****  **South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley Citizen Advisory Board**

**Minutes of the regular meeting of the South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley Citizen Advisory Board on June 5, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. at South Valleys Library**

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

Present – Penny Brock, Adolfo Correa, Brad Stanley, Drew Ribar, Marge Frandsen (online)

Absent –

1. **PLEGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge was recited

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –**Lisa O’Sullivan, a resident of Steamboat Valley, expressed concern about fencing recently installed by the Nevada Department of Agriculture, which blocks wild horses from accessing the valley. She explained that the fencing was done without consultation and has created significant public safety issues by eliminating the horses’ role in grazing and managing vegetation on about 250 acres of BLM-managed land. Without this natural fuel reduction, wildfire risk in the valley will increase. She also noted that alternative vegetation management methods, such as using goats, would cost the State between $40,000 and $60,000 annually, while the horses have historically provided this service at no expense to taxpayers. O’Sullivan further stated that the fencing has cut off access to long-established water sources, forcing the horses to cross East Lake Boulevard daily to reach Little Washoe Lake. This poses a danger to both drivers and the horses due to the 45 mile-per-hour speed limit on the road. In contrast, she explained that the horses’ presence in Steamboat Valley, where speed limits are lower, has historically been safer for all. She added that a Truckee Meadows Fire official supports her concerns that the fencing heightens fire risk. She urged the Department to revise the fencing plan by reopening access to the 250 acres of BLM land and restoring access to the water source on Willamonte that the horses have relied on for the past 13 years. O’Sullivan concluded that denying wild animals access to water is not only inhumane but also undermines fire management and land stewardship efforts, and she asked the Department to work with the community on a more responsible solution.

Sonia Cuffe, a resident of Steamboat Valley, spoke about her concerns regarding fire risk in the area between Pleasant Valley and Steamboat Valley. She moved to the valley in 2019 and referenced the area’s history of major fires, including the 2004 firestorm, the 2021 Highway 395 fire, and several recent fires. She identified two main issues. First, she raised concern about the closure of the Washoe Valley Fire Station in 2022, noting there are no current plans to reopen it. She questioned how the cost of reopening could outweigh the cost of fighting even one major fire and expressed strong concern about reduced fire protection in the valley. Second, she discussed the increased fire danger caused by fencing that now prevents wild horses from grazing in the valley. In past years, horses kept vegetation low, but with them fenced out by the State Department of Agriculture, grasses have grown unchecked around homes and on BLM land. She noted the visible difference in fuel accumulation and expressed fear for both homes and livestock in the event of a wildfire. She stated that if a fire occurred, evacuating hundreds of animals would be nearly impossible, and many would have to be set loose, but with the fencing in place, they would be trapped and at risk of dying. She added that pushing horses into the Virginia Hills without access to water is inhumane. Cuffe concluded by opposing the fencing, stressing that it increases fire danger, threatens property and lives, and creates unnecessary harm to the wild horses.

Paul White directed his comments to the Sheriff’s Office and requested that several questions be relayed to Sheriff Balaam for follow-up. He noted that while the jail has a capacity of about 1,200 inmates, there are still many individuals on the streets who, in his view, should be incarcerated. He questioned the practice of issuing citations instead of making arrests and asked what plans exist for ensuring adequate security at housing developments. White also raised concerns about diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, referencing a “30/30” initiative that would aim for 30 percent of command staff and deputies to be women. He stressed the importance of hiring based on qualifications rather than quotas. He then commented on reports of strained relations between the Sheriff’s Office and the Reno Police Department, allegedly tied to jurisdictional disputes over patrol areas and budgets. Finally, he questioned the disparity between Sheriff Balaam’s security detail and Reno Police Chief Nance’s lack of one, suggesting the difference could be contributing to tensions and asking for clarification on the county’s role in funding the Sheriff’s security.

Elizabeth Sotomayor shared her advocacy for wild horses and concern about their loss of access to water sources. She recounted attending the Lincoln Day Dinner in April, where she spoke directly with Governor Lombardo about the issue. She informed him that the main pond on the range was drying up quickly and expressed her alarm about the horses facing dehydration, which she described as a painful death. Sotomayor stated that Governor Lombardo assured her water would be delivered to the horses, similar to the practice used for bighorn sheep, though he did not specify a timeline. She noted that the ponds are now completely dry and urged action to provide a reliable water source on the range as the governor promised. She asked the community to help contact the governor to stress the urgency of delivering water for the horses.

