

# WAWONA TOWN PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** Friday, October 29, 2021  
**TIME:** 9 a.m. to Noon  
**LOCATION:** The Redwoods in Yosemite – Conference Room  
8038 Chilnualna Falls Road, Wawona CA 95389

### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Spindler called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Members in attendance: Alton Brown, Chuck Jones, Paul Koubek, Ed Mee, Eugene Spindler and Gary Wuchner.

County staff in attendance: Supervisor Miles Menetrey, Interim Public Works Director Shannon Hansen, Solid Waste Coordinator Sam Cerveney, and DPW Fiscal Officer Mike Pardi.

NPS staff in attendance: Wawona District Ranger Chad Andrews, Chief of Staff Joe Meyer, Realty Officer Joe Llewellyn, Chief of Maintenance Barney Riley.

### 2. Introductions

Committee members, County staff, NPS staff and public introduced themselves.

### 3. Persons wishing to speak on a matter not on the agenda, but within the jurisdiction of the committee. No action will be taken by the Committee. The public will also be given the opportunity to comment before or during the Committee's consideration of the items that are on the agenda.

Pat Sischo –concerned about road maintenance, shoulders and cleaning of culverts. No one came to clean out and prepare before the last storm. Hansen will check in with Roads manager – to see why not happened.

Road crowning – hard surface runoff concerns – washed debris into Washburn Ditch.

Sischo – will county come do booster shots for COVID?

NPS Joe Meyer – booster shots are available in Yosemite Valley. Pfizer currently available.

Mee – would like to revisit allowance for second residences on parcels in Wawona. Prior director said environmental review would be required. Concerned about TOT...could limit TOT approvals to one per parcel.

Williams – environmental review in 1987 precluded. NPS – there are still concerns with sewer and water service capacity.

Jones – Washburn Ditch – concerned with debris in ditch. Has historical significance. Would like to know about potential maintenance.

Spindler – asked about restrooms at flat rock. Is in river plan. Needed...has not had funding in past. With increased visitor attendance, there is additional use in community. American Lands Act may provide funding.

#### **4. Approve Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2019**

Corrections to 2.a – slow to snow.

Motion by Mee / seconded by Soulanille, approve draft minutes with correction.

Approved – 4 ayes

#### **5. Discussion Items / Action may include direction to staff**

##### **a. Wawona Wastewater Treatment System Rehabilitation – Receive Update from NPS**

Facilities manager. Operating fine now. About to commission new water system for golf course.

Llewellyn About 75% done with rehab project. Projected completion date is Memorial Day 2022.

Public – with last rain, system was backed up and residence was flooded with sewage.

NPS will follow up with written information. Garret Chung was supposed to attend to provide detailed information.

##### **b. Wawona Golf Course – Receive Update from NPS and Aramark**

Dave Sischo concerned about condition of golf course. Has not been watered. NPS - golf course is to be fully operational by next summer – 2022. Contingent on contractor. Garret Chung was supposed to be here to make report.

Supervisor Miles – report from Cicely to WAPOA.

##### **c. Community Needs for Water Storage**

Spindler - Water source is Merced River. Concerned if river dries up. Have hauled water in during drought. Billidoux Springs was another potential source of water. IRWIM plan – identified this as project which could be eligible for state funding. However, state may

question approving project if feds should be funding water source. Springs has been determined to be off the table...not possible.

What is NPS doing to address long term drought in community?

Mee - NPS has done projects for their own systems, but there are 27 other private systems which need water storage. Who is responsible if systems go dry? Needs to be planned for.

Public – private systems should be kept private. If river flow falls below 2 cf per second, then rationing should be put in place. Looking forward, with increased tourism and expected continuing drought conditions, need to look for additional funding for water storage.

Wuchner – has study been done to determine which parcels are served by which systems? Would be first place to start. What percentage of community is on private systems?

Roger – County has vested interest. If wells go dry, then would impact TOT.

Mee found USGS document which shows existing wells in community.

Public – should also include existing storage tanks in community.

Menetrey – possibly RCD could help with project. Bootjack just got water storage tank through RCD funding. He will reach out to Melinda Barrett about this to see if any potential help.

Another potential is when senator Feinstein is looking for projects to fund, could add this.

Jones – when water system was installed in 1988, NPS ran lines to each property boundary. For those who tied in, their private water source had to be destroyed.

Wuchner asked about county requirements for tanks. Only if new SFR permit submitted.

Williams offered GIS spreadsheet of parcels in community, property owner names, physical addresses. Community could do start of work to inventory water systems for each. Wuchner offered to be the point person for the survey. Williams will work directly with Wuchner.

