councilor Rogers suggested adding verbiage to the 2nd paragraph stating some businesses may not have the financial capability of surviving or recovering".

Vice Mayor Muth suggested that this correspondence be written in the form of a resolution as it would be more positive and affirmative. Everyone agreed it should be on the agenda for both town's next week.

Councilmember Erhart suggested setting up a committee for line items 1 through 4 and expounding on the long term goals and taking the ideas back to each of the councils and bringing them to the joint meetings for action in the hope of being able to get a meeting with the Senators.

Mayor Holaway asked if it would be possible to get the resolution on next week's council meeting agenda. Town Clerk Eva Wilson said it wouldn't be a problem if we could get the attorneys to write it.

Councilmember Hunt asked if there was anything they could do to go in and harvest the trees since they only have a 3 year window. She felt that the Nation needed to know how awful it was to fight a fire with because the forest was in such a terrible condition we couldn't stop it in the wilderness and we need to make resolutions that we won't live like that anymore.

Manager West explained the environmentalist have done a lot of the damage to the forest due to law suits. They have injunctions telling them what they can and can't do. He said he talked to the forest service and they said they would be more than willing to take the council up through the burned areas of the forest. Everyone thought this was a good idea.

Councilmember Silva gave kudos to the Forest Service PIO's for all of the information and support they gave to the communities and we should appreciate them as partners.

Mayor Baca felt that we should take a bigger stance and call our representatives in Washington or local Representatives.

Vice Mayor Muth said the environmentalists are organized and fight a cohesive effort to get things promote their agenda through proper channels. The loggers, ranchers, recreation people need to band together in one cohesive movement to promote a multiple use agenda. By dividing and conquering. With cohesion on both sides the management answer will be. The environmentalists have been fighting as a big cohesive group which is why for the past 25 years one agenda has been promoted through the National Forest. We have to start thinking about this as all Federal lands in our neighborhood.

Mayor Baca said he invited a local rancher to give a presentation tonight along with Game & Fish.

Councilmember Rogers said Barry Williams has put together a DVD and sent it to Congressman Gosar and several other Congressmen showing the treatment treated areas of the forest.

Discussion went back to the handout and the only suggestion was to make the change Councilmember Rogers introduced "if at all".

Vice Mayor Muth, Councilmember Erhart and Mayor Holaway volunteered to work on 1 through four of the long term goals.

Mayor Holaway suggested she and Mayor Baca work on setting up meetings with the Congressman Gosar.

3. NEW BUSINESS:

- Discussion regarding Representative Gosar's request for Wallow Fire Impacts for Use in Congressional Hearings

Town Manager Greenwood said he had a call from the City Manager in Glendale offering their Public Relations department support in the form of a film crew and support system. He wants to tell personal stories about what happened. One person on the film crew has won Emmy's for Newscaster. They will come down as soon as more of the forest is open so they can do a regional approach to include events that will be happening.

Chamber Director Christensen said she talked to them today. She sent them a copy of the calendar of events that include things going on in Alpine and Greer. They were going to do a press release and send it back to her for approval along with a list of media contacts. Cronkite News contacted her today. They did ask about giving discounts if they send media down to cover the events which are available.

Manager Greenwood said their push is to the media as well as the general public. Their message is that "We're still open for business". They would like to visit regarding specifics as soon as we can give them a date to promote the area. They will also put together a documentary for Congressman Gosar to present at the Congressional Hearings on how the environmental policy had an impact on the Wallow Fire with names and faces of people who lost their homes.

Ms. Christensen reported the chamber has had 3 times the number of phone calls from people in the Valley, Oklahoma and Indiana regarding our 4th of July events.

- Presentations/discussion by local ranchers
- Presentation/discussion by Game & Fish. No representatives were present from Game & Fish.

Local rancher Kerry Dobson said they all need to work together. Apache County and the town's need to step up and take their county back and work with the ranchers, loggers and business people. He said the EPA and ESA are killing them through over regulating and now the environmental groups want a seat on a board being put together to see what they need to do here in the next 10 years and guarantees there won't be any ranchers or local government officials that sitting on this board although they should be a part of it. They took away logging and are talking about taking away ranching in the next 5 years along with the possibility of not allowing hunting because of the danger. Currently 80% of the Spotted Owl habitat we had to quit logging for is gone. He said we all have to stand together and fight because no one else is going to help us. He stated that the EPA writes their own bills and no longer have to go through Congress. Congress has the emergency funds to help us. When they find out the Forest Service is allowing tree removal there will be injunctions coming.

Vice Mayor Muth asked if it was possible for Apache County to file a counter suit on the injunctions as friends of the Forest Service if they could prove economic impact or file an Amicus Brief on behalf of the Forest Service for the Stewardship programs if that's what the injunction was filed on.

Joe Sitarzewski said that wasn't possible because an environmental lawsuit is tough to be part of. He explained that the environmental groups look at the Endangered Species Act to find anything that can affect or threaten an endangered species then the courts back it up. He suggested both councils need the Congressional Delegation to pass a bill to exempt this from the things they file lawsuits on.

Mr. Dobson said we need to be proactive in getting a hold of the Congressional Delegations to have them understand the things they are writing on our NEPA's. The things he heard at today's meeting weren't good. There's a lot of areas that will be shut down for a long time and a lot of money sitting out there in timber sales.

Town Manager Greenwood reported there was a meeting last Friday with Representatives from the Forest Service and the Industry saying there is approximately 50,000 acres of salvage logging. They are doing categorical exclusions on all roadways and are trying to work a deal on the Black River with the White Mountain Apache Tribe.

Mayor Holaway reported she and Councilmember Steve Erhart met briefly with the Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and chairperson for the White House Rural Council to Strengthen Rural Communities. They explained to him that both communities are working together on a proposal and told him we would love to be a pilot program. They explained that we met the criteria prior to the Wallow Fire and more so now. Mr. Vilsack was receptive to the idea. They hope to meet with

the elected Senators and Representatives. This program isn't funded yet but they are meeting in July.

Adjournment by Vice Mayor Muth, seconded by Councilmember Hunt. The meeting adjourned at 7:10p.m.