

**Mono Basin RPAC  
Regional Planning Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020, 6:30 pm, remote/virtual meeting via Zoom**

**Members present:** Lisa Cutting, Bartshe Miller, Elin Ljung, Chris Lizza, Duncan King, Ilene Mandelbaum, and Kristie Nelson

**Public Attendees and Presenters:** Virtual attendees list filed by staff. Please contact Bentley Regehr, if needed ([bregehr@mono.ca.gov](mailto:bregehr@mono.ca.gov))

1. **Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance: 6:31pm**
2. **Public Comment:** none
3. **Review minutes from August:** one small correction was made. Ilene made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Lisa seconded and motion passed unanimously.
4. **Supervisor Gardner's report:** the Board recently passed their budget. They are still working on balancing the structure of the budget so that amounts and needs allocated to each category match up. County owned Lundy campground recently was closed down to be consistent with the closure of the Inyo National Forest for fire concerns. Humboldt-Toiyabe NF is closing after tonight. There's still unfinished areas in Mono for the US Census – Mono Co. has the lowest census polling returns in the state. The Mono City dumpster is full again and Bob has been working on having it emptied. Mono Lake volunteers staffed an outdoor table at the Mono Basin Visitor Center which had 100 – 400 visitors per day. They gave out a lot of information.
5. **Chair Report:** Duncan didn't have any big issues – no fire safe council meeting yet this month.
6. **Members reports:** Chris: announced the Mono Market sale finally transferred after a long escrow. The Planning Commission has 2 workshops planned on updated climate and safety issues to incorporate new state laws on second home units. There's more info on the PC website. Lisa: Thanked Bob and the Board of Supervisors in activating fire prohibitions on county property. Bartshe: announced the Mono Lake Committee is planning to open the bookstore and information center 3 days/week. Also, together with the Ca. State Parks they removed the old steel posts from the 1970's era chain link fence that tried to protect gulls nesting on Negit Island from Coyotes and single steel posts remained and were hazards to boaters. There was also some illegal activity at DeChambeau Ponds that will be addressed at Inyo NF update. Ilene, Kristie, and Elin did not have anything to report.
7. **Inyo National Forest Update:** INF is closed to all public entry, day use, campgrounds and dispersed camping to drastically reduce fire hazards. Information booths remain open and there are potties at those. Someone messed with valves and gates at the DeChambeau Ponds.
8. **2020 election update:** Shannon Kendall and her assistant provided an update on the general election which is held by mail. Ballots go out Oct. 5 and are easy to return: at the P.O, any of the polling drop boxes, or returned in person at a polling site. Remember to sign the ballot so it counts. Bar codes on your ballot can be tracked in transit from their website. They are still looking for poll site workers, if interested contact them at [elections@mono.ca.gov](mailto:elections@mono.ca.gov).
9. **SCE update:** deferred to next month, as Ray wasn't available.
10. **Mono City Access Rd:** Bob checked in with Tony Dublino on this. County has held up their responsibilities on this, and both this road and the south going Blue Lake road that connects to

Cemetery rd. are BLM roads. Bartshe reported that someone had put a paddlelock on the gate of the primary exit road to 167. It's been cut, but this is pretty bad! There are also complaints about quad use that has degraded the road and sandy parts are worse on the south exit road in particular. This exit road should be accessible if needed to 2WD vehicles, and it may not be right now. Someone getting stuck and blocking the road during a fire would be bad. Deanna Dulen spoke up and emphasized the negative ecological impacts of offroad use in this area, including increasing amounts of tumbleweed. She also didn't like the noise and impacts of all the ATV use, and reports that other community members agree. In sum, both the exit roads to 167 and Cemetery Rd need to be properly maintained and in good condition. Right now the south road that connects to Cemetery Rd probably needs to be checked out and graded which is probably jurisdiction of BLM. Agreements with the BLM on maintaining these roads may need to be brought up again.

11. **RPAC's role in specific plans:** A long conversation ensued about the role of the RPAC in regard to specific plans, and in particular with the Tioga Inn project. Can or should the RPAC provide recommendations or take a stance on that project or others like it? Wendy provided background on RPAC roles and procedures. The RPAC serves in an advisory role to help set the policies and regulations which the Planning Commission, whose authority is set forth in State law, then uses to evaluate development projects. To bring a project before the RPAC as well would duplicate the process, which the County does not currently have the capacity to support. However, RPACs have input and awareness from the local community which is critical for local issues, and the PC is county-wide and has less local perspective. This is important and should have an adequate way of being communicated, which may be limited in public comment periods at PC meetings, etc.

Several RPAC members feel strongly that the Tioga Inn project violates the Community Plan, and is thus highly relevant for the RPAC to comment on. These members discussed their feelings of disillusionment and questioned the relevance of the RPAC. The discussion also included a desire to weigh in early on projects, such as during the development of a project. Wendy reminded the RPAC that everyone can comment individually or as any type of community group outside of the RPAC structure, and clarified that County staff does not develop or design projects. County staff is not part of the project development phase either, and is in a position of reacting to a project proposal submitted by the applicant. A developer or applicant could voluntarily choose to involve the community in their design process and would run their own process to do so, but it is not required as part of the County process and therefore cannot be required by the County.

The discussion ended with ideas of reinvigorating the RPAC through increased collaboration with other groups, increased participation, and though re-visiting and up-dating the Community Plan. This could be refreshing and help bring clarity to this topic. Further discussion on RPAC roles could continue.

12. **Covid update:** Limited inside dining in restaurants is being allowed, but employers must require self-certification that employees are not sick. Lee Vining Cares is doing well and needs are being monitored.
13. **Information Items:** Someone asked about the 3 RV spaces being requested in a previous permit application. The request is on a large 40 to 80 acre parcel to have 3 small, dry campsites, but it

does need a general plan amendment and permit. County is working on it and it will then go to the Planning Commission and BoS. Still no new date for Tioga Inn meeting, probably early Oct. The Highlands in June Lake has a specific plan modification for short term rentals, and there is a proposal to develop 12 new housing units/apartment in June Lake. Shelley's gas station in Lee Vining will get a new shell sign.

14. **Future Agenda Items:** Pedestrian connectivity, SCE update with Ray, Fire Safe, and at some point (not necessarily next month+) take a fresh look at the community plan.

Adjourn 8:43pm      Respectfully submitted Kristie Nelson, secretary.