Menetrey said that information to back a request for funding will be critical.

#### **d. SDA Camp Wawona project – Receive Update from Camp**

Dennis Kim – just got hired there a few weeks ago. Not a lot of information. Contractor in charge of project has had to shift focus to mono winds damage. Permitting has reached PWD – once approved, can move forward with phase 1.

Spindler provided history of camp permitting.

Williams described permit for removing portions of access road that are off SDA Camp property. Permit has been issued.

Llewellyn – NPS has approved road work project.

Spindler asked about NPS lawsuit for NEPA compliance. Has that happened?

Llewellyn confirmed that comprehensive NPS environmental work for whole project has not yet been completed.

Llewellyn - This project was required due to water tank rupture. Life safety concerns. SDA Camp has not approached the park to do the environmental review work for full project redevelopment.

**e. Recology – Discuss Rate Increase for Trash Pick Up; Possible Separate Accounting/Structure for Residential vs. Commercial Uses (including Vacation Rentals)**

Hansen introduced item. Pardi – looking at financing issues and potential other revenue streams. Have lost residential and commercial customers, which impacts revenue. Once that study is done, can determine whether or not rate increases are necessary. For sure, will not be pine needle and large items pick up this year. Last years fund balance picked up cost for pine needle pick up.

In response to question, Pardi described process for budgeting when NPS or concessionaire picks up privately owned parcel. Pardi needs to review that issue.

Andrews said that NPS properties do not pay into county for services. NPS has their own dumpsters.

Public – questioned why NPS not paying into contract for Recology.

Andrews described situations where garbage is not put into proper dumpster. NPS employees will pick up garbage off the street because it is eyesore. Sometimes doesn't get into correct dumpster.

Mee said there are three separate dumpster systems in Wawona – County/private property owners, NPS and Concessionaire. Too bad we couldn't all work together to have one system of dumpsters.

Hansen said that DPW are looking at uses and impacts. Vacation rentals generate more trash than do privately occupied residences.

Wuchner said on busy weekend, all dumpsters are full. People are driving and looking for places to dispose of their garbage.

Discussed dumpster size and location, number of trips for pick up, cost for pick-up, contract details, alternative companies, ability to use TOT revenue for trash pick-up.

Menetrey – County has list of TOT properties in Wawona. Recognize that there is potential need to charge commercial properties differently than residential properties. Just don't have answers yet as to how this will look.

Hansen discussed organizational challenges; this agenda item has made staff dig into item.

Spindler emphasized importance of transparency.

Menetrey offered to come back to the community with report based on results of study / deep dive. Rates have been the same since 2013/2014. Will come back to community with results of study, before going to BOS with proposed rate increase.

Jones said community is just looking for justification for fees.

Mee requested copy of contract.

Pardi – knows there are 257 residential and 7 commercial current customers. Used to be 278 residential customers.

Public questions - Are concessionaire residences being charged residential fee? They aren't taking their garbage to the Wawona Hotel.

Knows that NPS employees living in Wawona are using "county" dumpsters.

**f. Pine Needle Pick Up – Discuss Discontinuance of Service**

Soulanille doesn't understand why there are funds for pine needle pick up.

Mee – NPS has grant to pick up downed fuel. That is different than pine needle pick up.

Jones – could there be one year assessment to cover storm needle pick up?

Pine needle pick up is usually in June.

County will come back to community with detailed information and justification for potential rate increase.

**g. Hazardous Waste Pick Up – Discuss Prior Service**

Menetrey doesn't remember that this service ever being provided in past. All agreed. No further study will occur on this item.

**h. Large Item Pick Up – Discuss Prior Service**

Large item pick up is usually in October.

County will come back to community with detailed information and justification for potential rate increase to include large roll off for large items one time per year.

**i. Redistricting Project – Receive Update from County Staff**

Williams provided report on redistrict process. She described the future public hearings next week on Monday and Tuesday. She described changes to Wawona, in each of the four options. All move Wawona into District 1. Williams pointed out changes in population figures from 2010 to 2020. She talked about Census Designated Places boundary changes.

Menetrey welcomed input to Board next week. He is disappointed that Wawona changes to District 1 in all options. He said he will stick with the community on issues he's worked on, including the Wawona Ambulance Bay and water storage.

Wuchner observed that the communities within the modified District 1 boundaries have significant issues – will be a heavy load for one supervisor.

**j. Update on Wawona Ambulance Bay – Receive Update from District Supervisor**

Menetrey described what he'd done to pursue federal funding for the project. Requested \$350,000. County owns property (2 parcels). He even went to DC. Recently learned that the project was dropped from bill for funding. He said we can try again, should the funding opportunity come back again next year.

