



JOINT MEETING
Taos County Board of Commissioner's & Town of Taos Council
Historical County Court House
121 North Plaza, Taos, New Mexico
Monday April 14, 2008
9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

I. Call to Order: Chairman Charlie I. Gonzales, Mayor Bobby Duran

The meeting was called to order at 9:25 a.m.

II. Roll Call: Taos County Clerk Elaine Montaña

Present were:

Daniel Barrone, Commissioner District I
Charlie I. Gonzales, Commissioner District II
Nicklos Jaramillo, Commissioner District IV
Joe M. Duran, Commissioner District V

Mayor Bobby Duran
Rudy Abeyta, Councilmember
Darren Cordova, Councilmember
Eugene Sanchez, Councilmember
Amy Quintana, Councilmember

Absent were:

Gabriel Romero, Commissioner District III

Also Present were:

Julia Valerio, County Manager	Renee Barela-Gutierrez, Town Attorney
Sammy L. Pacheco, County Attorney	Jack Valencia, NCRTD
Elaine Montaña, County Clerk	Josette Lucero, NCRTD
Valerie Rael, County Transcriber	Pat Chambers, Taos News
Abigail Adame, Interim Town Manager	Carlos Cisneros, State Senator
Victor Robles, Taos County Project Manager	Roberto Gonzales, State Representative

III. Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Senator Carlos Cisneros

IV. Approval of Agenda:

Vice-Chairman Daniel Barrone made a motion to approve the agenda of Monday, April 14, 2008. Commissioner Joe M. Duran seconded. The Council and Commission were all in favor of the motion.

V. Citizens Forum: Wholly Rags- Melissa Larson

Ms. Melissa Larson informed the Commission and Council that at the previous Joint Meeting she provided the Commission and Council with some information regarding recycling in Taos County. Ms. Larson informed the Commission that her organization is requesting a building in which to place a recycling center. Ms. Larson suggested that the Town and County impose a tax for the use of plastic bags at the stores in order to reduce the use of the plastic bags. Ms. Larson is also asking that the Town and County provide a plan and a timeline for recycling in Taos County. There is a big concern with the increased use of the landfill and the amount of trash that is being dumped at the landfill. Ms. Larson believes that the County needs to discontinue the use of the punch-cards that are used at the landfill and increase the fee at the landfill and also, impose a fee for recycling in order to help fund the recycling program. Ms. Larson informed the Council and Commission that there are many organizations and individuals involved in wanting to recycle in Taos County.

Mayor Bobby Duran informed the representatives that were present from NMDOT that he had been aware of plastic being mixed in with asphalt in order to repair roads in the state of California. Mayor Duran asked if that could be possibility in Taos County.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT informed the Commission and the Council that he also is aware of project that allows the use of plastic to be mixed with asphalt in order to repair roads. However, Mr. Ortiz stated that the cost for something of that magnitude is high.

Mayor Bobby Duran informed the Commission and audience that the Town Attorney was directed to researching and possibly creating a banning ordinance for the use of plastic bags in the city limits.

Ms. Renee Barela-Gutierrez, Town Attorney informed the Commission and the Council that she has researched the possible ways to ban the use of plastic bags. Ms. Barela-Gutierrez stated that there are many different levels on how to go about passing an Ordinance to that affect. Ms. Barela-Gutierrez informed the Commission and audience that discussions regarding the possible Ordinance would be held at the Council meeting which will be held the evening of Tuesday, April 15, 2008.

Councilor Eugene Sanchez informed the Commission and Council that plastic bags are just part of the problem, there is also the use of plastic bottles and that also needs to be looked at closely.

Ms. Melissa Larson informed the Commission and Council that her organization would like to begin collecting plastic bags to recycle as soon as possible.

Councilor Eugene Sanchez suggested that the Town and County work jointly in keeping the sides of the roads clean and clear of plastic bags and bottles.

Councilor Darren Cordova suggested that some sort of incentive be established for the public in order to increase the amount of recycling and be successful with the project. Councilor Cordova also suggested that the media also get involved in order to educate the public on how important it is to recycle.

Mr. Roberto Gonzales, State Representative informed the Commission, Council and audience that the first step is to educate the youth and start in our schools from kindergarten up.

Vice-Chairman Daniel Barrone informed the Council that the Commission has had discussion regarding possibly acquiring some land at the landfill and would like to also discuss it with the Council at some point.

Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo informed the Commission and Council that the County has been looking at various ways to improve the use of the landfill. Commissioner Jaramillo stated that it also a good idea to include all the municipalities on the use of the landfill. Commissioner Jaramillo recommended that a Joint Advisory Board be established in order to get various opinions and ideas.

Mr. Robert Gonzales, State Representative informed the Council, Commission and audience that the Taos landfill has been rated the best in the state and Mr. Gonzales commended the landfill for that high rating.

