

Ouray County Study Group
Minutes
May 7, 2008
4:00PM
Land Use Office

The meeting was called to order at 4:09.

Those in attendance included: Ken Lipton, Karen Risch, Sara Coulter, Lynn Padgett, Keith Meinert, Don Batchelder, Heidi Albritton, Connie Hunt. John Moss and Chris Pike. John Clark, Craig Fetterolf, and Ted Collin were all absent.

Ken advised the group that Rene had resigned from the group due to health concerns. Keith mentioned that the BOCC wanted to do some sort of thank you for all of Rene's hard work. All were in favor of letting him know how much his service had been appreciated, very much. Connie will follow up on that, and make sure.

The minutes from the previous meeting were discussed. Karen had a correction on the second page "she is going back to the county assessor Susie Mayfield who produced." There were also a few typos that Heidi will correct. The minutes were approved with the corrections.

Ken moved to the action items from the previous meeting. He had put together a summary of what had been discussed up to this point in time. He put this draft into a purposed "Synopsis of Study Group Proceedings". The group read Ken's paper. Trips to Montrose were discussed, and the various reasons for those trips. Groceries, errands, etc are all reasons, and it seems that in the future people will be planning their trips more carefully, and making them less often. The service centers for many companies are in Montrose, and that is not likely to change. The commute to Montrose will continue to be a major factor in regional planning and economic. Carpooling is happening more, as is Internet shopping which also affects traffic to and from Montrose. Lynn reminded the group of the changing dynamics, and felt that the present was not necessarily the key to the future in terms of planning. Ken felt that the RPI study is a projection of the present into the future, but that it does not necessarily incorporate these other dynamics.

Keith discussed the fact the 7ADT has been used as the figure for the study, and it does not take into account the seasonal homes or realities of actual traffic counts. He felt that the numbers in this regard might be skewed. The assumption that homes are occupied year-round may be problematic. While the 7ADT is an average, it was discussed whether or not it was helpful or not. Don brought up the fact that Theobald's study separated out County and Municipal traffic, and the difference is negligible whether or not people turn right or left at the Ridgway light, same for Log Hill. As to vehicles traveling down county roads, there is not a huge effect in the negligible effects of these differences.

Sara suggested that the group take Ken's synopsis home, and read it more in depth to be able to continue the discussion at the next meeting. Don discussed the housing authority

and the urban growth boundaries. He brought up the fact that centralized water and sewer would be necessary for higher density to take place in the County, which is not likely. It would seem that the density would almost have to take place in the municipalities, not the county, and that probably it does not need to remain in the synopsis. The county will not allow annexation without an annexation of the county road as well.

Karen focused on the mining claim section. The unknown numbers of claims at the time of Theobald contributed to the fact that the data was not included, now there is much more information. The failure to include the mining claims was discussed with various opinions as to why that was. Sara suggested that people send Ken suggested changes, and the group agreed. We will continue the discussion on this synopsis at the next meeting.

The final report will be submitted to the BOCC, and the method of presentation was discussed. Sara would like to wait till July for any kind of presentation to allow for the rest of the information and data to come in and then be processed by the group. Then allow for a few more months of processing getting to the final product in the fall. Don felt that because the resolution called for an interim report that could be accomplished as a part of a normal BOCC meeting. Ken brought up the fact that he and Ted had anticipated trips in June that would prevent them from being here much during that month. He had hoped to get as much done as possible in May before he left. Heidi felt that pushing the report back as Sara had suggested was a good idea, as the BOCC has been able to participate to a greater degree than had originally been contemplated. The BOCC already knows where the group is, and therefore the interim presentation would be more for the benefit of the public, than for the BOCC. Since so many people are going to be gone in June, then the whole process should be pushed back a bit. Lynn suggested that perhaps Theobald should visit in early July, and then have a more thorough report after more time has been allowed to digest some of this. John Moss suggested that there are some more contentious items than others in these reports, and he felt that the public should be made aware of these items and have adequate time to respond and become involved before any kind of final report. Consensus was that it would be better to wait to do the interim report later, rather than sooner, and Sara will try to get Theobald in early July. Sara will be sure that he has his reports and work done for the July presentation/meeting so that the group can take that and run with it.

Sara discussed the tasks she had given Theobald, per last meetings' action items. Theobald had told her that he could make the changes, and recalculations as requested, he asked for the school district layers. He wanted to think about trailhead and visitor counts, and how those would be incorporated into the study. He felt that the mining claims could be incorporated by not getting mired down by ownership issues. There are 1194 buildable sites in that area right now. Lynn discussed utilizing the GIS to randomly pick points within a defined area as a tool to explore development possibilities. Karen liked the suggestion, and felt that it could be further refined. The group will make sure that Theobald takes this method into account. Karen and Allen will start by defining the areas, and then mail those to Theobald. Lynn will then e-mail him the script that she is referring to. Theobald felt that he could do these beginning in the end of May, and he didn't comment on whether or not he would require additional compensation. The county

had agreed to pay for travel expenses previously, and would need to look into how to fund any future trips.

