

Envision Cameron

Meeting Notes

November 18, 2021

1 PM MST / 2 PM MDT

Videoconference | Teleconference Options

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87967176174?pwd=U0hZWm1iWnd6ZzE2aFNhYlRpYlFrZz09>

Meeting ID: 879 6717 6174

Passcode: 708620

If by phone only: (346) 248-7799

1. Call to Order

Jamie Larson called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm MST. Meeting attendees included Mae Franklin, Rhonda Harvey, Waylon Honga, Chuck Howe, Don Irby, Chris McKibben, Shawn Newell, Bobby Robbins, Charlie Smith, Patsy Yazzie, Jamie Larson, and Brian Cole.

2. Administrative Details and Reports—Tolani Lake Enterprises/USDA Rural Development

Don Irby reminded the group that Timothy O’Connell has moved on from this project and there is new oversight and representation from USDA Rural Development. Irby indicated that Tolani Lake Enterprises would be receiving a letter related to this project. Irby indicated that USDA Rural Development was looking for more activity from TLE in terms of running the regular meetings.

Brian Cole reiterated his message from previous meetings that Building Communities is pleased to continue to play its coordinating role in terms of developing meeting agendas and distributing meeting notes. If Building Communities needs to defer that responsibility to TLE he would respect that decision.

Stephanie Hall indicated that the overall project expenditures total \$23,303.10. Of this, \$19,648 has been the Federal expenditure.

3. Discussion of Path Forward

Brian Cole reminded the group that Mae Franklin has come forward over the past couple of months with an idea that she could bring a group of very interested Cameron citizens to the table to participate in planning activities as designed in the grant proposal. This idea has been presented to Cameron President Charlie Smith and there is support. Cole noted that all of the consulting teams and participants in the regular meeting process also support this as the path forward. It was also noted that the door would always be open for participation by Cameron CLUP members and Cameron Chapter Officials. Cole explained that all of this was developed in a 1.5-page background document attached as Attachment A.

Charlie Smith agreed that he was in support of this plan. He also noted that he had distributed an email explaining a couple of options that could help to advance the project. Charlie Smith emphasized that it would be a TLE project, not a Cameron Chapter project.

Brian Cole and Chris McKibben stated that they agreed with the direction being explained by Charlie Smith. Chuck Howe also provided a summary of the situation and stated support for the path forward.

Charlie Smith indicated he was familiar with several potential stakeholders that could be involved with the effort. Bobby Robbins noted that it would be important to have Mae Franklin engaged with the project as it moves forward.

Mae Franklin stated that she would be conducting outreach efforts to all areas of the Cameron Chapter, notably Black Falls, Needmore, Shadow Mountain and East Cameron. Franklin would reach out to anyone that might be interested in constructively engaging with the effort.

Chris McKibben once again supported the path forward and added that it would be very beneficial to engage people with a diversity of ages. In particular, it would be advantageous to have Cameron youth involved with the project. It might even potentially lead to a career opportunity for someone. It was noted that there is funding in the TLE budget for an intern.

Stephanie Hall stated that she thought the new path forward was “wonderful.” She emphasized that involving community members is of very high importance. Hall noted that she has sent in reports on the project. (Don Irby indicated that it might be advantageous to make sure that the reports are signed and resent to USDA Rural Development). Irby emphasized that it is important for TLE staff and contractors to be in a leadership role with the project.

Charlie Smith agreed that TLE should be viewed as the project leader.

Stephanie Hall stated that she would continue to work with Mae Franklin and her group. Hall noted that TLE has recently onboarded a bookkeeper, an administrative assistant and has strong engagement with a variety of consultants. One benefit to Cameron, for example, is that a TLE water truck may be provided to the community for local benefit.

Mae Franklin asked for a flyer to be developed for any upcoming meeting. Brian Cole stated he would coordinate with Bailey Anderson to update the draft flyer. It would then be sent to Chris McKibben for review, graphics and other improvements before distribution.

After considerable discussion considering many options for dates, times and locations, the group agreed that the in-person meeting should not be characterized as a “Kickoff Meeting” but rather a “Getting Acquainted Gathering” to be held from 11 am through 1 pm MST at the Cameron Trading Post. Brian Cole contacted Bernetta at the Trading Post (bernetta@camerontradingpost.com, (800) 338-7385). Bernetta indicated that she would expect no more than 20 people to be there for the meeting. Brian Cole indicated that someone

from the group would be in regular communication with her relating to meeting logistics. Shawn Newell indicated this would be an eligible expense of the grant.