Spindler asked if NPS could try to get funding for this project through American Lands Act for maintenance projects.

Andrews responded that this was a possibility.

Meyer – probably means the Great Americas Outdoors Act – passed in late 2020 (GOA). NPS is getting significant \$ for deferred maintenance project backlog. \$640M estimated backlog project at NPS...but is dated information. Projects are coming in 25%+ higher when projects are contracted. Yosemite NP is using this money for projects like campground renovation, Tenaya Road, Glacier Point Road, etc. NPS has about \$3M each year to put into new projects. NPS is reluctant to take on new projects that will increase operational costs.

Andrews stated that new ambulance has not been purchased because there isn't a location to house the equipment.

Discussed potential for other grant funding.

**k. Discuss Process to Change Road Name**

Tad Perkins recently moved to Wawona. His brother Barry Perkins also purchased property. They live on Koon Holler Road. Asked about process to rename road. Not sure about background of name. Koon and Holler are both southern references. Koon is a

disparaging term. Very offensive slur. He asked about criteria for changing road name. Public interest? NPS Superintendent's office would be okay with road name. Concerned about public appearance. Was previously Greeley Mountain for Forest Greeley. Sign has been vandalized. Would like statement of support from NPS and Wawona Community...is about support for inclusionary.

Williams commented on 2 procedural options for moving forward.

B. Perkins agreed that involving property owners would be important. Would rather have action taken by Board. If can't agree, then Board can take action. There can be backlash from the community to persons who are promoting changes. Names of other facilities and communities are being changed to address this.

T. Perkins – they will fully engage the property owners on the road. But recognizes that people don't like change.

Jones lives on Koon Holler Road. He felt that koon was in reference to raccoons. He understands that in this age of political correctness, that this represents community. Could change to Racoon Hollow.

T. Perkins – looked up holler, which may refer to animal habitat. But also can be shallow area with trailers.

Mee said that it is critical to contact all property owners served by road. What was history of name?

Koubek moved here 2 years ago, and he felt that is not our community – not how we talk about here. He felt it was racist.

Public – doesn't matter what intent was one hundred years ago. It is offensive now.

Brown – Could there be any potential impacts to legal descriptions? Is Koon Holler used as legal identification of any properties?

Williams said this is a title issue. Can't answer question today.

Jones has never had a backlash in the 30 years he's lived here. But can imagine it would be case with rentals.

Spindler always felt that name was benign except that spelling used K and not C. County has a process. Get property owners on road involved in process. There's pathway to get to process.

T. Perkins – existing process is Plan A. There is a Plan B too. Looking for endorsement for road name change from WTPAC.

B. Perkins - Is there support from WTPAC, if community doesn't support change? Understands agenda doesn't reference Koon Holler, so community wasn't informed.

Spindler said getting endorsement would be premature if don't have input from others who own property or live on the road.

Williams offered to help get property owners names and addresses for the Perkins.

## **6. Review NPS/County MOU for Wawona – Provide Recommendation for Changes**

Williams described provisions in current MOU for reviewing and amending.

Andrews commented on water service, water treatment, water storage, ambulance building – there's a lot of room for interpretation. Lack of specificity. Who's responsible for wells when they go dry. Concerned about ambiguity and room for interpretation.

Williams commented that, to do good review, need to have the other MOUs

Llewelyn – MOU has expired now and needs to be renewed. Should be brought up to date and address current issues.

Mee suggested another meeting to review this, together with all other MOUs available.

Soulanille asked if other MOUs are available on-line.

Motion by Mee –  
Second by Koubek

Ayes – unanimous.

## **7. WTPAC Election of Officers (annual requirement) – Elect Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary**

Wuchner is willing to take on role as Secretary.  
All members supported Wuchner as Secretary.

Motion by Mee to nominate Spindler as Chair.  
Second by Jones  
Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Spindler to nominate Mee as Vice Chair.  
Second by Wuchner  
Motion passed unanimously.

## **8. Information and Report Items**

### **a. Supervisor, District V**

No report

### **b. Planning Commissioner, District V**



Not in attendance

**c. Wawona District Ranger**

No report

**Adjournment**

Spinischo encouraged meeting to be scheduled soon, to get update on Golf Course and status of WWTP project.

Discussion continued regarding authority of WTPAC.

Mee said let NPS / contractor continue work. See what happens.

Llewellyn is community value – community asset.

Llewellyn – Alan Kunz program permit manager for park. Used to work for Superintendent's office.

Mee  
Brown

Spindler adjourned the meeting at 12:26 p.m.