Cynthia Reed, a longtime Reno-Sparks resident and retired teacher, spoke as a volunteer, HOA board member, and Firewise coordinator. She raised two concerns related to parks in South Reno. Her first concern was the need for fenced dog parks for both small and large dogs. She noted that the South Valleys 2015 Master Plan included a small dog park behind the baseball field, and with the plan scheduled for review in 2025, she urged that the dog park remain part of the expansion. She explained that after COVID-19, funding for the project disappeared, though infrastructure improvements are now underway and the softball group has secured a grant. She stressed the importance of green space for both dogs and their owners, citing health, socialization, and safety benefits, and encouraged support and funding for the project. Her second concern was balanced use of existing neighborhood parks. Reed described how retired residents like herself enjoy walking dogs on-leash and playing casually in neighborhood parks, but conflicts arise with sports programming. She expressed frustration that dog owners are being threatened with $200 citations for this activity, and she asked for more consideration of multi-use access in neighborhood parks.

Nicole Herris, a resident of Galena, expressed frustration that the community continues to face unresolved issues and emphasized the need for vigilance and active participation. She reminded attendees that Citizens Advisory Boards are mandated by statute and stressed that residents have a right to meaningful involvement. Herris urged Commissioner Mike Clark and the Board of County Commissioners to hold CAB meetings monthly rather than every two months, explaining that less frequent meetings leave residents relying on rumors instead of clear answers. She highlighted the importance of better communication, noting that residents pay taxes and employ public officials, and therefore deserve consistent updates. She also presented a community survey to identify key areas of interest and encouraged neighbors to share their HOA or neighborhood information for a master contact list, which has already grown to 188 entries. She clarified the list is private and will not be sold but is intended to improve communication across neighborhoods. Herris stressed the need for residents to serve on boards and commissions to act as “eyes and ears” for their communities, as CAB members cannot handle the workload alone. Citing past examples such as confusion during the Davis Fire and uncertainty about local development projects, Herris underscored that residents need accurate facts to make informed decisions. She concluded by encouraging all neighbors to attend meetings, participate, and work together to make their neighborhoods stronger.

Julie Ullman provided an update on recent improvements and programs at the library. She noted the library is celebrating its 22nd anniversary this year, which highlighted the need to refresh the aging building. With ARPA funding, the teen zone received new paint, carpet, furniture, shelving, and an art gallery. The periodicals area also received new furniture, and sustainability funds allowed for window film to reduce heat. Additional upgrades included a renovated business center, new shade on the south patio, and improvements in the meeting room. She highlighted a generous donation from patron Bill Nicklish in memory of his wife Karen, which funded new photographs, chairs, tables, benches, and a Lake Tahoe panorama in the lobby. Ullman said these changes have greatly improved the facility and invited further donations for future projects. She also announced the start of the summer reading challenge, themed *Color Our World*, which is open to all ages. Within the first few days, 105 active readers had already logged 245 books and more than 11,000 minutes, with eight participants completing the challenge. Ullman encouraged everyone to sign up and support community literacy.

Kevin Williams spoke about his past involvement with wild horse advocacy and his frustration with how the issue has been handled in recent years. He said that after the fencing went up, it felt like the effort to protect the horses lost momentum, and he became discouraged. He criticized the Nevada Department of Agriculture and related organizations for a lack of transparency, saying the public struggles to learn the truth about what is happening. Williams expressed anger that wild horses are being fenced off from their natural resources, particularly water, and emphasized that the animals have feelings and play an important role in reducing fire fuels by grazing. He argued that agencies and organizations tasked with helping the horses are restricted by contracts with NDA, leaving them unable—or unwilling—to act. In his view, these groups react too late instead of proactively addressing problems, leading to unnecessary suffering and roundups. He concluded that the situation is “terrible” and difficult to understand, but wanted to voice his concerns about the ongoing treatment of the horses and the lack of timely solutions.

