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**Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board - Workshop**

Minutes of the workshop meeting of the Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board held on April 3, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Spanish Springs Library.

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

PRESENT - Bruce Parks, Brandon Partain, Bradley Young, Bonnie Billings, Shannon Martell, Sharon Thygesen

ABSENT - Adam De Merit

A quorum was established, and the meeting was brought to order.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE -** The pledge of allegiance was recited.
2. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Miranda invites the community to attend the second annual Armed Forces Day event on May 18, from 11 AM to 3 PM. The event, aimed at residents of Sparks, Reno, and nearby areas, offers an opportunity to connect with veterans and honor them through military tribute displays. These tributes also recognize the families of veterans and active military. The event will be held at the American Legion on Prater and 4th Street. Mr. Miranda encourages attendance, noting this is the only similar event nearby, with the closest other event being in Hawthorne.

Mark Neumann highlights upcoming events for Elderly Month in May. He mentions a senior fair on May 1st at 9th and Sutro with various vendors, and the "Stuff a Bus" event on May 24th at the Target on I-80. The City of Reno is offering free weekly swimming for seniors at the Northwest Pool in May, and a new initiative allows Washoe County seniors to use recreational facilities at no cost through their insurance. He also shares senior resources and magazines to raise awareness about available services.

Brett Taylor, the new Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Coordinator for Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD), explains his role in addressing wildfire threats. His position focuses on advising and inspecting properties to mitigate wildfire risks. He offers free defensible space inspections for residents and works to secure federal grants to support mitigation efforts, particularly in underserved or high-risk areas. The goal is to prevent catastrophic wildfires and bring resources back to the district. Taylor encourages residents to contact him or TMFPD for assistance with wildfire protection.

Alexandra Wilson, Washoe County Community Outreach Coordinator, addresses concerns about a neighborhood development meeting occurring simultaneously with the current meeting. She explains that two meetings were scheduled: an in-person meeting on April 1st at the Washoe County Complex and a Zoom meeting happening that evening from 5 to 6 PM. She assures attendees that they can still submit feedback, view recorded meetings, and access related documents on the Neighborhood Development Hub website. She offers assistance in navigating the site and emphasizes that no one is missing out by attending the current meeting.

Marsy Kupfersmith introduces herself and announces her candidacy for Washoe County Commissioner District 4 as a nonpartisan candidate, with a focus on senior issues and affordable senior housing. She encourages everyone to attend the Older Americans Month Info Fair on May 1st at the Ninth Street Senior Center, which will feature over 50 vendors. While candidates can't have tables at the event, they are welcome to walk around and interact with attendees. She highlights that the event brochure will list all senior-related events for the month.

Janet Butcher shares her positive experience with the website but highlights an issue with the community engagement opportunity survey. After sharing the survey with her network of 400 people, she encountered a problem where the site requested IT department information, which confused her since she manages her own IT. She tried multiple computers, but the issue persisted. Janet warns that others may face the same confusion and urges the issue to be addressed to avoid deterring people from completing the survey.

Bruce Foster, representing the Turning Point USA Faith Coalition, announced several upcoming candidate forums sponsored by Calvary Chapel Sparks. These forums will cover local elections, including a Washoe County School Board forum on April 18, Reno and Sparks City Council and Washoe County Commission on May 13, Nevada State Assembly and Senate on May 30, and a U.S. Senate forum on June 6. Additionally, a ballot chasing training will take place on April 13. For more information, he directs attendees to the Calvary Chapel Sparks website.

1. **COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Clara Andriola expresses gratitude for everyone's participation and emphasizes the importance of the evening's meeting to reimagine the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB). She highlights Washoe County’s opportunity to gather feedback and engage the community in shaping the CAB's future, describing it as a "blank canvas" for community involvement. Andriola stresses the need to improve communication and partnership between the board and the community, acknowledging that while the process may not be perfect, it's essential to take the first steps toward meaningful change. She thanks Alexandra Wilson for her efforts in organizing the meeting.

