

**Crystal River Caucus**  
**General Meeting Minutes – DRAFT**  
**May 11, 2017**

The meeting was called to order by Dee Malone at 7:01 p.m. The 48 present who signed in constituted a quorum. Guests included Mike Kraemer, Senior Planner for Pitkin County Community Development and George Newman representing the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The first order of business was to approve the minutes from the March and January meetings, the latter having been edited on 4/7/2017. No amendments were suggested and motions for approval of each were made, seconded and approved with no opposition or abstentions.

Phil Youngman presented a brief treasurer's report, noting that annual grant from the BOCC had just been received, resulting in a current balance of \$1789. A motion to approve the report was made by Peter Martin and seconded by Jimmie Benedict. The motion passed with 25 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstention.

Bruce Gledhill announced the death of Jim Hornsby, a long-term resident who had been active in the local community. He also reported that a committee of the Church at Redstone had selected a new pastor from the group of candidates and the appointment was pending approval by an upcoming vote of the congregation.

The Caucus meets six times per year in the Church at Redstone and has traditionally made a donation to offset associated costs. A motion was made by Terry Knapp and seconded by Nancy Chromy that the Caucus make a donation to the Church of  $6 \times \$50 = \$300$  for this year. The motion passed with 40 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstention.

New Business:

1. Redstone Castle Development

Steve Carver, the new owner of the Redstone Castle was called upon to describe the short- and long-term plans for the property. The sale closed on 11/2/2106 for \$2.2 million. An historical easement for 10 rooms in the Castle and conservation easements for 15 acres associated with the Castle and 7 acres with the carriage house constrain future development of the property. An application was submitted to the County to modify 10 rooms to facilitate short-term rentals. Some doors would be locked but no walls would be moved. A proposal accompanied by 30 letters of support was submitted to the State Historical Fund for \$200K (with a required \$200K match) for restoration of masonry and stonework. The plan is to submit a two such proposals each year to restore windows, ceilings, etc. to their original condition. Applications have also been made for state and federal income-tax credits. The short-term plan is to host special events such as weddings with a longer-term goal to create a "Boutique Hotel". Operation of the property as a bed and breakfast venue was suspended by Pitkin County in 2004, pending connection to the local sewer system

because of an inadequate septic system. An agreement with the Redstone Water and Sanitation District for extension of the sewer line from the Redstone Inn and connection to the Castle property will permit excavation to begin next week. Steve emphasized that preserving the historical character of the property and making it available to the public were priorities.

Glen Horne, Pitkin County Land Use Planner provided additional information about the property, which consists of 3 parcels: 71 acres associated with the Castle, 42 acres with the barn and 37 acres with the carriage house. The property currently has three different zoning classifications: AR-1, AR-2 and RS-30, the most restrictive being applicable to all parcels and none of which currently permits hosting special events or operation of a Boutique Hotel. To facilitate short-term plans, an amendment to the Pitkin County land-use code was requested for properties zoned AR-2 to be permitted to apply for a special-events venue permit. The proposed amendment was recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission to the BOCC for approval, which will require a public hearing at a forthcoming meeting of the BOCC followed by a vote at a subsequent meeting. The special-events venue permit application would limit events to 150 people with on-site parking for 50 vehicles. They would take place between 11 a.m. and 10 p.m. and be held inside the carriage house or Castle buildings, and/or outdoors on the patio, courtyard or on the lawn. The long-term plan to operate a Boutique Hotel would require rezoning of the property to lodge-preservation designation, consistent with the Redstone Master Plan. The Redstone Castle is currently excluded from some benefits received by other historic designations in Colorado and an appeal through the BOCC is planned.

A motion was made by Tammy Shirk and seconded by Joe Gates that the Crystal River Caucus support a zoning change for the Castle property as recommended in the Redstone Master Plan in lieu of a code change amendment. The motion evoked considerable discussion and the expression of diverse viewpoints.

Mike Kraemer noted that a land-use code amendment would be required in order to request more than 3 special events per year and become a venue, and that such an amendment could either be general or specific to a property, depending on the wording of the proposal to the BOCC. Joe Gates noted that AR-2 designation currently prohibits special events and other AR-2 property owners and neighbors might be unaware of the proposed code amendment. Stacey Bernot noted potential impacts of the proposed events on nearby residents and that appropriate parameters should be developed up-front, e.g. for sound mitigation by baffling and use of appropriate fixtures for external lighting. Peter Martin pointed out that many thousands of hours have been devoted by members of the community to the historic preservation of the Castle and those efforts would be largely wasted by the proposed zoning change. Resident historian Darrell Munsell noted that the Redstone Castle, Inn and model village are together unique in symbolizing an era of experimentation in welfare capitalism and labor-management relations. They constitute a national historic treasure that should be preserved and made accessible to the public (e.g. for tours and lectures). Dorothea Ferris pointed out that Pitkin County has severe rules and restrictions and that the Caucus needs to better understand the significance and consequences of such a motion before voting on it. Bob McCormick, who has lived in the Gate House for 43 years and whose property borders the Castle expressed concern about the effect of the proposed developments on the

