

Community Transition Advisory Committee (CTAC)
Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2009

CTAC meeting was held on 9/10/09 in the Extension Office conference room in Whitehall. *Attendees* were Mark Thompson, Tim Dimock, Paula Johnston, Liz Kidwell, Ed Handl, Terry Ross, Roy McBride, Tim Mulligan, Tom Harrington and Nancy Wheeler.

1. Tom called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Tim D. made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 8/13/09; Ed seconded the motion. Minutes were approved as published.

3. Golden Sunlight Mine (GSM) Operations

a. Current Operations Update

Tim D. reported the mine currently has 148 employees and 25 contractors. Courageous Leadership, the biggest part of the mine's safety program, is a program where everyone is made responsible for each other and the entire mine site and the majority of contractors recently completed the training. Chad Hymas is scheduled at the mine November 12 & 13 and will be bringing his safety bus with him. The schools will be promoting Chad. Paula said it's a great opportunity for the students and community. Chad will do a session at the elementary school one day and at the high school the following day. Tim D. said GSM has received approval to donate \$10,000 to the ambulance facility in Whitehall. Terry said the town and ambulance service appreciates and thanks the mine for the donation.

b. Pit Lay Back Progress

Tim D. said the stripping is going well and reported the mine is about eight percent ahead of plan. The mine struggled recently with shovel availability as the big electric shovel was moved into the pit and the hydraulic shovel is down for some maintenance. Once all three shovels are up and running, should be able to do quite well against the budget and expedite the stripping. The purchase of three more trucks and a blast hole drill was proposed to Barrick in the mine plan this year to move the mill startup into 2011; however, the mine will not know if this is approved until near the end of the year.

c. Wind Development Update

Tim said he has nothing new on wind development. The leasee continues to collect more data and is building models; GSM will know more later this year.

The mine did have a court ordered mediation on the mine's backfill litigation Tuesday. The groups did not come to any resolution during the mediation. In absence of mediation, the first hearing is scheduled for early December. The National Summit of Mining Communities will be held in Butte again this year on October 12-15. Mark will be presenting on the 13th, mainly an overview of the mine's expansion project and an update on the current reclamation at the mine. Mary Nelson from Alaska, a liaison between the company and the native groups in Alaska, has requested some Whitehall community members come to Alaska and talk to their communities. Tim gave her names of CTAC members and a couple of individuals have been contacted by her. Mary organized the tour last year for some of the native groups to tour GSM and they also attended a CTAC meeting. Another trip to GSM is being planned for October.

4. Golden Sunlight Mine (GSM) Environmental Update

Mark said the mine had one environmental incident since the last meeting on the drinking water system. In the process of upgrading the system to comply with the new standards, during construction, two samples for total coliform come back with positive results. A consumer notification was posted as this was in violation of drinking water standards. In August, after the system was up and running, five total coliform

samples were collected and all five samples came back with negative results. There were several insignificant small spills since the last CTAC meeting. Mark said when the mine is done dumping on the west side, probably toward the end of this year, will develop two dumps on the east side and are starting to develop roads and stripping in that area, so will probably see some activity from the road.

5. Sunlight Business Park Overview

a. Phase II Grant Status & HUD Special Grant

Tom said EDA is still working on the grant application partly due to project officer changes. Staff received an email from EDA requesting further specific information required before the grant process can be finalized. A contractor is working with the environmental officer in Denver on the special HUD grant to submit the necessary information required to release those funds.

b. Subdivision Update

Tom said ten engineer firms responded to the RFQ to be the lead engineer for the park project. Personal interviews were conducted with three of the ten firms and Stahly Engineering out of Helena was the firm ultimately selected. Staff has scheduled a meeting with them next week to outline the scope of work and contract terms. Stahly will move forward with the lot re-write for the first 48 acre phase of the park. Once EDA funds are approved, JLDC will go for bid for park infrastructure.

c. Tax Increment Financing District (TIFD) Update

Tom reported the map and boundaries have been received from Barrick and sent to the contractor. The contractor is finalizing the process and will then present it to the Commission for their approval. If approved by the Commission, a public hearing process is then required.

d. Small Wind Update

Tom said the report received from Northwest SEED showed the project is feasible. Staff would like to meet with the big wind developer next time they visit the mine to discuss duck tailing the small wind project with the big wind project to save on development and infrastructure costs as that would make the small wind project more feasible.

e. Interpretive Center

Tom said the Interpretive Center is expected to be one of the initial buildings in the park and would like to make it a mining and wind interpretive center.

6. Pavilion Construction – GSM Assistance

Tom said the Community Development Board (CDB) will decide the location for the pavilion at their next meeting and start the process. Tim D. asked what assistance is needed from GSM and Tom replied that specifics have not yet been discussed. Tom said the CDB has earmarked \$5,000 toward the pavilion. Discussion followed.

7. Other Items of Discussion

a. Tom said the total collected for the Fire Relief Fund was about \$42,000 with a \$14,000 balance; \$3,000 is reserved to help one of the businesses with a website and advertising. The fund has been a good process to help re-establish some of the businesses.

All persons interested in Whitehall's future are invited to attend a Study Circle process that will be initiated in October to discuss Whitehall and its future, what they would like the town to look like and give their ideas and input on revitalizing Whitehall and its downtown area, etc. Tom said this is a good process that may help toward getting grants that may be available in the future.

Ed said when his wife and he travel around the state for recreational purposes, he looks at small towns and notices that some have decayed and have abandoned buildings while other small towns are vibrant with active, thriving businesses and nice homes. In Ed's opinion, most of the thriving small towns have a

center point of attraction such as a nice park or a focal point for the community. Ed said wherever Whitehall can produce a nice focal point, it would add to its ability to make the community thrive.

b. Tom asked Tim D. if he has heard anything further on the rebuttal article that was to be published in the *Montana Outdoors* magazine. The magazine published an article titled "Precious Metal or Precious Trout" that was not favorable toward mining and the environment and some mining organizations, including the Montana Mining Association, took exception to the negative article. Debbie Shea, Director of the Montana Mining Association, met with the director of FWP and wrote a "letter to the editor" and was gathering information from various mines to write an article about the positive aspects of mining. Tim D. said he hasn't heard anything from Debbie recently but is open to being featured in the article. Tim D. said shortly after the negative article was published, a number of anti-mining articles were published in papers. Tom said he will follow up on the status of the article with Debbie Shea.

8. Next Meeting Date/Time

Next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, October 8th, 2009**, 8:00 a.m. at the Extension Office Conference Room. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Nancy Wheeler, Note taker