*Review*

Alexandra Wilson provided an overview of Washoe County's communication resources, detailing how the county shares and receives information from the public. Key tools include Mailchimp for email blasts, social media for immediate updates (especially during emergencies), and Zen City, a platform for conducting surveys and analyzing neighborhood data. The county also utilizes jurisdictional publications like HOA newsletters and senior magazines to reach specific audiences. Strong media partnerships help broadcast county information through local news outlets, while the Commissioner support team manages constituent requests and escalates issues to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). The Washoe 311 support center collects calls and tracks common issues, and the E-comment and Speak Up portal allows residents to submit feedback to the BCC online. The county website, the most visited resource, sees heavy traffic in sections related to business licenses, permits, and neighborhood development.

Wilson also reviewed survey results from around 2,000 residents on how they prefer to receive and provide information. The website ranked as the top source for receiving information, followed by news media and word of mouth, highlighting the importance of media relationships and neighbor trust. While in-person meetings, such as CABs, were on the list, they ranked lower than other methods like the website and media, indicating a preference for digital and broadcast communication. Booths at community events and social media were less prominent, though newsletters and email blasts were appreciated by subscribers.

For providing feedback, the top choice was email and online forms, especially for neighborhood development meetings. Text messaging was another popular option, though Wilson acknowledged challenges with implementing it during campaign season. Other preferred feedback channels included online meetings, 311 calls, and public comment portals, offering flexibility for residents to engage. Wilson concluded by emphasizing the county's focus on continually improving communication processes and increasing engagement with constituents.

Alexandra then went over the structure of the discussion which was designed to focus on increasing engagement and communication within Washoe County's Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs). Alexandra Wilson began by reviewing attendance statistics and emphasizing the goal of enhancing public participation. The format encouraged a collaborative "workshop" environment, where participants were asked to offer solutions alongside identifying problems.

The discussion was guided by key principles:

* **Problem-solving solutions**: Participants were encouraged to propose solutions to any problems raised.
* **Use of a "parking lot":** Ideas not directly related to the current topic could be added to a parking lot for future consideration.
* **Active participation:** The goal was to involve everyone, preventing domination by a few individuals.
* **Constructive dialogue:** Respectful and productive conversation was emphasized, with an invitation to discuss current engagement challenges and identify any missing community voices.

*Challenges: Board & Public Discussion*

Sharon Thygesen noted that the CAB is missing younger folks at the meeting and suggested that it is due to competing priorities – like being home with family.

Bonnie Billings suggests a challenge with the current feedback methods, noting that while over 50% of survey respondents preferred email and online platforms to provide feedback, she personally finds in-person meetings more beneficial. This is because they allow for direct interaction, including asking questions and better understanding issues. She highlights the difficulty of engaging the public when the majority favors one-sided communication through email, which lacks the interactive nature of in-person meetings.

Bradley Young highlights the challenge of identifying and addressing the diverse interests of constituents across Washoe County, particularly given its large geographical area. He notes that topics like fire department responses, public safety, and building developments are important to different communities, but it’s difficult to determine what would drive more engagement. He suggests that board members should bring relevant community topics to the CAB, invite speakers, and facilitate dialogue. Young also sees potential in online platforms, such as Zoom, to increase participation and engagement.

Adding to Bradley’s comments, Alexandra Wilson acknowledges that some of the highest CAB attendance occurs around specific topics, such as senior scams, which tend to drive more community interest. She agrees that communication is often identified as a challenge, though she believes the county is communicating regularly, albeit not always as effectively as desired. Wilson notes that when a topic resonates with the community, attendance can surge significantly, citing an example where attendance jumped from 30-40 people to around 97 for a specific meeting in Lands Bill. This demonstrates the importance of relevant, high-interest topics in driving engagement.

Bradley Young agrees with Alexandra Wilson on the importance of communicating relevant topics but proposes a new challenge. He suggests that the CAB members should have more involvement in setting the meeting agenda. He notes that it feels unfair to reach out informally to Alexandra with requests and reflects on a previous meeting where a board member questioned the purpose of the CAB's work. To address this, Bradley proposes a more structured process, such as a post-meeting Zoom call for board members to share ideas and suggest topics for future meetings. This approach could help ensure the agenda reflects issues of importance to the community, like continued interest in topics such as DOT or the Lands Bill. Alexandra Wilson acknowledges Bradley Young’s point and explains that all CAB agendas already include a standing item for announcements, news, and requests for future topics. She admits that this option might not be highlighted enough but encourages board members to use it as a formal opportunity to suggest topics, such as updates on the landfill or other community concerns. While informal communication is also an option, she reiterates that this standing item is a good platform for proposing ideas and ensuring they are addressed in future meetings.