Kelly Hyatt stated that she has been hauling water for wild horses for nearly a decade, previously with approval from the Department of Agriculture and private landowners, but can no longer do so because of new fencing. She explained that there are three separate fences affecting the horses: one built with grant funding by the City, another across Steamboat Valley from Andrew Lane to Toll Road that blocks water access, and a third built with little public awareness through categorical exclusions, running from Jumbo Grade to Ten Horn near the now-closed fire station. Hyatt warned that these fences increase fire danger in areas like Sierra Reflections and surrounding canyons that have burned multiple times in recent years. She also raised concerns about rumors of road expansions and inadequate communication with residents, emphasizing the need for monthly CAB meetings to keep neighborhoods informed. She expressed frustration that community volunteers are being told not to speak up, despite taxpayer dollars funding projects carried out in secrecy. Hyatt stressed that water sources for wildlife, such as guzzlers for bighorn sheep, are maintained by hunters and specifically designed to exclude wild horses, leaving no natural water available on the range. She concluded that the seasonal ponds are now dry, she is prohibited from hauling water, and the situation poses both fire risks and threats to the survival of the horses.

Lynda Fisher submitted a letter for the record and spoke about her opposition to the fencing that restricts wild horses from accessing water. She said she was unaware of the fencing until informed by a friend involved with the horses and expressed concern that instead of addressing population management, the solution has been to cut the horses off from resources they need to survive. Fisher shared her lifelong connection to Nevada and the Sierras, noting her father was a cowboy who valued the wild horses as part of the region’s history and culture. She questioned how people have become indifferent to them and described the fencing as inhumane, urging that the horses be allowed continued access to water. She strongly opposed completion of the fencing project and emphasized that denying water to the horses is cruel and contrary to Nevada’s heritage. She concluded by asking that her letter be included in the minutes and adding her personal appreciation for firefighters.

Norma Davidson, a resident of over 35 years, voiced strong opposition to the actions of the Nevada Department of Agriculture regarding fencing that blocks wild horses from grazing and accessing water. She argued that the decision has put homeowners at greater risk of wildfire by removing the horses that naturally reduce vegetation fuels. Davidson compared the situation to Galena, where sheep are used for grass control, emphasizing that in her area, horses serve that role. She stated that claims about available water above Highway 395 are false, noting that the high desert has limited sources and that Washoe Lake is the only reliable water supply. She described the fencing as inhumane, torturous, and lacking compassion for wildlife. Davidson also linked the issue to rising homeowner insurance challenges, saying insurers are dropping coverage because the area is now considered a high fire risk. She concluded by stressing that wild horses are part of Nevada’s heritage and identity, calling them symbols of the state’s free spirit, and urged that they be protected rather than fenced out.

Kristin Field, a resident of Steamboat, spoke in support of the wild horses, saying they are a treasured part of the community and neighborhood. She expressed disbelief and deep concern that the horses are being denied access to water, calling it inhumane and unacceptable. Field noted that residents have previously petitioned on behalf of the horses and questioned why the community is facing the same issue again. She emphasized that the fencing and lack of water access are “the craziest, most awful thing” and highlighted additional fire danger, as neighbors have observed unusually heavy grass growth without the horses grazing. She concluded by urging officials to recognize that residents do not support the current situation and asked for clear directions on what can be done to ensure the horses’ needs are met and community concerns are addressed.

Roger Dauffenbach described how he and his brother have long provided water for wild horses but can no longer do so effectively because new fencing prevents the animals from reaching it. He explained that diversionary feeding used to keep the horses in the hills, but with that gone, they depend on water sources near his property, which the fencing now blocks. He emphasized that horses cannot open the gate built into the new fence, leaving them without access to water. While herds used to be plentiful, he said only five or six horses now come around, and he expressed distress at the decline. Dauffenbach argued that the fencing traps horses and prevents natural movement, asking how they are supposed to survive without water. He concluded emotionally, recalling the time when he and his brother actively cared for large herds and questioning what has happened to them, calling the situation flabbergasting and disheartening.

