

Webinar Highlights

Munds Park Equipment Barn Committee

Wednesday, September 9th, 2020: 10:00 – 11:00 am

ZOOM Webinar

Committee Members Present: *Tom Eade, Wes Deam, Walt Brodzinski, Gail VanDeurzen, Bud Alter, Roy Levenda, Dick Drinen, Everette Worfolk, Joe Holcombe, Scott Bowen, Cat Klein, Sandee Caviness*

Coconino County Staff: *Lucinda Andreani, Eslir Musta, Jeff Stein, Jeremy Floyd, Shaun Pooyouma and Gregory Nelson.*

Guests:

- *Josh Tope, Pinewood Fire*
- *Gerrit Boeck, Coconino County Sheriff Deputy Lieutenant*
- *Matt McGrath, United States Forest Service*
- *Bridget Roth, United States Forest Service*
- *Dierdre McLaughlin, United States Forest Service*

1. Welcome and introductions – Tom Eade

- a. The webinar was streamed through Zoom and YouTube for the public to view. The link for the webinar video is available on the Munds Park Equipment Barn webpage at www.coconino.az.gov/MundsParkEquipmentBarn
- b. Members of the public can submit comments/questions via email at mundsparkbarn@gmail.com
- c. (4) Additional questions were received since last meeting.
- d. Restatement of Charter and Objectives, affirmation of commitment from members in accordance with Charter and Objectives
- e. Review of communications resources
- f. Introductions: Matt McGrath, United States Forest Service, District Ranger, Coconino National Forest, Flagstaff Ranger District

2. Presentation by United States Forest Service (USFS) – Matt McGrath, District Ranger, Coconino National Forest

- a. Staff Introductions: Bridget Roth, Public Services Staff Officer, Dierdre McLaughlin, Land and Minerals Special Uses Program Manager
- b. Overview – Matt McGrath
- c. USFS Process – Matt McGrath, Dierdre McLaughlin, Bridget Roth
 - i. Description of how Special Use Permit applications are received, considered and administered
 - ii. Examples of similar SUP projects
 - iii. Specifics of the retracted Coconino County application

1. Initial “Pre-Application” reviewed with no disqualifying resource or impacts identified
2. Began NEPA process, the first step of which is “Scoping of the Public” which is where this project was at when opposing comments were received and the application was retracted by the County.

3. Questions from the Committee Members during the presentation:

****Detailed answers from the Forest Service can be found on the meeting video located at:***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yz1Ac5sBag> (video time: 00:10:00 - 01:07:02)

A summary of the conversation is below:

- a. How was list of residents established by the USFS for outreach?
 - i. The decision was that those in the immediate area, with a view of the proposed location would be the most effected, therefore letters were sent to those owners.*
- b. How was the timeline for start of work at Hillside established?
 - i. The timeline was established by the County.*
- c. Is there a requirement for the County to notify residents of a proposed projects?
 - i. No, there is not a County requirement for notification.*
- d. Why was the Hillside sight option not divulged at community meetings over the last two years?
 - i. The Hillside site only became an option within approximately the last year and as a result of discussions with the USFS indicating that sites adjacent to developed areas, not islands out in the forest, were preferred. The candidate locations in the past were off FS240; Hillside was not an option at the time of those meetings.*
- e. Can the USFS address some of the concerns with the barn as it relates to impacts on natural or cultural resources or other threats, such as wildfire, given that these types of facilities are fairly common at other USFS locations, such as Grand Canyon?
 - i. This project was reviewed according to FS requirements and based on the initial review there were no “red flags” identified with respect to natural or cultural resources, or other threats such as wildfire. Additionally, the USFS Special Use Permit provides for strict design standards for these types of facilities and includes provisions for annual inspections to verify that the use is consistent with the terms of the permit.*
- f. We would like to further discuss the “need” for the project. Can the County/stakeholders provide more information and clarity as to the need for this project?