Stacey (inaudible) comments that, in addition to selecting relevant topics, having an open exchange of thoughts and questions significantly boosts audience engagement. She points out that meetings with higher attendance often feature interactive discussions rather than one-sided presentations. Stacey emphasizes the importance of allowing two-way communication, where attendees can ask questions and engage in dialogue, as opposed to simply listening to facts. She believes this type of exchange is key to attracting and retaining participants, as no one enjoys attending a meeting just to be told information without having the opportunity to contribute. Alexandra asks if Stacey would agree that the format of the CAB could be a potential challenge as the structure does not allow for more back and forth conversation – added to the board ‘Quality Q&A’ as a challenge.

Don asks several questions about Washoe County’s survey and communication tools. He first inquires about the demographic breakdown of the survey, which Alexandra Wilson doesn't have on hand but believes exists. Don then asks about the survey platform, and Alexandra confirms they use ZenCity. Don suggests trying MetroQuest, a more sophisticated platform used by RTC, which he's familiar with from his business. Don then asks how the email list is developed, to which Alexandra explains that it's self-elected, with different lists for various topics, consolidated for broader outreach when necessary. They discuss using social media, where Alexandra mentions that they primarily use email and Nextdoor for CAB-related communications, with Twitter reserved for emergencies. Don suggests using text messaging and video engagement to attract younger demographics, citing his experience during COVID with video-based Q&A sessions. He emphasizes the importance of investing in digital tools to improve engagement. Alexandra responds by saying they had experimented with TikTok for younger audiences but discontinued it for legal reasons, although Instagram is still available but underutilized.

Mark Neumann raises a concern about the lack of access to computers among seniors at various centers in Washoe County. He notes that many seniors who attend lunch programs at these centers, including those in North Valleys, Cold Springs, and Sun Valley, can't afford computers or even phones. As a result, when surveys report that most people prefer to receive information via email, it only reflects those with access to the necessary technology. Alexandra Wilson suggests placing this issue in the "parking lot" for further discussion. Bruce Parks agrees, highlighting that this is an issue he has been advocating to address for three years. Alexandra acknowledges the problem and notes it will be considered under the topic of underserved communities and lack of resources. A public commenter suggests addressing this issue by holding presentations at senior centers, such as the one on Ninth Street, to provide information to those without computer access. They recommend taking information sessions to targeted physical locations where seniors already gather to ensure broader engagement and access to important resources.

Tracy Thomas highlights a challenge of general apathy within the community, where many people are not engaged or interested in local issues. To address this, she suggests using digital boards in libraries to display information and announcements about county events and activities. Given that libraries are located in strategic locations throughout the community, Tracy believes they are a valuable resource for spreading important messages. She references the large Nugget billboard on I-80 but clarifies that something smaller and more accessible in libraries would be sufficient for this purpose. Alexandra marked down ‘apathy or attitude towards being engaged’.

Shannon Martell comments that a significant challenge in community engagement is reaching groups that feel disconnected, particularly renters. Many renters perceive a lack of investment in the community because they don't feel like permanent members of it. This sense of detachment also affects younger demographics, who often fall into this category. Shannon suggests that this perceived lack of belonging makes it harder to involve these groups in community matters, even though they are an integral part of the community. Alexandra added it to an existing challenge regarding ‘buy-in’ as it’s a lead in.

Bruce Foster comments on the issue of community apathy by pointing out the low attendance at the meeting, despite the area's population. He notes that most attendees are senior citizens, highlighting a lack of participation from other demographic groups. While notifications are sent out, the lack of turnout suggests that many people do not consider these meetings important enough to attend, reflecting broader challenges in community engagement.