Mary Ann Tolsner, a Steamboat resident, raised concerns about wildfire and flood safety in her community. She emphasized that the neighborhood has only one way in and out, which poses a major risk in emergencies. With tall grasses now unchecked because wild horses are no longer grazing the area, she said fire danger has increased significantly. Tolsner described the potential chaos of residents trying to evacuate on a single road during a fire, noting that in past emergencies people have resorted to driving across private property. She also pointed out that flooding along Steamboat Creek further limits safe routes, and even if residents make it to Roden’s Road, it would likely be jammed with traffic. She concluded that the community is essentially “landlocked and doomed” without better exit strategies in place.

Kellie Hansen, a former volunteer who worked with wild horses for over a decade, expressed frustration that years of effort have been undone by the installation of fencing. She said horses are now suffering without access to water or supplemental feeding and noted that the impacts extend beyond horses to deer, bears, coyotes, bobcats, and mountain lions. Hansen shared that she was injured, along with children she was riding with, after colliding with fencing on BLM land, criticizing the lack of notice or warning about its placement. She argued that the fences block access to public lands for recreation such as dirt biking, quads, and hiking, and pose ongoing safety hazards. She emphasized that in her 40 years in the area, she has witnessed several major fires, and believes the horses play a critical role in reducing fuels and mitigating fire danger. Hansen concluded by stating that the fences are unfair, harmful to wildlife, dangerous for the public, and cut off necessary access to water.

1. **BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**Commissioner Mike Clark, representing District 2, addressed concerns about fire protection, county finances, and government accountability. He said residents have been paying taxes toward a promised new fire station that has not been built, despite being planned years ago. Costs have since risen to an estimated $5–7 million, and Clark stated he was recently told there are no funds to build it. He pledged to work with the new fire chief to get the project back on track, noting the importance of both fire stations and wild horses in reducing fire risk. Clark also criticized the closure of a previous station due to bats, pointing out that the Nevada Department of Forestry now occupies the building without issue. He highlighted his own experience living through three major fires in Washoe Valley and warned that current power shutoff practices by NV Energy create new risks, including power surges that could spark fires. On finances, Clark said the county has more tax revenue and investment returns than ever in its history yet is still projecting a $125 million deficit over the next four years. He argued this is due to fiscal mismanagement, including overspending and hiring more than 300 permanent employees with temporary COVID relief funds. He cautioned that the county’s approach to solving the shortfall will be to raise taxes, further burdening residents. Clark concluded by urging residents to stay engaged, warning that county leadership is trying to eliminate Citizens Advisory Board meetings to reduce transparency. He positioned himself as a voice for fiscal responsibility and accountability.

Commissioner Clark was asked where we go from here. He responded that the next step is sustained public pressure: attend meetings, use the three-minute public comment to state your concerns, email or call commissioners, and flood them with votes or campaign contributions if you want action because, he said bluntly, elected officials respond to votes and money. He urged residents to keep pushing the fence and fire-station issues publicly so officials can’t ignore them, acknowledged low meeting turnout weakens the community’s influence, and said he’s raised these points with county leadership and will continue pushing the fire-station issue with the new fire chief. Clark also put the concerns in fiscal context, citing county budget choices and spending priorities to explain why projects haven’t been funded, and used several budget comparisons (homeless services, seniors, animal control) to illustrate his view that county management and recent hiring decisions have created the current shortfall. Overall, his answer combined practical guidance for residents on how to compel action and a critique of county fiscal choices that he says underpin the lack of progress.

Ragsdale asked who is accountable for the budgeting of taxpayer money. The response given was that accountability ultimately lies with the five County Commissioners, though spending decisions are often seen as illogical.

Kristin Field asked where community input goes after residents voice oppositions such as raising hands against the fencing and expressed concern that Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) meetings no longer feel meaningful. She said it seems as though feedback is not reaching decision-makers, and community members are left wondering how their voices can influence outcomes if messages do not move beyond the CAB. In response, Commissioner Clark acknowledged her frustration and agreed that CABs have been “dumbed down.” He explained that while he listens and carries residents’ concerns to the Board of County Commissioners, his single vote often gets dismissed as “just Clark’s opinion.” He emphasized that residents’ collective voices matter more than his alone and urged them to keep speaking out, send emails, and directly pressure other commissioners. He said change requires more people to participate, make their opinions known, and continue pushing issues beyond the CAB so they cannot be ignored.

