

San Miguel County Open Space Commission
Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 23rd, 2024, 4:00 PM

Attendance:

OSC Members Present: Joanna Kanow, Susie St. Onge, Angela Dye, Laura Kudo,
Sefra Maples, Jason Merritt

OSC Members Absent: Roger Wickham, Yvette Henson,

SMC Staff Liaisons Present: Janet Kask, Greg Pollio

Call to Order: 4:07 p.m. by Chairperson Susie St. Onge

Approval of 7/22/24 Meeting Minutes: Moved by Angela, Seconded by Sefra, Approved

Approval of 8/26/24 Meeting Minutes: Moved by Laura, Seconded by Joanna, Approved

San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway (Angela Dye)

- Looking at the final draft of the SJSSB work plan
 - Following the Federal Highway Administration Scenic Byway formatting
 - New Mission and Vision Statement
 - Identified ongoing priorities
 - Identifying opportunities and threats in the future
- Mission Statement: The mission of the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway is to inspire and educate visitors through the preservation and celebration of Southwest Colorado's breathtaking landscapes, historic towns, and cultural heritage. We are dedicated to fostering sustainable tourism practices that protect the skyway's scenic natural and cultural resources while enhancing and maintaining the economic vitality of our communities. Through partnerships with local communities, tribes, businesses, government agencies and nonprofits, we aim to create enriching and educational experiences for all travelers by promoting awareness and appreciation of the Skyway's unique qualities. We strive to ensure its continued legacy and enjoyment for future generations.
- Vision Statement: Our vision for the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway, recognized as an All-American road and a National Forest Byway, is to be a model of excellence in sustainable tourism, inspiring visitors from across the globe with the awe-inspiring beauty, rich history, and vibrant communities of Southwest Colorado. We aim to create unforgettable and educational experiences that celebrate the scenic, natural, and cultural heritage of the region, while promoting sustainable tourism practices that benefit both residents and visitors. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and responsible tourism, we aspire to preserve the unique intrinsic qualities of the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway, and inspire other regions to adopt sustainable and inclusive approaches to tourism. Our commitment is to ensure the

Skyway remains a cherished and accessible destination for future generations, where the stories of the land and its people are honored and shared.

- Angela highlighted the emphasis on sustainable tourism in the plan.
- They are working in conjunction with CDOT to make sure the document meets standards of works plans and has enough in it, so that after the process is done, a commission can be appointed to oversee the action plans.
- DOT's participation in this project is mainly focused on engineering and safety, but they are not focused on maintaining scenic quality or preserving natural features.
- Susie expressed her concerns with the document promoting more tourism, given the impact the increased tourism has had on our community recently.
- Angela stated that the advisory board does not have regulatory power that the nature of the group is purely advisory. This means that the individual communities cannot be regulated into omitting tourism promotion.
- Ongoing Priorities: infrastructure, inventory and assessment. Work with CDOT, Forest Service, Local Governments to identify funding mechanisms for improvements in maintenance, develop new interpretive panels and wayfinding signs or replace existing ones as needed. Local awareness campaigns, and educate local businesses, and educate residents on the importance of preserving intrinsic values. Dark Skies Initiatives- support local State and Federal efforts to protect, promote dark skies. Sustainable Tourism Practices- educate visitors about responsible travel and conservation through the Care for Colorado principles. Work with tour operators or local guides so they can pass that knowledge on.

Mill Levy Budget Concerns

- The Parks & Open Space Mill Levy will be on the ballot in November for rerouting a portion of the fund to affordable housing.
- Our budgets for 2025, for the most part, went forward as proposed.
- Angela brought up the point of wanting to know the specifics of the budget numbers to see what kind of impact a 30% cut would have.
- Janet brought up the fact that there is an excess each year in the Mill Levy Funding that is saved and rolls over year to year.
- There was a discussion that there is a possibility that facility maintenance and its budget could be taken out of Parks & Open Space if the measure is passed.

Other Business Updates

- Placerville Community Annual Fall Potluck on October 3rd from 6-8pm at the Placerville Schoolhouse.
- Black Swift Survey was added to the 2025 budget.
- Bridal Veil Platform - There was a delay with some supplies needed to complete the platform which has led to a delay. The Platform is assembled and still anticipated to be completed before winter. Once the materials come in they will finish the installation.

Next OSC meeting is Monday October 28th at 4pm

Meeting adjourned: 5:45 PM