Janet Butcher addresses community apathy by noting that many people feel discouraged from participating because they believe their input doesn't make a difference. She shares that some residents feel ignored by their commissioners or city council members, citing the Lands Bill as an example where numerous people voiced concerns, yet the bill passed regardless. This leads to a sense of "why bother" among the public. Alexandra Wilson acknowledges that people may not see the long-term impact of their comments or engagement. Speaking from her perspective as a younger person and a parent, she admits that without her role in Washoe County, she might not be as engaged in government due to focusing more on immediate concerns rather than long-term developments.

Jenny comments on the confusion many residents face regarding which governmental entities to approach for various issues, particularly with overlapping jurisdictions in Washoe County. She notes that people often don’t know whether to contact the city, county, or other agencies like planning commissions, leading to frustration. Jenny suggests that the county could offer a "newbies" agenda item—a short, 10-minute lesson to help residents understand the roles and responsibilities of different governmental bodies, clarifying where to seek help. Alexandra Wilson acknowledges that navigating jurisdictional boundaries is confusing and part of her job in 311 involves guiding people to the right place. She highlights that offering a lesson on jurisdiction could help clarify responsibilities.

A public commenter supports this idea, proposing the concept of "rules of engagement" to better guide residents on how to interact with their government. They suggest that the county website should explain what steps people can take if they want to address specific issues, such as protesting a development or zoning changes. Drawing from past experience, the commenter recalls a resource for new commissioners that summarizes all departments in a few pages and recommends something similar for the public to simplify engagement with different agencies. Alexandra Wilson explains that the county has considered creating a guide for individuals new to the area, and even those who've lived there for some time, to help navigate government responsibilities. She mentions the idea of collaborating with realtors but expresses caution about the potential complexities this could introduce, including concerns about branding and defining the county's responsibilities. Wilson suggests that a comprehensive guide could easily turn into a large document, as it would need to cover various government functions, such as obtaining business licenses and understanding jurisdictional boundaries. She notes that these discussions are ongoing, but the full scope of what this guide would look like is still undecided. Additionally, Wilson touches on the county's internal efforts to improve its onboarding process for new commissioners, with a focus on clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Alan Munson suggests that Washoe County could benefit from holding public forums where residents can directly engage with commissioners and other officials. He shares his frustration with trying to use the phone to communicate, which often leads to no results. Munson proposes that these forums, even if held quarterly, could allow people to discuss important or hot topics directly with local leaders. This would help residents stay informed and provide a space for meaningful dialogue with decision-makers.

Mark Neumann comments on the difficulty of navigating Washoe County’s website, sharing that he often has to call 311 for assistance in finding the right information. He suggests that the website could benefit from an index or a clearer structure to help users more easily locate what they need. Neumann highlights the confusion many experience when trying to navigate the site, even after years of using it himself.

Brandon Partain echoes earlier comments, emphasizing the importance of understanding the demographic breakdown of surveys. He believes that if only regular attendees are being polled, the results may not capture the full community’s perspective. On the issue of apathy, Brandon agrees with previous remarks, suggesting that many people feel like they are talking to a wall and don’t return because they don’t expect meaningful feedback. He stresses that people want to feel heard, even if the outcome doesn’t align with their views. Offering a respectful explanation of why decisions are made, even when contrary to public input, would add significant value. He also notes that meetings often feel like passive listening sessions, which could just as easily be conveyed via email, reducing the incentive to attend in person.

Reva Crump comments on the issue of conflicting meetings, noting that some people may not attend CAB Board meetings due to overlapping important meetings, like a zoning committee meeting that occurred the same night. She suggests that crucial topics, such as zoning changes, could be presented at CAB Board meetings to inform the public more effectively. Reva emphasizes the importance of presenting both the pros and cons of any issue, allowing people to form their own opinions. She also highlights the problem of short notice for important meetings, mentioning that a zoning meeting was announced with only about five and a half days' notice, making it difficult for people to attend if they already had plans. Alexandra added meetings on same date/time and not enough meeting notice as a challenge.

Bruce Parks reflects on the effectiveness of past "fireside chats" hosted by county commissioners, noting they were illuminating and valuable for engaging with the community. He appreciates the restructuring of CAB meetings, which now provide more time and opportunities for community input, rather than focusing solely on development projects as they used to. Bruce highlights the importance of two-way communication and encourages more outreach, such as sending postcards to new residents with information about county resources. He emphasizes the value of navigating the Washoe County website for information but acknowledges that face-to-face interactions and opportunities for direct engagement, like town halls, are crucial for fostering real two-way communication. He believes this type of communication should be prioritized and initiated from the top down.