viability of the Redstone Inn which is the cornerstone of the village. Glen Horne clarified that the proposed code amendment would just allow the Castle to apply for a special events permit that requires BOCC approval as well as annual review. Lisa Wagner noted that the Castle had been operated as a resort and hotel since 1945 and in 1993 as a 10-room bed and breakfast venue. Glen Horne clarified that the bed and breakfast ceased operation in 2004 due to failure of the septic system. Bill Argeros expressed general support for the proposed Castle developments but also concerns, for example where the music will originate and traffic safety involving 50 cars leaving after the event at which alcohol is served.

Stacey Bernot proposed a friendly amendment to the motion on the floor to allow the Caucus to review information concerning the proposed special events before voting on the motion. By a show of hands (33 in favor, 11 opposed), the motion was tabled until the next Caucus meeting.

Tammy Shirk introduced a motion seconded by Joe Gates that the Caucus recommend to the BOCC that they postpone any action on the Special Event Venue Permit until the community and the Crystal River Caucus has had an opportunity to review all documents submitted and to then make a recommendation to the Pitkin County Board of Commissioners. George Newman described the process for approval of such a permit. The Planning and Zoning Commission reviews the application and makes a recommendation to the BOCC which is considered at their next meeting. Input from the Caucus must be made prior to the following meeting at which a decision will be made by the BOCC. Mike Kraemer indicated that he would send a copy of the application materials to the Caucus for review prior to the decision by the BOCC at their July meeting. Stacey Bernot introduced a friendly amendment to the motion to convene a special meeting of the Caucus on June 8 to consider the information received, which was accepted. A ballot was distributed for a vote on the amended motion, which passed with 32 in favor, 1 opposed and 5 abstentions.

## 2. Crystal Trail Conservancy

Terry Knapp described a 501(c)4 non-profit advocacy group that was recently formed to address the proposed extension of the Crystal River Recreational Trail. There are no dues but the group accepts donations and maintains a website. Their purpose is to urge that the trail alignment be exclusively on west side of the river within the CO-133 highway corridor. The group advocates 10 positions, enumerated below.

- Feasibility – a highway alignment is outlined in the 2004 Newland report.
- Safety – the east side has issues with adverse impact on wildlife habitat.
- User Experience – the highway corridor is part of a scenic byway.
- Wildlife Impact – elk and sheep habitat would be adversely affected by an east-side alignment.
- Maintenance and Clean-up – sanitation, trash, bandit trail issues are simpler along highway.
- Emergency Response – injuries will occur and access of emergency vehicles is an issue.
- Closures – an off-highway trail is an attractive nuisance, with enforcement issues.
- Easements – private property and rights of way are non-issues within the highway corridor.
- Cost – highway corridor offers the lowest cost for construction and maintenance.
- There is no compelling reason for an east-side trail alignment.

Phil Youngman, a self-described cycling enthusiast stated opposition to use of the former railroad grade, which now provides access to some homes. He also expressed concern about liability issues and indemnification of nearby property owners. George Newman stated that Pitkin County formerly had insurance for trails with a \$500K limit, but that the State has now assumed that responsibility. He affirmed that the trail development process will be open and transparent with studies commissioned addressing impacts of the alignment on wildlife, farming and engineering. He asserted that no pre-assumptions have been made about the trail alignment and an informed decision will be made. The Forest Service is also involved in the trail planning process and will conduct its own studies, as will the Wilderness Workshop. Phil Youngman advocated a clear paved shoulder on both sides of CO-133 with no barrier separation of the trail from the roadway. Referring to the values statement of the Caucus Master Plan, Bill Hanks described Filoha Meadows as the jewel of the valley and urged that the trail not adversely affect the meadow or the elk and sheep that inhabit it. The seasonal closure from Sept 1 to July 1 to protect wildlife habitat would make it impractical for a trail. He noted that the completed section of the trail between Carbondale and the KOA Campground has had minimal impact on wildlife. Bob McCormick stated that wildlife are abundant on his property and expressed concern about the effect of 50 cars that may soon be using the road passing his property to attend special events at the Castle.

A motion to adjourn was made and passed unanimously at 9:26 p.m.