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President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 788
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November 28th, 2009

To Prairie Hills Audubon Society (PHAS) Members in Meade County or others interested in Bear Butte Area,

Prairie Hills Audubon Society supports the protection of Bear Butte Lake National Wildlife Refuge and Bear Butte Mountain from adverse impacts of inappropriate development in the area.

This note discusses 4 Meade issues that will be before the Meade Commission in the next months:
Alcohol permits, Sturgis by-pass, Open Government, Comprehensive Plan

DISCUSSION ON BEAR BUTTE AND ALCOHOL LICENCES RENEWAL-RELOCATION

Every December the Meade County Commission (MCC) votes to renew hard liquor licenses – called “on-sale” or “off-sale” liquor licenses. This year the hearing will be Wednesday Dec 2nd at 3:00 pm. Someone from PHAS generally goes to testify against some of the licenses; opposing licenses for facilities that are near the Mountain/Lake, although such licenses are generally approved. Some of these licenses facilitate and help support large facilities that cater to large Rally crowds, which are disruptive of the area, and we believe inappropriate development around the Mountain/Lake.

Some of the Commissioners are concerned that some large Rally campground/bar venues pay agricultural taxes, not commercial taxes and seek to change that and MCC will discuss that the morning of Dec 3rd at 8:30 am.

This year the City of Sturgis is in the process of annexing land area along Bear Butte Creek, from the BLM property sweeping east to properties that include Kickstart, Monkey Rock, Full Throttle and parts of Glencoe. The County is fighting this City effort via litigation.

Full Throttle Saloon and Campground, wishes to move (transfer) their on-sale license to a location to the NE of Bear Butte. This will allow them to escape City jurisdiction and expenses and will place the new facility in an agricultural area accessed by a gravel road. We will oppose this transfer as it will result in large Rally Venues to the NE in an area that currently does not have such development, and if approved we will have Rally venues to the NE, NW, SE, S of Bear Butte, encircling the Mountain with large Rally venues.

We (PHAS) sometimes schedule a get together after the yearly alcohol license hearing – and will have one this Dec 2nd after the hearing. (scroll down to the end of letter for info).

DISCUSSION OF I-90 to Hwy 79 By-Pass issue.

The Meade County Commission has supported building a by-pass from I-90 at exit 37 (Pleasant Valley) to the junction of Highway 79 & 34. At first it negotiated with the State DOT, expecting the state to build the by-pass and do environmental studies and get permits. The SD DOT has been working on the studies but does not have the money to build the road, nor was building it ever a high priority.

This summer the Commission, tired of waiting on the State, approved the County's building the road itself and funded a study to investigate building the road, but did not fund construction. The State in response then suspended DOT's environmental studies. SD DOT and the FHWA have informed the County that if it proceeds to build the road without the completion of various procedures, such as NHPA compliance, the County will never receive federal funding for this route alignment. This Nov. Meade Commission approved the County's staff to investigate costs of right of way acquisition.

There is and always has been substantial opposition to this by-pass. People oppose for many reasons, such as high cost, other funding priorities, route construction difficulties, safety, resulting development of east Sturgis, impacts to Bear Butte & Bear Butte lake and/or adverse impacts to local area, wildlife and cultural resources. Others worry about alleged corruption, influence and/or who the road truly benefits.

, Prairie Hills Audubon Society opposes the by-pass at this time, at least until there is a wise commitment to land use planning by the County, one that adequately protects Bear Butte Mountain and Lake from development pressure. . We also expect better justifications for the road, full compliance with laws, and adequate environmental and cultural mitigations, if the road is ever built.

OPEN GOVERNMENT

Members of the public have been complaining about openness of meetings & sufficiency of Commission agendas. The Deputy States Attorney will discuss laws about this with the Commission on Tuesday, Dec 2 at 3:00 pm.

DISCUSSION ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This is a note about Meade County's attempts to revise it's Comprehensive Plan and perhaps adopt zoning in the I-90 Corridor area.

Some areas of Meade County are experiencing more intense development than others and state law now allows for zoning to be applied to subsets of a county. To address development concerns, zoning in Meade County may be applied to the I-90 Strip and Box Elder first. Separate zoning plans may be developed for the Piedmont, Summerset, Black Hawk and Box Elder areas.