Joannie Hammond emphasizes the need for sincerity from presenters and officials at public meetings. She expresses frustration with attending meetings where public comments seem to be disregarded, noting that officials often appear uninterested and vote against the public's expressed concerns, as seen with the Lands Bill. Joannie stresses the importance of having officials who genuinely care about community feedback and are willing to act on it, as elected representatives are supposed to represent the interests of the public, including those attending CAB meetings. Alexandra Wilson added sincerity of speakers/presenters to the notes.

Brandon Partain highlights the challenge of education, suggesting that many people likely don’t understand the purpose or process of the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB). He notes that a clearer understanding of the CAB’s intent and role might encourage greater attendance and participation. He believes if the public were better educated on these matters, more people would be inclined to get involved. Alexandra Wilson responds by noting that the issue of education has been categorized under "jurisdiction and governing bodies" and agrees that it’s important for people to understand who is responsible for what, as well as the overall process. She acknowledges the many challenges raised during the discussion, viewing them as opportunities for improvement.

*Ideas: Board & Public Discussion*

Bruce Parks raises a concern about how input on agenda items is handled under Nevada's Open Meeting Law. He acknowledges that the law restricts certain actions by public body members but notes that the CAB already includes a part of the agenda where input is solicited from members for future topics. He asks whether CAB members can email Alexandra Wilson directly with agenda suggestions between meetings to avoid delays, as directly emailing other board members could potentially violate open meeting regulations. Alexandra Wilson confirms that CAB members can absolutely email her directly with agenda suggestions. She shares that in other CABs, members often reach out to her individually to avoid violating open meeting laws. Alexandra also recommends that members email the Commissioner support team, rather than just her, to ensure continuity and accountability, especially if she is unavailable. This way, her team and supervisor can also monitor and address any requests, ensuring nothing is missed.

Bradley Young asks if it’s possible to send out surveys or emails specifically targeting a certain district, like his own. He inquires whether Washoe County can narrow surveys down by jurisdiction to ensure they are relevant to the area. Alexandra Wilson explains that it's tricky to automatically narrow down surveys by jurisdiction due to the nature of IP addresses, which can sometimes reflect locations far outside the area, like other countries. However, in some surveys, they ask for zip codes or whether the respondent lives in incorporated or unincorporated areas, along with the name of their commissioner or district. She notes that many people don't know which district they belong to, which complicates targeting. Bradley responds that even incomplete responses, where 60-70% of the data is accurate, would be better than nothing, especially for those who signed up for district-specific emails. Alexandra adds that the district lists are based on interest, meaning that someone could sign up for a district's information even if they don't live there, which can further complicate accuracy.

Ron Brandon echoes Bruce Parks' comments about the importance of adhering to open meeting laws and avoiding a "walking quorum." He emphasizes that some neighborhood issues require thorough research, such as inquiries about hazmat cleanups near water sources like the Truckee River. He suggests that, while board members may request information, someone like Alexandra Wilson—who knows the right contacts—could follow up and provide researched answers, either through email or at the next CAB meeting. Ron also raises concerns about the increasing presence of vendors on street corners in Spanish Springs and compares it to the situation in California, noting the potential for people to approach cars at stoplights. Additionally, he points out the issue of homeless encampments leaving behind trash and other hazards, and questions how much these cleanups are costing the county. Alexandra Wilson explains that Washoe County's 311 system is an excellent resource for tracking and responding to various issues, from public records to random inquiries. The system is designed to ensure timely responses, usually within 24 hours to 5 days, depending on the nature of the request. Alexandra notes that her knowledge of county processes, jurisdiction, and who to contact stems from her experience with 311. When an inquiry, like a hazmat issue, is submitted, 311 directs it to the appropriate department—such as environmental health services or Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District—and tracks it until the department responds to the constituent. Commissioner Clara Andriola adds that residents can request further follow-up if they feel the initial response was insufficient. She receives reports on all 311 inquiries, including their status, and follows up if necessary. If a constituent seeks deeper information, they can request further clarification or details to ensure their concerns are fully addressed.