VI. Joint Matter for Discussion and Possible Action:

A. Discussion on Proposed Traffic Light off Hwy 68 & Albright St.-Deputy Manager Victor Robles, DOT Deputy Secretary Robert Ortiz

Mr. Victor Robles, Taos County Project Manager informed the Council and Commission that the plans for the proposed complex are about 50% completed. Mr. Robles informed the Commission and Council that the discussion today is in regards to a possible traffic light off of highway 68 and Albright Street. Mr. Robles stated that the issue with placing a traffic light is the funding. Mr. Robles also stated that with the new complex and

having the Magistrate courts and District Attorney's office in the Judicial complex will increase the amount of traffic.

Mr. Carlos Cisneros, State Senator asked what the estimated cost would be to place a traffic light at the intersection of Albright Street and Hwy 68.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT informed the Council, Commission and Senator Cisneros that first a traffic study would be needed, which would indicate if a temporary signal would be needed, which is estimated to cost \$200,000 to \$300,000. However, if the traffic study indicates that a permanent signal light is needed, the estimated cost would range from \$1million to \$1.5 million.

Mr. Carlos Cisneros, State Senator, asked who is responsible to fund the placement of the traffic light, the state or the community.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT stated that the state would be partially responsible to fund the placement of a traffic light. Mr. Ortiz also stated the project is currently not a funded project.

Mr. Carlos Cisneros, State Senator asked what the process is for earmarking funding for this project.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT stated that a signal analysis needs to be conducted in order to indicate if a signal light is needed. Once it is determined that a signal light is needed, the project will be placed on the priority list with the state.

Mayor Bobby Duran asked if the engineering of the intersection has been done.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT informed the Commission and Council that yes, the engineering for the intersection had taken place several years ago.

Mayor Bobby Duran asked if would be possible to place stop signs in place of a traffic light.

Mr. John McElroy, NMDOT informed the Commission and Council that stop signs would not be feasible at the intersection due to the heavy amount of traffic.

Mr. Roberto "Bobby" Gonzales, State Representative asked how difficult and cost wise it would be to move from a temporary traffic light to a permanent traffic light.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT stated that a temporary traffic light and a permanent traffic light are two separate projects.

Mr. Roberto "Bobby" Gonzales, State Representative suggested that a permanent traffic light would be the best option right away in order to avoid loss of monies.

Mr. John McElroy, NMDOT informed the Commission and Council that about 50% of the temporary traffic light can be salvaged and used for the permanent traffic light.

Mr. Roberto “Bobby” Gonzales, State Representative asked how partnerships with the local businesses would work with the project.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT explained that the local businesses would be contacted for contributions for the project.

Councilor Darren Cordova informed the Council and Commission that he understands that a traffic light is already warranted and asked if the state could fund the complete project.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT explained that there are other routes to research, such as turning lanes for example. Mr. Ortiz also stated that costs will continue to increase and also indicated to the Council and Commission that the state would not be held responsible for the funding of project.

Councilor Darren Cordova recommended moving forward with the project and work on a design for a permanent traffic light.

Mr. Roberto “Bobby” Gonzales, State Representative asked if would be possible to list this project under the School Bus Route fund for funding of the project.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT informed the Council and Commission that yes, this project could be placed on the School Bus Route funding.

Mr. John McElroy, NMDOT informed the Council and Commission that they can place the project on the School Bus Route funding, however he does not recommend it because that funding would be taken away from other school bus routes in the Taos County.

Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo informed the Commission and Council that there needs to be collaboration between the state, county and town regarding this project.

Mr. Victor Robles, Project Manager asked NMDOT if the easements would be included in the estimated amount of \$1million.

Mr. John McElroy, NMDOT informed the Commission and Council that the estimated amount would be to plan, design and construct the project.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT informed the Council and Commission that it would be logical to place a temporary signal light first.

Mr. Carlos Cisneros, State Senator asked if the state would be able to fund a temporary signal light.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT informed the Council and Commission that it would be easier for the state to get funding in the amount of \$300,000 rather than the amount of \$1 million for a permanent traffic light.

Mr. Carlos Cisneros, State Senator requested the estimates from NMDOT in order to submit a letter to the Governor regarding the need for traffic light however, Mr. Cisneros would rather place a permanent signal light rather than a temporary traffic light.

Chairman Charlie I. Gonzales asked NMDOT how it would be possible to move this project up on the states priority list.

Mr. Robert Ortiz, NMDOT informed the Council and Commission that the meeting that is taking place today was the first step because all entities are jointly involved.

Mr. Francisco “French” Espinoza, Town Public Works informed the Council and Commission that the Town had an engineer in the past who did the engineering work for the project on Albright and highway 64 however, the engineer did not provide the necessary corridors that are needed by NMDOT. Mr. Espinoza stated that highway 64 was designed as a 1-way and he believes that would be the best solution he believes. Mr. Espinoza informed the Council and Commission that there are records available in his office if the Commission or Council would like to view them.