6. Next Meeting

The group agreed to hold a quick pre-Thanksgiving “check-in” Zoom meeting on Tuesday, November 23 at 1 pm MST. Jamie Larson would distribute a Zoom invitation.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM MST.

Envision Cameron Meetings

**1st and 3rd Thursdays at
1 PM MST and 2 PM MDT**

Attachment A

Envision Cameron Project Path Forward November 2021

Background

In late September 2020, Tolani Lake Enterprises (TLE) was informed by USDA Rural Development that their Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC) grant proposal was being approved by the federal agency. The project was to have a start date of October 1, 2020 and conclude by September 30, 2022. Ultimately, the project would result in a Rural Placemaking Plan for Cameron.

In the context of the Navajo Thaw, the RPIC program is a key project to assist one of the Chapters to capitalize on its key connection point between the Grand Canyon and the Navajo Nation.

The truncated period between federal program announcement and the deadline (approximately two months) required a rapid approach to developing the grant proposal. Despite the short timeframe, there was strong support from existing Cameron CLUP members and Cameron President Milton Tso in August/September of 2020. This, combined with a competitive proposal submitted by TLE, led to the selection of TLE as one of five national recipients (out of 67 applicants) for the Placemaking project.

Shortly after the notification of grant award to TLE, the Navajo Nation held the November 2020 elections which changed the makeup of many of the Chapter leadership positions throughout the Nation, including a complete changeover for the Cameron Chapter. This, in turn, led to the appointment of new Cameron CLUP members shortly thereafter. In short, even though there was broad understanding and support for the grant at the time of submittal, a “rebuilding and understanding” process was necessary to commence with planning activities.

One of the top priorities of the new Cameron leadership (both the elected positions and the CLUP members) is the *certification* of the Cameron Chapter. Local Chapter Governance certification is a process managed by the Navajo Nation that ultimately gives Chapters increased authority to make local decisions to further the welfare of the people. The Cameron Chapter Officials have been consistent in wanting to make sure that any engagement with the Envision Cameron project would not hinder their goal of Chapter certification.

It has been the understanding of the Envision Cameron consulting team that there is not a conflict between the goals and structure of the Envision Cameron project and the long-term goal for Chapter certification. Federal funding would not be channeled through the Cameron Chapter. Rather, TLE can administrate the project by reimbursing the budget elements of the project that support activity by Cameron community members. Gaining clarification on this concern has been a top goal over the past three months, also involving expertise from the Navajo Nation Department of Justice.

In a Nutshell

An emerging group of community-based advocates would initiate planning activities. Cameron CLUP Members and Chapter Officials could join the planning activities when they are comfortable engaging.

The consulting team was advised by USDA Rural Development in August 2021 that effective community engagement needed to be in place by the end of December 2021. The consulting team has notified the

Chapter president of this goal and encouraged communication that could expeditiously lead to effective community engagement leading to active planning activities by the end of December.

With under two months until the end-of-the-year engagement target, an informal group of Cameron advocates has come forward to ensure that the benefits of the federal grant are ultimately realized. This was discussed during the regular meeting of Envision Cameron on November 4, 2021. *(This was the 24th meeting of the Envision Cameron Consulting team dating back to October 2021. Meeting notes from all the meetings have been submitted to USDA Rural Development.)*

Adjusting the Path Forward

There is a strong desire by all the participants in the project to move forward while allowing the Cameron Chapter to continue to address any concerns about project engagement impacting their Chapter certification goals. With emerging interest by a group of Cameron citizens to engage in the project, and support from Cameron President Charlie Smith, Jr. to reach out to the community, the consulting team recommends moving forward with the project. The door will always remain available for the remainder of the Cameron Chapter Officials and CLUP Members to engage with the project when the time is right for them.

The vision and objectives of the project remain intact, and continued engagement with Blackstreak Holdings as a project partner and matching funds-provider remains in place. ***The consulting team is asking for concurrence by USDA Rural Development and Tolani Lake Enterprises to advance the project accordingly.***