Bruce Parks shares his experience with the 311 system, explaining that he had initially received incomplete answers to his inquiry after submitting it twice. However, upon submitting it a third time, a different representative engaged and provided him with all the information he was seeking, even more than he initially expected. Bruce emphasizes the importance of persistence when using 311 and encourages people to resubmit their questions if they feel the response they received is inadequate. He suggests that sometimes inquiries might be directed to the wrong department, but resubmitting can ensure the question reaches the appropriate department for a complete answer. He concludes by noting that he's never been disappointed by 311 when he pursued clarification.

Alexandra Wilson explains that when inquiries are submitted to 311, the goal is not only to provide customer service but to ensure the quality of that service. If a department like Truckee Meadows (TM) is not the correct one to handle a request, the inquiry will be redirected to the appropriate department. The team’s responsibility is to clarify what the person is asking for, as sometimes people may not know exactly what they need. She emphasizes that if 311 can't directly provide an answer, they will find someone who can, even if it involves jurisdictions outside of Washoe County. She gives an example of how some people mistakenly call Washoe County's 311 thinking it's San Francisco’s system and underscores the importance of asking clarifying questions to ensure the correct information is provided. If necessary, the inquiry can be escalated to her team for follow-up.

Janet Butcher asks whether the chair is responsible for setting the agenda at CAB meetings, similar to commission meetings, as she was under the impression that the chair had that authority. Alexandra Wilson explains that while the chair's main role is to run the meeting and ensure everything stays on task, they do not have sole control over the agenda. All CAB members can provide input on agenda topics, and Alexandra works with the chair to confirm items but emphasizes that it is a shared responsibility. She notes that the vice-chair is also involved, particularly in decisions about canceling meetings or making other adjustments. The process is collaborative, ensuring all members can contribute to the agenda. Alexandra clarifies that CAB meetings are advisory in nature, which may result in slight procedural differences compared to commission meetings.

Brandon Partain suggests using YouTube and shorter, engaging video content as a way to enhance community engagement. He points out that many people, including his friends, spend hours watching and sharing videos on YouTube, but these videos are typically short, digestible clips, not lengthy recordings like two-hour discussions on county matters. He proposes that instead of presenting full master plans or quarterly reports in traditional formats, the county could create brief videos that highlight key sections of these documents. This approach would make the information more accessible and engaging, especially for younger audiences who consume content in smaller chunks. Brandon emphasizes the importance of making the content "digestible" and thinks this strategy could lead to better engagement with county reports and initiatives.

Stacey Farrell suggests leveraging HOAs (Homeowners Associations) as an additional avenue for outreach and communication in the community, particularly because they are well attended. She proposes sending newsletters or Spanish Springs news to HOAs to help raise awareness about CAB (Citizen Advisory Board) meetings, meeting agendas, or general county updates. Although HOAs do not meet frequently, she believes they can still help reach a wider audience and make more people aware of community events and meetings. Additionally, she suggests incorporating this information into the broader Washoe County Newsletter, especially to highlight events and updates relevant to Spanish Springs.

Bradley Young asked if there is a list of HOAs. Alexandra explains that while a list exists, it's quite extensive and challenging to manage. She describes how she has searched for HOA information, noting that there are many HOAs, but it can be difficult to find complete or accurate contact details. For example, some HOAs are managed by large property management companies, many of which are not based in Washoe County but operate out of places like Las Vegas. This can result in only having generic email addresses or 800 numbers for contact information.

Commissioner Clara Andriola introduced the idea of hosting a community engagement event in District 4, where various county departments could participate and provide information to the public in a more interactive, fun, and engaging manner. She mentioned that this would go beyond the typical formal setting, aiming for a more powerful community outcome. She acknowledged that organizing such an event would require significant effort in terms of staffing and coordination but felt it could be a good pilot project for the district. Andriola also noted that there had been discussions about doing something similar on a larger, regional scale but suggested starting with District 4. She welcomed feedback on the concept and asked for thoughts from others. Alexandra Wilson noted down "community engagement forum" as part of the discussion.