Karen presented the Mining Claim data report for Ouray County. There are a total of 1194 claims that are buildable sites within Ouray County. The claims range from approximately .1 to 10.33 acres in size. 1500 x 300 is the standard size of a mining claim. The earlier the number, the more senior the claim when you are looking at mining claims. They are considered 'lots' with regard to our land use code, and thus are able to be built upon assuming they can address the various other requirements in the LUC. Karen just got the report yesterday, and she will take a more detailed look at it before the next meeting. Keith asked how many were of the smallest size, and Karen responded that not too many were. He stated that he was considering whether or not there ought to be a 'fudge factor' to deal with the limited potential of some of these lots to be built upon. Karen can break the claims out by drainage by looking at the maps, not by utilizing the report that Susie gave her. Because the Theobald study is based on an ultimate, maximum build out, it was agreed that the 1194 number should remain in an effort to keep the same philosophy present in each of the indicators. Don suggested that Theobald run the numbers at 100%, at 75%, 50% and 25%, that way it could be more easily understood what the effects would/could be on these areas. The group agreed that would be good to know and Sara will ask Theobald to include that exercise.

Karen will e-mail Sarah the file with the trailhead user numbers so that Sarah can forward it onto Theobald. She presented the trailhead numbers to the group in the form of a report. Don brought up that the only impact is vehicle miles traveled. Karen will get the information on the mileage from the county roads to the trailheads. Keith would like for the Forest Service vehicle counts to be taken into consideration, as many people who drive up in the high country do not sign into the trail sheets, so this would be more comprehensive than the trail sign-ins. The seasonality of the road usage was discussed. He preferred that we use the Forest Service data as the main data source, because it was more accurate. Karen and Keith will each come up with vehicle miles based on the trail head/forest service reports.

Sara has been doing research on some of these issues to augment the group's work. She presented the group with a summary of some of these academic reports and abstracts. In the State of Colorado, you do not get an adequate tax base to service the dispersed residential build out which is occurring. The way in which the 35-acre development is occurring is not conducive to paying its own way, nor is municipal residential development. The cost of services remains higher than the tax figures can support. In Ouray County, the cost to the County is \$1.29 for every \$1 of income (according to the Coupal/Seidl analysis). Sara suggested that we could talk to the authors of the study and see if they might be able to help in the County's current efforts. She discussed academic journals and studies, and the high cost that universities bear in order to give their students and faculty access to them. She offered her services in any future research efforts to utilize these academic sources. The second report dealt with conservation subdivisions, and concluded that from the developer's point of view these are cheaper to build and easier to both sell and market.

Ken brought the discussion around to the RPI study, and clarified that it was produced using 2005 data. He suggested that it might be appropriate to see if the projections have been holding up so far. This was discussed. John asked if the past 3 years could be included in the 'base' rather than forming a separate comparison. Keith mentioned that at the time it was presented, the RPI study presented some difficulties for the public to understand, such as 'level of service'. He felt that any presentation should include an effort to bring the public up to speed in terms of the terminology and concepts. The group agreed. Don brought up one potential flaw in the study. In going by previous year's property taxes, the study did not take into consideration the fact that the County was TABOR constrained, which it no longer is. If you look at overall county revenue, property taxes represent around 60% of total revenues. The difference would therefore not be significant, but they must be acknowledged as present. The first section is the executive summary and findings, and it was agreed that we shouldn't focus on that just yet. Ken wants to look at the real numbers from the past few years to see if the real numbers of taxation vs. services really are compatible, or not. Keith asked if we could access the RPI models in the same way that we can the Theobald models. Don was unsure to what extent those would be made available. Connie will call and speak with Andrew.

Lynn felt that it needed to be clarified what the baseline and numbers really represented in the RPI study. The level of service in the baseline is purely what was in place at a point in time, not necessarily what was 'sufficient' at that time. What 'was', was not necessarily 'sufficient'. The numbers represented a snapshot, not an acknowledgment of adequacy. Keith was concerned about explaining the cumulative affects of this 'level of service.' Where the level of service assumes that the way in which a road was constructed will handle increased traffic, and in many cases that is not true, the level of service will decrease to a greater degree than the RPI study indicates. This is a substantial anomaly that would indicate that the study is more optimistic than reality would indicate. In the instance of the roads in particular, the future may be bleaker than the reality suggests. Don suggested that rather than having Andrew look at 2 years of additional data, he could look at his 10-year study of revenues vs. expenditures on roads (as an example). Ken liked the suggestion, and felt that it began to address his concerns over the adequacy of the study. In the last 3 years, we have had increased revenues as well as increased services, we use this recent data to see what the trends are indicating.

Don suggested that everyone look at the RPI study in a critical manner to see if there are holes or areas that could be picked apart, and then we can try and tackle those areas at the next meeting. It was agreed that it would be a good starting point for next time.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Sarah will invite Theobald to come for a meeting in early July – he will have his missing data with him. She will ask him to look at the mining claim build out info looking at 100%, 75%, 50% and 25% build out in that area.

- Karen will e-mail Sarah the file with the trailhead user numbers so that Sarah can forward it onto Theobald. She will also get the info on miles from the County roads to the trails for use in these calculations.
- Keith will use the Forest service data to present the group with traffic data to compare with Karen's trailhead numbers.
- The group will continue to discuss the 'interim report' and fine-tune it for presentation later in the summer.
- The County will explore funding options for Theobald's travel expenses.
- Karen and Allen will work on defining development areas within the mining district (by drainage) for Theobald's study. Lynn will e-mail Theobald the script for the GIS technique she is recommending, and will also meet with Karen and Allen to digitize their work.
- Connie will contact Andrew to see if we can access the models from the RPI study, or have him update the material and see if the projections are proving true by whatever method that would be the most effective.

May 21st is the next study group meeting.