Councilor Rudy Abeyta stated that the public has never been in favor of the 1 way on highway 64. Councilor Abeyta recommended that a realignment of highway 64 be considered.

The Council and Commission thanked NMDOT for being present at the meeting and answering the questions that were brought to their attention.

Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo also thanked NMDOT for their open door policy.

The Council and the Commission took a 15 minute break at 11:04 a.m. and returned to regular session at 11:21 a.m.

B. North Central Regional Transportation District- Josette Lucero, Executive Director

Ms. Josette Lucero, Executive Director provided and explained a packet that she provided to the Council and Commission pertaining to the NCRTD.

Ms. Linda Calhoun, Red River Mayor informed Ms. Lucero that the Enchanted Circle is a very important area and asked how the routes would be funded.

Ms. Josette Lucero, Executive Director informed the Mayor of Red River that the local match would have to come from the budgets of the participating municipalities.

Mr. Sammy L. Pacheco, County Attorney informed the Council that he forwarded 2 resolutions and the NCRTD contract to the surrounding municipalities that the County will be considering for adoption at their Regular Commission meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 15, 2008.

Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo stated that he is aware that if the 3/16 GRT is implemented, Taos County will generate \$1.1 million and he also understands that there is no sunset period on the GRT. The GRT implementation is not based on county but is based on district. So for example, if the Taos residents vote to not pass the GRT and the residents of Santa Fe pass the GRT, the GRT will still be imposed on the Taos County residents. Commissioner Jaramillo is concerned that once grants are slowly taken away, routes will be cut and there is no guarantee on what routes will remain in the Taos County vicinity.

Mayor Bobby Duran asked what would happen if Taos County decided to withdraw from NCRTD.

Ms. Josette Lucero, Executive Director stated that if Taos County decides to withdraw from NCRTD then that would be the bus services would no longer exist.

Mayor Bobby Duran stated that the question that needs to be asked today is, "Do we want rural transit in Taos or not"?

Councilor Rudy Abeyta informed the Commission and Council that rural transit is a good concept however, Council Abeyta is concerned with the increase of the GRT to the residents of Taos County. Councilor Abeyta stated that right now he does not support the GRT and recommends that the Commission strongly consider withdrawing from the NCRTD and then work together jointly on a local plan.

Councilor Eugene Sanchez asked how the trip schedules were determined in each area.

Ms. Josette Lucero, Executive Director informed the Council and Commission that proposed trip schedules were determined by the need of each the areas.

Councilor Darren Cordova stated that rural transportation will become more and more important as time progresses due to the high rising gas prices. Public transportation will be needed either way.

Chairman Charlie I. Gonzales informed the Council and Commission that he is glad that there has been discussion on this important matter and believes that this program is very beneficial especially to the elderly.

Mr. Roberto "Bobby" Gonzales, State Representative informed the Council and Commission that this program needs to be looked at in a positive manner and also, consider what the needs of the residents are.

C. Public Restrooms at Old County Courthouse– Mauro Rosales, Buildings Director

Councilor Eugene Sanchez and Councilor Darren Cordova provided plans and explained to the Council and Commission the possible ideas for renovating the Old Courthouse building. The Councilors are also suggesting a long term contract from the County in regards to the Old County Courthouse.

Ms. Julia Valerio, County Manager asked what would happen to the current tenants in the Old County Courthouse.

Councilor Eugene Sanchez informed Ms. Valerio that the current tenants would have to vacate the building, but not immediately. Councilor Sanchez informed the Council and Commission that the building needs to be brought up to code.

Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo stated that he is in support of the project, however he would like a timeline of what will be taking place and the expected completion date of the renovation.

Councilor Eugene Sanchez informed the Commission that a timeline is a good idea however, an architect is needed first in order to determine a definite timeline.

Mayor Bobby Duran stated that he feels that the renovation is a good idea and recommends working together jointly in order to acquire funding for the project.

Councilor Darren Cordova thanked Councilor Sanchez for the plans that he provided and stated that the Commissions input is needed in order to move this project forward.

Chairman Charlie I. Gonzales asked the Commission to strongly consider the project in order to move forward and provide a historic site for Taos County.

Vice-Chairman Daniel Barrone thanked Councilor Sanchez for the great suggestions and recommends moving forward with the proposal as a joint effort. Vice-Chairman Barrone also recommended a long term contract with the Town of Taos.

VII. Proposed Date of Next Meeting: April 30, 2008 a.m. Town of Taos Council Chambers

The Taos County Manager and Town of Taos Interim Manager will work together to determine when and where the next Joint Meeting will be held.

VIII. Adjournment

Council Darren Cordova made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo seconded. The Council and Commission were all in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.