Mark Neumann suggested that Sun Valley GID, although smaller than Spanish Springs area, has successfully hosted community events like picnics and an Easter egg hunt. He mentioned that Commissioner Mariluz Garcia attended and interacted with residents, highlighting that community events provide an opportunity for engagement. He proposed that Spanish Springs could host a similar event in their park, inviting the Commissioner and offering simple refreshments like hot dogs and sodas to encourage participation. Alexandra Wilson responded by acknowledging the idea and suggesting expanding community engagement through partnerships with other entities, such as the Sun Valley General Improvement District (GID). She emphasized that working with community partners can bring in additional resources, funding, and support for organizing such events.

Sharon Thygesen suggested using local events, such as the weekly summer concerts in the park, to promote Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) meetings. She recommended that announcements be made during the concerts to remind people to attend the CAB meetings. Additionally, she proposed engaging high school students, particularly those in student leadership roles, as they might have an interest in attending the CAB meetings. Sharon also mentioned that using QR codes on event handouts, like those distributed during the summer music series, could help gather feedback or encourage sign-ups. She further suggested partnering with local churches to include CAB meeting information in their flyers. Sharon also suggested tapping into the business community. Alexandra added businesses to community partners as an idea.

Bruce Parks added that local community colleges and the university often encourage students, especially those in political science departments, to participate in community events as part of their curriculum or to earn extra credit. He suggested engaging these students, along with high schoolers, to get them involved in CAB meetings or other community activities. This could be a good way to increase participation and awareness among younger demographics.

Sharon Thygesen asked if districts were determined by zip code, suggesting that a field be added next to commissioners to help residents “find their district.” Commissioner Andriola noted that it is and isn’t done by zip code, as there are islands in Sparks that belong to Washoe County. Mark Neumann added that the “find my district” tool is already available. Alexandra explained that each Commissioner’s profile includes information about their district, but the email sign-up process isn't intuitive. While there’s a sign-up link at the bottom of every webpage, it doesn't directly guide users to sign up when they are on specific district or Commissioner pages, which might hinder user engagement. Alexandra added this to “parking lot” as a potential improvement to the website.

Shannon Martell added that many people do not know who we are and why we’re here, so potentially adding in an introductory statement might be helpful.

Bradley Young shared an anecdote about attending water aerobics and mentioned how, despite many participants having lived in the area for 20-30 years, none of them had ever heard of the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB). He explained the CAB to them, but after he finished, they walked off, highlighting a lack of awareness about local government activities and CAB meetings within the community.

*Next Steps: Board & Public Discussion*

Alexandra Wilson discussed the next steps for improving community engagement. She explained that while ideas presented during the meeting were valuable, they needed to be prioritized based on what would yield the most benefit for the board and the community. She highlighted the cost challenges associated with outreach, sharing that sending a single postcard in 2022 to communicate CAB schedules cost approximately $39,000 in postage, with minimal return on investment. Many postcards were sent to outdated addresses, missing renters, and did not result in increased CAB participation. Despite these challenges, Alexandra encouraged ongoing discussions to determine which engagement strategies would be most effective in moving forward.

Bonnie Billings emphasized the importance of having a strong marketing plan to increase community engagement. She suggested that leveraging text messaging and video engagement on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram would be an effective and modern approach. Bonnie noted that short, engaging videos—ideally around one minute in length—could capture people's attention and convey essential information in a concise and appealing way. Although not entirely cost-free due to staffing needs, she believed this strategy could have a significant impact.

Shannon Martell proposed a creative idea involving mobile advertisements as a way to enhance community engagement. She suggested using vehicles, such as those with billboards on the side or cabs with advertisements on top, to spread important information about Washoe County initiatives. This would be similar to the mobile billboards that drive around promoting events or services, providing a more visible and dynamic approach to outreach.

Bruce Parks emphasized that the marketing plan should incorporate various strategies discussed during the meeting, such as leveraging electronic engagement, tapping into community partners, and conducting targeted presentations. He stressed the importance of making the marketing plan strategic to effectively reach and engage the community.

Bradley Young suggested a practical solution for future meetings, emphasizing the importance of having CAB members bring ideas from their HOAs or communities to ensure engagement. He noted that some members, like Brandon, may feel hesitant to interrupt during meetings. Therefore, he proposed that members prepare a list of ideas beforehand and contribute them to help set the agenda for the next meeting before it ends, ensuring broader input and a more efficient process.