But prior to doing that the County needs to revise its Comprehensive Plan, which this summer was just a 2 page document. The Plan sets the goals, objectives and limits for planning and zoning in the County. A draft revised Comprehensive Plan exists and is 52 pages long, it has been approved by the Meade Planning Board, (11/16/09) and now it must also be approved by the Meade County Commission, . The Meade County Commission will discuss, may consider changes and may vote on this on Jan 5th, 2010 at 4:00 pm . This will also be the first Commission meeting of the year, where they are likely to make committee assignments. Please verify this time/date schedule with staff: Joell Romick <jromick@meadecounty.org>, Bill Rich <brich@meadecounty.org>, or Jennifer Phillips <jphillips@meadecounty.org> as Jan 5th approaches.

Prairies Hills Audubon Society would welcome the input of our members as to what planning and zoning issues our members are concerned about. We assume our members would support protection of Bear Butte, Bear Butte NWR , commitment to conservation and clean'/air water protections, as well as protection of historic and cultural resources and provision for open space, parks, scenery, greenways still etc.

A version of the revised draft Meade Comprehensive Plan (this may still be the Oct 22nd version) is now available on the Prairie Hills Audubon Society (PHAS) web site, thus folks can go there to read it - if you have high speed internet to download it - about 14 MB file. Our web page is:.

<http://www.phas-wsd.org/>

Meade County has the latest version (11/16/09) on their web site, which is a 5.4 MB file

<http://www.meadecounty.org/main.asp?SectionID=59>

For more information and/or a "hard copy" or CD of the draft:

Bill Rich Deputy Director of Planning - "Bill Rich" brich@meadecounty.org,
or Jennifer Phillips, jphillips@meadecounty.org, Phone (605) 347-3818.

MEADE COUNTY COMMISSION,, 1425 SHERMAN ST, STURGIS, SD 57785,
meade@meadecounty.org, PH: 720-1625 , Email staff- Joell : jromick@meadecounty.org

MEADE COUNTY COMMISSION

To down load the Commision agendas

<http://www.meadecounty.org/main.asp?SectionID=20&SubSectionID=76>

To get a list of commissioners and addresses thereof

<http://www.meadecounty.org/main.asp?SectionID=20>

Commissioners - Gary Cammack - District 1, Doreen Creed - District 2, Dayle Hammock - District 3 ,
Alan Aker - District 4, Bob Mallow - District 5

Planning Board Agenda's <http://www.meadecounty.org/main.asp?SectionID=41>

PLanning Board address ---- Meade County Planning Board, Department of Equalization, 1425 Sherman
St, Sturgis, 57785, (605) 347-3818, doe@meadecounty.org

Members of Planning Board

Mallow or Aker are chairs of the Planning Board - they are the Commissioners that rotate through the
Board , Other members: Tim Potts, - from Sturgis area, Bob Powles, - from Piedmont/Blackhawk area,
Craig Shaver, - from Sturgis area, Wayne Gutzmer, - from Black Hawk/Piedmont area

PHAS MEETINGS – December 2nd, 2090, eve Sturgis,

While PHAS most often meets in Rapid City, in the past PHAS has sponsored meetings in Sturgis as part
of our campaign to protect Bear Butte Lake National Wildlife Refuge & Bear Butte Mountain. This
December we have reserved the Agricultural Extension Office to the west of the Courthouse for the eve
Dec 2nd. We would start our meeting after the liquor license hearing ends. The time of the end of the
liquor hearing is uncertain, but hearing should last till 5 pm or later. Those of us who wish further
discussion will stroll from one building to the other after the hearing ends and crowd disperses. Meade
County Extension Service Office is at 1029 Fifth Street, Sturgis -- is just beyond the courthouse at the
west end of Sherman Street.

We also sometimes meet in Deadwood or Spearfish. PHAS may plan meetings that are only announced
by e-mail, thus if we have your e-mail address you get more news/data. For more
info/questions/comments contact:

Nancy Hilding

6300 West Elm

Black Hawk, SD 57718

605-787-6779 phone best to call me on

605-787-6466 phone and fax and voice mail and internet hook up

I have call waiting and "no answer" may mean both "land lines" in use

(call before faxing)

cell phone 605-430-9230, I don't check cell messages regularly, thus do not rely on cell for ASAP calls

nhilshat@rapidnet.com, nhilding@rapidnet.com, phas.wsd@rapidnet.com