Cameron McSweeney asked an inaudible question to Commissioner Clark. He responded that he opposed the proposed development, stating that smaller lots are incompatible with the rural character of Pleasant Valley. McSweeney stressed the importance of continued community attendance at meetings to raise awareness, since many residents in Pleasant Valley, Steamboat, and Washoe Valley remain unaware of how harmful the project could be. Clark explained that the political process often relies on public fatigue after repeated delays and rescheduled meetings, fewer people show up, and decisions get pushed through once attendance dwindles. The speaker urged neighbors to stay persistent, keep showing up, and not allow officials to wear down community opposition.

Elizabeth Sotomayor asked Commissioner Clark whether the fencing was funded with federal money and what authority the county has over the issue. Commissioner Clark responded that, as far as he knows, the matter has never come before the county for a vote and that decisions rest primarily with state and federal agencies, not local government. He explained that while CAB meetings provide a forum for public comment, the real influence comes when state or federal officials, such as the Governor hear that large groups of residents are opposed. He noted that this type of community input can still be valuable when higher-level leaders are engaged. Clark also mentioned that in Washoe Valley there are still significant numbers of horses, estimating around 250 in the area.

Maureen Collins asked how effective petitions are when compared to other forms of communication, such as emails or public record requests, and where petitions actually go once collected. In response, it was explained that while petitions can help raise awareness, they are less impactful than direct communication. Hundreds of identical petition signatures might only put an issue “on the radar,” whereas individual emails or phone calls to commissioners carry more weight and are taken more seriously as part of the public record.

A citizen asked how much financial information about county spending is available to the public. The response was that all of it should be accessible, noting the county’s budget is over $1.1 billion. Despite this, recent budget meetings drew only about 12 attendees out of a county of half a million residents. The speaker stressed that while taxpayers have the right to see how money is being spent, few people engage, and it remains unclear how well new efforts to share spending information will work.

Candee Ramos, representing Washoe County, announced an upcoming event called *Budget 101 and the Washoe Checkbook* on July 22 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Washoe County Chambers. She explained that the Washoe Checkbook is an online tool for viewing county financial information, but it can be difficult to navigate. The event will provide instruction on how to use it, along with a Q&A session featuring the county’s Chief Financial Officer, Budget Manager, and Comptroller. Ramos also noted there is a separate statewide tool called the Nevada Checkbook. Flyers were provided in the back of the room.

Jay Collins said he empathized with residents’ concerns about the wild horses and pointed to a past incident when Little Washoe Lake dried up. He noted that once media coverage drew attention to the problem, it was quickly addressed. Collins suggested that the same approach should be taken with the horse issue, encouraging residents to get television and media involved to generate momentum. He emphasized that Commissioner Clark cannot tackle the matter alone and criticized the scheduling of important county meetings during weekdays and late afternoons, when few people can attend. He argued that sometimes public officials only respond when issues are exposed or when they are embarrassed into taking action. Commissioner Clark agreed, acknowledging that public pressure and visibility through media can be effective in getting officials to act, especially when procedural tactics like shifting agendas make it harder for residents to participate meaningfully.

A question was asked about when the county was last audited and whether an intermediate list was available. The response clarified that audits are conducted based on information the county itself provides to auditors. In other words, auditors rely on county-supplied data, and there is little independent verification, leading to concerns that the process does not fully ensure accountability.