Mark Neumann suggested that many of the ideas shared during the meeting could be effectively communicated through short formats, like 1- to 3-minute YouTube commercials or text messages. He highlighted that this approach would allow the dissemination of these ideas to a broad audience in an efficient and engaging way.

Ron Brandon suggested the idea of including a bill insert in property tax statements as a way to reach residents, particularly those who are not part of the email system, such as the 80 people he referenced at the pool. He noted that when taxpayers open their bills, they are likely to take an interest in any additional information included. Though unsure of the cost, he proposed this method as a potentially effective way to reach a broader audience.

Brandon Partain suggested having Washoe County CAB-branded apparel as a way for members to represent the board in the community, sparking curiosity and engagement from others. He also raised a concern about conflicting meetings and competing priorities, asking how much advance notice could be provided for meeting topics to help people clear their schedules for those of interest. Alexandra Wilson mentioned that similar items are used for the Washoe County Leadership Academy (WCLA) to foster a sense of pride among participants. While it could be a positive initiative, she noted concern about the potential misuse of branded materials, as it reflects on the organization. This cautious approach ensures that any inappropriate behavior while wearing the items wouldn't negatively impact the county's image. Addressing the issue of conflicting meetings, Alexandra explained that internal communication between departments is key to avoiding scheduling conflicts and that this is something they are actively working on. For meeting topics, she noted that she maintains an ongoing ideas list and tentatively schedules items for future meetings. Posting these ideas and agendas earlier could help with public planning.

Commissioner Clara Andriola suggested making the captured discussion available to board members afterward, as sometimes ideas come to mind later. She emphasized that having access to the discussion could allow members to contribute additional thoughts or follow up on ideas at a later time. Alexandra Wilson responded by agreeing that it would be beneficial to share the discussion summary and confirmed that all feedback will be documented and sent to CAB members. She highlighted that this process ensures inclusivity and transparency while avoiding any open meeting law violations. Alexandra also mentioned that the video and meeting minutes would be available for review.

Bonnie Billings suggested a more cost-effective alternative to sending postcards to new and existing residents. She noted that when realtors sell property, they provide a packet to newcomers, which includes a magazine. By placing a small ad about community involvement and CAB meetings in that magazine, it could reach new residents at a lower cost than using postcards. She emphasized that the rate of return from postcards and postage has not been effective. Alexandra added this to the inserts or publications idea that was proposed re: tax bills and HOA newsletters.

The CAB Board closed the item and moved to have staff summarize the item and bring this back to the next agenda (Motion passed 6-0).

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bradley Young requested NDOT (Nevada Department of Transportation) as a presenter, noting that it would be a draw due to the significant roadway projects in the area. He mentioned the last NDOT presentation was well-received but occurred about a year ago, so it would be beneficial to have them return. He also supported the suggestion for more dynamic Q&A sessions, proposing that brief, on-topic questions be allowed during presentations to engage the audience while still keeping the meeting efficient. He acknowledged that Washoe County Commissioner Eric did well managing short questions in past events and suggested the CAB chair could allow similar brief interactions during presentations before transitioning to the next speaker. Bruce Parks mentioned that him and the Commissioner discussed having both NDOT and RTC at the next meeting.

Tracey Hilton Thomas, running for County Commissioner for District 4, expressed disappointment that the sheriff's and fire reports were removed from the agenda, as she had been looking forward to hearing them. She then provided time-sensitive information about the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District's upcoming "Green Days" on April 13th and 14th, where residents can bring their defensible space debris for mulching. She also noted that residents with larger quantities of material could schedule an appointment for on-site assistance. Additionally, she reminded the group that April is the designated open burning month, but residents are required to obtain a permit for any burning activities.

Alexandra Wilson added that in addition to the "Green Waste" days on April 13th and 14th, Washoe County will also be holding another event on April 27th in collaboration with Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful (KTMB) as part of the Great Community Cleanup. The Washoe County staff, along with Document Shred, will provide a drop-off location for various items, which she plans to present more details about during the Sun Valley CAB meeting on Saturday.

**ADJOURNMENT -** Adjourned at 7:54 p.m.