**Minutes of a Special Session of the Common Council and Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Clarkdale Held on Tuesday, December 16, 2014**

A Special Meeting of the Common Council and Parks and Recreation Commission of the Town of Clarkdale was held on Tuesday, December 16, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the Clarkdale Men's Lounge, 19 N. Ninth Street, Clarkdale, Arizona.

Town Council:
Mayor Doug Von Gausig (recused)
Vice Mayor Richard Dehnert
Councilmember Scott Buckley
Councilmember Bill Regner (recused)
Councilmember Curtiss Bohall

Parks and Recreation Commissioners:
Shannon Westcott, Chairperson
Barbara Van Wye, Vice Chairperson
Peter Curé (absent)
Trish Gomez
Lynda Zanolli

Town Staff:
Town Manager Gayle Mabery
Town Clerk/Finance Director Kathy Bainbridge
Community Services Supervisor Dawn Norman
Deputy Clerk Mary Ellen Dunn

**CALL TO ORDER AT 6:01 P.M. BY THE CLARKDALE TOWN COUNCIL**

**CALL TO ORDER AT 6:01 P.M. BY THE CLARKDALE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**DESIGNATION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THIS JOINT MEETING** – Consideration of designating Vice Mayor Richard Dehnert as the Chairman for the Joint meeting between the Clarkdale Town Council and the Clarkdale Parks and Recreation Commission.

As referenced in the Clarkdale Public Service Handbook the Chairman of our public meetings has the important responsibility of ensuring that the meeting operates efficiently and that decorum is maintained. During Joint Meetings of the Town Council with appointed Boards and Commissions, the Mayor acts as the chair of the Joint Meeting.

Mayor Von Gausig has declared a Conflict of Interest on the subject of tonight's meeting, and will not be participating in the meeting. As such, pursuant to Section 2-2-2 of the Clarkdale Town Code, the Vice Mayor shall perform the duties of the Mayor during the Mayor's absence.

To make the record clear, a motion, second and vote on this topic is appropriate during the meeting. The votes of all members of the Town Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission will be recorded in the minutes for this Joint Meeting.

Councilmember Regner also recused himself, declaring a conflict of interest.

**Councilmember Bohall moved to approve the designation of Vice Mayor Dehnert as the Chairman for the December 16, 2014 Joint Meeting. Councilmember Buckley seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Parks and Recreation Chairperson Westcott polled the commissioners and Vice Mayor Dehnert was approved as Chairman unanimously.**

**INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – The Town Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission invite the public to provide comments at this time. Members of the Council and Commission may not discuss items that are not specifically identified on the agenda. Therefore, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.01(G), action taken as a result of public comment will be limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to any criticism or scheduling the matter for further consideration and decision at a later date. Persons interested in making a comment on a specific agenda item are asked to complete a brief form and submit it to the Town Clerk during the meeting. Each speaker is asked to limit their comments to five minutes.

**There was no public comment.**

Vice Mayor Dehnert presented opening comments.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**JOINT WORKSESSION ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL RIVER RUNNER CAPACITIES FOR THE VERDE RIVER @ CLARKDALE** – Discussion of the information and recommendations submitted by Town Staff relating to Commercial River Runner Capacities on the Verde River @ Clarkdale.

After launching the Verde River @ Clarkdale project in 2011, the Town of Clarkdale opened the 110-acre Lower TAPCO River Access Point on June 18, 2014, providing the public with access to diverse year-round recreational activities on the river. As expected, the site quickly became popular as a kayak launch point for boaters who wanted to float the 3-mile stretch of river between the boat launch areas of Lower TAPCO River Access Point and the downstream Tuzigoot River Access Point. In addition, the Town of Clarkdale and Arizona State Parks issued the first special use permits to allow commercial outfitters to operate at the Lower TAPCO RAP and the Tuzigoot RAP in 2014, resulting in approximately 6,800 commercial customers either kayaking or tubing this stretch from April – December, 2014. During peak boating season (from June 1 – September 30) in 2014, we experienced an average of 250 commercial customers per week launching from the Lower TAPCO RAP.

With requests for issuance of additional commercial permits increasing, the Town of Clarkdale has determined the need to establish commercial river runner capacities for the Verde River @ Clarkdale between the Lower TAPCO River Access Point and the Tuzigoot River Access Point.

Staff at the Town of Clarkdale have developed a report (which is attached as part of your meeting packet) that outlines the information they considered in recommending commercial outfitter capacities for the Verde River @ Clarkdale.

The following commercial river outfitter capacities are recommended as part of the report:

- Maximum guided trip size of sixteen (16) people, including trip guides.
- Maximum of eight (8) guided kayak/canoe/stand-up paddle board trips per day, with at least two (2) of those trips being reserved specifically for tours that operate under a separate permitting structure and receive pre-approval as official interpretive trips by the Town of Clarkdale.
- Maximum of one (1) guided trip launching per hour, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (which may be extended to include a 5:00 p.m. launch during certain seasons).
- Maximum of up to thirty (36) unguided customers (in a vessel that meets the Arizona definition of a watercraft) per day.
- Maximum of six (6) unguided customers launching per hour, between the hours of 9a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Based on the comments and input received during the December 16th Joint Worksession, Staff will make revisions to the Capacity Recommendations, and present those for formal consideration by the Town Council at their January 13, 2015 Regular Council meeting. If the Parks and Recreation Commission would like to make a formal recommendation to the Town Council on this subject, a special meeting will be scheduled prior to January 13th in order for them to do so.

