

MEETING SUMMARY December 8, 2021

Meeting Attendees

Community Working Group members present both in-person and by Zoom:

Todd Pryor – Town of Superior
Jim Schenck – Rebuild Superior, Legends of Superior Trail
Mila Besich – Town of Superior
Richard Provencio – United Superiorites
Pamela Rabago – Superior Chamber of Commerce
Rick Cartier – Superior Chamber of Commerce
Fred Gaudet – Arizona Trail Association
Fernando Shipley – Cobre Valley Regional Medical Center Board
Amanda Moors – Arizona Wildlife Federation
Bruce Wittig – Queen Valley Water Department, Fire Department
Hank Gutierrez – Superior Copper Alliance
JoAnn Besich – Superior Optimist Club

Resolution Copper Company:

Hesston Klenk

Facilitators – Godec, Randall & Associates (GRA):

John Godec
Sydney Uphouse
Jody Lomenzo

CWG members not present:

Pam Bennett – Queen Valley Community Liaison
Lynn Martin – JF, JI Ranch
Arlynn Godinez – Superior Unified School District Board / Maricopa County
Jeff Bunklemann – Central Arizona College
Lynne Nemeth – Boyce Thompson Arboretum
Silvia Werre – Top of the World
Karen Kitchayan Jones – San Carlos Apache Tribe
Tino Flores – Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition
Anna Flores – Town of Kearny (retired from Town of Kearny and CWG)
Sylvia Kerlock – Town of Winkelman
Cecil Fendley – Queen Valley Water Board
George Martin – JF, JI Ranch
Cathy Melvin – Gila County
Anthony Huerta – Town of Superior
Mayor Bracamonte – Town of Winkelman
Gloria Ruiz – Town of Winkelman

Welcome and Introductions

John Godec welcomed everyone and introduced the newest member of the facilitation team, Jody LoMenzo from GRA, who will be taking over for Sydney Uphouse. The group welcomed her and wished Sydney the best on her new endeavors. Godec then asked the group to share any community updates.

It was announced that Mayor Besich won the 2021 Flinn-Brown Award, an award honoring the state's most dedicated and impactful leaders—for Central Arizona. It was also announced that the land exchange the Town of Superior previously applied for was approved, and loan documents had been signed for Superior to buy back its old high school. The group shared a toast to celebrate its achievements, as well as Todd Pryor's birthday.

Additionally, it was announced that an 11-member crew from AmeriCorps will be clearing 8.5 acres of the park section and build a trail system. It was requested that local community groups welcome and host them, so they can learn more about the area. CWG members can also request help on other projects, as needed.

Resolution Copper Updates

John Godec asked Hesston Klenk to give an update on the FEIS and other relevant news. Klenk indicated that there has been no change on the status of the FEIS and no updates from the Forest Service. There also hasn't been any progress on getting the Save Oak Flat Bill back into the Reconciliation Bill. However, there was a small protest made up of members of the San Carlos Apache tribe and students from a local prep school at Senator Kelly's office the previous week. Resolution expects the FEIS to be republished in March or April 2022 with a 45-day objection period following the publishing. There could also potentially be a ruling in the 9th circuit court in early January on the Apache Stronghold case surrounding religious freedom.

Klenk announced that Willard Antone will be replacing Vicky Peacey as mining executive for Resolution. Klenk noted that he had to leave the meeting.

Plans for 2022

Godec announced that the CWG received a letter from ADOT in response to concerns that were expressed about the Queen Creek Bridge project. The letter explained that ADOT would not be moving forward with any major project until 2023. Other than this, the letter did not address many of the CWG's concerns. Some of these concerns include access to the trail that crosses the bridge as well as heavy construction. Godec asked the group if it would make sense to get the Town of Superior, the CWG, and RUG together to discuss the issues they have with the project and then communicate with ADOT about what they would like to see done. The group agreed that ADOT needs to know that construction will disrupt a major recreation area, impacting both the economics and aesthetics of Superior. The group also agreed that the road is old and dangerous and needs to be fixed in a way that will minimize the impact on the town and recreation as much as possible. The group also expressed concern over the local saguaro cactus population – ADOT claims they will move saguaros to a farm during construction to protect them from damage. However, 80% of saguaros do not survive transfers, the group claimed. Godec announced that the group would stick with this issue going into 2022.

Godec gave each member of the group a roster of current CWG members and asked the group to identify who, on roster, who is no longer an active member and could be removed or contacted to determine ongoing interest and participation. Godec also queried the CWG for potential new members who would be active participants. Several names were mentioned; the group determined who Godec should contact to determine interest. Godec stated he would plan to reach out to those recommended.

Wrapping Up

It was suggested that the CWG start leading a “good neighbor agreement” group in order to hold Resolution accountable for the commitments it has made to the town. Godec stated that he has already discussed this with Klenk. It was decided that the CWG should play a critical role in enforcing a good neighbor agreement and that leading a group would allow the CWG to hold meetings on important topics and get input from the town. The good neighbor agreement would also be beneficial to Resolution because it would give them predictability and transparency.

Godec stated that he would bring this topic up again with Hesston and ask him to work on creating the group. The CWG agreed that a good neighbor agreement needs to be prioritized and flushed out in the first quarter of the coming year, especially with the republishing of the FEIS in the spring.

The group addressed the need to have a discussion on growth and housing, as affordable housing is becoming increasingly hard to come by. Zoning laws and housing regulations impact building affordable, low-income housing. The town needs to reevaluate housing regulations and housing codes and address restrictive zoning laws that discourage affordable housing. The group agreed that Resolution needs to put money into affordable housing for the region and encourage mine employees to live in Superior.

It was suggested that the group invite a speaker with expertise in real estate to present and answer questions at a meeting, since there are a lot of players involved in this issue and not a lot of communication about development plans. Several group members made suggestions for who the group could talk to, and some offered to contact these people on the group’s behalf.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 6:00pm (MST)

The next meeting topic is TBD.

Those planning to attend in person at Superior Chamber of Commerce, please RSVP, for headcount for dinner. Those attending by Zoom are also requested to RSVP. An invite reminder will be send in early January.