- i. The FS is not involved in making a determination of “need” for the project. That is for the current community process to determine. If determined there is a need, then the project would be run through the standard FS process to either advance or decline moving in forward.*
- g. If there were years to go in the process, how was construction to be scheduled to start June 2020 to be completed by summer 2021?
 - i. Addressed in previous questions.*
- h. What is the process for the USFS for allowing the County or other entity to have a 500-gallon diesel tank, or 1000-gallon propane tank located in the forest when it comes to safety and environmental reasons?
 - i. Whatever improvements are requested by the applicant are included in the application. The FS evaluates these based on requirements and standards.*
- i. Is there any other equipment barn in the State of Arizona that has caused a forest fire or any environmental spill or other environmental issue?
 - i. FS does not have any recollection or example of this type of issue occurring.*
- j. Would the County be able to purchase any land in the future? (from USFS)
 - i. Initially the FS was proposing the County purchase FS land. After significant discussion the direction was to stay with a Special Use Permit model. The County does not have budget to purchase land at this time.*
- k. What is the cost right now of the project, as proposed?
 - i. ~We are at a very conceptual stage, ~\$500-\$600k was the budget. Those funds have been swept indefinitely as a result of COVID-19.*
- l. How would this barn be used in support during an emergency as during a fire or flood? (Greg Nelson)
 - i. It would provide capacity for the County and partners to utilize the facility for a fire or flood event.*
- m. Has there ever been a time when you (Pinewood Fire Dept.) have not been able to respond to an incident because of snow removal?
 - i. Within Munds Park no. There have been delays, but there has never been a time when we could not respond to an incident.*
- n. Why is an environmental study not need to be completed when the site is under 5 acres (on USFS property)?
 - i. Assessment is based on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. There is a provision that for under 5 acres of disturbance do not require an “environmental assessment” which is the more traditional and detailed study. This does not mean that a study is not completed, just that project under 5 acres of disturbed area require a lesser standard of review.*

- o. Does this facility in Munds Park cover Foxboro?
 - i. *Not specifically answered.*
- p. Is there really a need for the barn, or is it a “nice thing to have”?
 - i. *To be addressed at the next meeting in more detail.*

4. Questions received from the website:

- a. If there were years to go in the process, how was a construction schedule to start June 2020, to be completed by Summer/Fall 2021? This question was addressed during the meeting.
- b. Can the forest service explain how the Townsite Act works regarding the County being open to purchasing a parcel in the future. The Townsite Act is a law that allows local municipalities to purchase federally owned property. Any municipality can submit an application to the federal agency for purchase. The agency makes a decision to accept the proposal, followed by a determination of public benefit. If the determination is made that there is a public benefit, then the agency proceeds with an environmental review (under NEPA), as well as ensuring compliance with other laws, regulations and policies, to make a final decision about the proposed transaction. If the decision supports the transaction, then the municipality purchases the property (or some subset) from the agency.
- c. In summary, this process, if we proceed, will take 3-5 years to begin, correct? The 3-5 year duration is primarily a function of anticipated available budgets, and as a result of reduced Capital Project funding due to COVID-19 impacts. Also, I still do not understand the need and why the current Schnebly Hills location does not suffice any longer. One of the primary drivers of the project is safety. The Schnebly Hill site requires equipment to access Munds Park via I-17. This requires slow moving equipment to share the highway with high speed traffic during a snow event causing a hazardous condition for both our operators and the traveling public. I apologize if I missed that info, if conveyed. Never received a letter either. From a year-round resident with our cabin off Pinewood-240 and the Forest. Thank you.

5. Items Tabled for Future Webinars

- a. Answers to questions received online.
- b. Request to provide more information on the need for the Barn.
- c. Evaluation for how barns have function at other County locations.
- d. Presentation on services and need for barn from:
 - i. Pinewood Fire
 - ii. County Sheriff
 - iii. FUSD

6. Any other discussions: Next Meeting is October 14th, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.