After the Council takes final action on establishing the commercial capacities on the Verde River @ Clarkdale, staff will begin the process for soliciting bids for the outfitter permits that will be available in 2015. Staff hopes to begin advertising in January and award the first sets of outfitter permits in February. Given that there are several different categories of permits that will be available, we anticipate that we'll be letting bids for different types of permits as we get them developed over a period of a couple of months.

The 2015 Outfitter Permit has not yet been drafted, as staff's focus has been on developing the capacity recommendations for the Council and Parks and Recreation Commission's consideration. Establishing capacities on the river is a necessary first step in the process.

Staff has invited representative from Arizona State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service to attend the meeting. Both of these agencies have reviewed and provided input on the report that has been developed by the Town Staff. If desired, these public land managers will be prepared to offer comments and/or address questions from the Council and Commission.

Staff also anticipates that members of the public may have comments to share on this topic. While this Joint Worksession is an opportunity for discussion between the Council and Parks and Recreation Commission, it is appropriate to open the agenda item for Public Comment at some point in the meeting.

Town Manager Mabery gave a PowerPoint presentation: "Commercial River Runner Capacities on the Verde River @ Clarkdale" which provided collected data regarding boating activities, history of river outfitters on the Middle Verde River, comparisons between guided and unguided commercial activity, interpretive and recreational guided tours, and recommendations and examples with regard to capacity.

Arizona State Parks Representative, Keith Ayot, presented Parks's views and cited three directives:

1) Protect our resources; 2) provide access to those resources; and 3) be an economic driver for local communities.

Clarkdale Town Council and Parks and Recreation Commission shared questions and comments.

Councilmember Bohall thanked the staff for their efforts and time. Stated he does not kayak but believes the river is an asset for the Town of Clarkdale to cherish.

Discussion followed regarding topics including the Ambassador program, water quality testing, and Brewer's Tunnel Diversion Dam challenges.

Vice Mayor Dehnert opened the discussion to public comment. The following persons addressed the Council:

**Tom Martin, not a Clarkdale resident – requested reconsideration of the "do-it-yourself" boating capacity; supports river access**
**Jett Tenant – expressed concerns about the initial capacity numbers; supports public access to river**
**Ann Miranda, Clarkdale resident – stated concerns about the noise along the river and disturbed quality of life of property owners along the river; supports public access to river**
**Paul Matthew – had public safety concerns**
**Rick Littell, Clarkdale resident – noted concerns about noise/quality of life for property owners along the river and changes in wildlife presence; supports public access**
**Lisa Petty, Clarkdale resident – concerned about initial numbers with regard to maximum capacity; supports public access to river**
**Liz Gail, Clarkdale resident – appreciates the Ambassador program; concerned about enforcement of quiet zones**
**Harry Sweet, not a Clarkdale resident – concerned about impact on wildlife and peacefulness of river for private boaters**
**Carrie Anderson, former Clarkdale resident – supports river access; concerned about initial maximum capacity figures and environmental impact as well as property owners' quality of life**
**Jane Moore, Jerome resident – has concerns about impacts on the river; would like to see greater numbers of interpretive tours as opposed to increased recreational capacities**
**Richard Lynch, outfitter – believes the maximum capacity figures may be too high and stated he wants a cooperative effort in dealing with the issues and concerns**
**Elizabeth Gerstner, Clarkdale resident – stated concerns with the noise levels, impacts on wildlife and parking on her street to access river**
**Wendy Kaye, Clarkdale resident – concerned about neighbors along the river and their quality of life; questioned Town's financial gain**
**Nicki Check, Jerome resident – participated in interpretive tour and felt strong connection to the river and noted the low impact of the trip; appreciated the Town's evaluations and endeavors**
**Dylan Anderson, outfitter – would like to see more education; believes the initial maximum capacity numbers are too high**

Vice Mayor/Chairman Dehnert stated that the Town of Clarkdale did not get into the project for financial gain but for the river's protection and thanked everyone for attending and bringing out issues for consideration. Dehnert then turned the discussion back to the Council and Commission for comments.

Chairman Dehnert: noted a "measured reaction" to the maximum capacity numbers and would like to take another look at refining those numbers more conservatively, keeping the public comments in mind.

Commissioner Westcott: stated she always looked for places to get into the river and appreciates the new access points and has some of the same thoughts and concerns as those stated earlier in the public comments. She assured the audience that their concerns do not go unnoticed or unheard. She further stated that the panel represents the community and that's the reason they volunteer for the positions they hold.

Councilmember Buckley: stated he would like to see more "science" and data regarding impacts on the river.

Commissioner Zanolli: clarified that the Town was no longer recommending rented inner tubes and supports that recommendation.

**This Joint Worksession was agendized for discussion only, and no formal action was taken.**

**ADJOURNMENT – Commissioner Westcott moved to adjourn the meeting and Councilmember Bohall seconded. Without objection, Chairperson Dehnert adjourned the meeting at 7:53 P.M.**

APPROVED:

Shannon Westcott
Parks & Recreation Commission Chairperson

ATTESTED/SUBMITTED:

Dawn Norman
Community Services Supervisor