A speaker noted that while about 250 horses were recently seen in one area, the large number was due to herds being cut off from other regions by fencing, forcing them to merge. This is not typical and reflects the impact of restricted movement. Commissioner Clark then discussed efforts to improve community engagement, explaining that he and volunteers host evening town hall meetings at local venues, such as churches, where residents can speak freely without formal restrictions. He said future meetings will be announced on his Facebook page with several weeks’ notice and encouraged residents to sign up so he can share information directly about issues in District 2.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF** April 3, 2025 Brad Stanley motioned to approve the minutes of the April 3 CAB meeting. Adolfo Correa seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
2. **PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES**

**Washoe County Sheriff’s Office**
Lieutenant Thor Tinseth of the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office reported on crime and safety trends in Washoe Valley and South Truckee Meadows. Calls for service in the first quarter totaled 3,087, up from 2,480 the previous year, showing county growth and increased activity. Assaults, vandalism, DUIs, fraud, and theft have all risen. Traffic accidents reached 154 in April, about 30 more than last year, many tied to impaired drivers. To address this, the Sheriff’s Office has created a dedicated DUI enforcement unit working seven days a week. He noted a recent fatal crash involving a bicyclist in Washoe Valley and emphasized the ongoing risks of impaired driving. With summer events such as the rodeo, Hot August Nights, and balloon races approaching, the office is preparing for increased demand. Lieutenant Tinseth also urged residents to help prevent property crime by locking cars, not leaving valuables visible, and securing homes at night. He warned of rising fraud cases, particularly scams targeting the elderly, where callers impersonate law enforcement and demand immediate payments via cash or gift cards. He stressed that the Sheriff’s Office will never request money in this way and encouraged residents to verify suspicious calls by hanging up and calling official numbers. Overall, he said the Sheriff’s Office is busy but prepared, with a strong focus on public safety heading into the summer season.

A citizen asked what could be done about kids riding e-bikes recklessly on Veterans and Toll Road. Lieutenant Thor Tinseth explained that these motorized bikes must follow traffic laws, and violations like speeding or reckless riding can lead to citations or even arrests. However, if deputies don’t witness the behavior, they rely on citizens to provide detailed descriptions and, in some cases, sign the citation themselves, similar to how noise complaints are handled. He noted that enforcement is challenging because riders often leave before deputies arrive, but tips such as identifying where the kids live or providing dashcam footage can help. Tinseth added that this problem is occurring countywide, with several juveniles recently arrested in Spanish Springs for similar offenses.

A citizen asked if footage from their home security cameras without a placard could still be used as evidence for reckless driving in front of their house. Lieutenant Tinseth confirmed that as long as the video includes a timestamp, it can be used.

A citizen asked about current law enforcement coverage in the South Valleys. Lieutenant Tinseth explained that the area is part of the AB district, which runs from Hidden Valley to the Carson City line, and typically has four to five deputies per shift. Coverage includes day, graveyard, and a swing shift added eight months ago to handle peak calls, with six deputies roaming countywide as needed. Compared to the past, staffing is about the same as five years ago but somewhat lower than ten years ago.

**Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District**
Division Chief Joe Schum of Truckee Meadows Fire and Rescue reported on operations in the South Valleys, which cover five fire stations from Hidden Valley to Pleasant Valley and Arrowcreek. In May, crews responded to 231 calls, down slightly from 265 the prior year, with an average of about 225–235 monthly. Calls included five fires, 120 medical and motor vehicle incidents (22 of them crashes), 10 hazmat responses, and 97 false or canceled alarms. He reminded residents to stay hydrated and take breaks during the heat, noting that fire danger remains high. Safety precautions include securing tow chains, checking vehicle hubs, avoiding sparks from cutting or welding, and ensuring barbecue briquettes are fully extinguished. Schum also announced that the board ratified the contract for new Fire Chief Richard Edwards, who begins July 1 and has already started engaging with staff.

1. **REPORT ON REQUESTS FOR SERVICE FROM PREVIOUS CAB MEETINGS -**This item was skipped.
2. **GREENLINK NEVADA TRANSMISSION PROJECT**
Charles Hutchinson, a permitting manager with Power Engineers representing NV Energy, presented on the Greenlink Nevada Transmission Project. He explained that the project, mandated by Senate Bill 448, is designed to strengthen Nevada’s power grid and meet future energy demands with new high-voltage transmission infrastructure spanning 11 counties. For Washoe County, the relevant portion is the “Common Side Component,” a 345 kV line running from the Walker River Substation near Yerington to the Mira Loma Substation in Reno, crossing about 3.5 miles of Washoe County land. Hutchinson described the transmission structures, routing, and permitting process, noting that Washoe County must approve a special use permit, followed by review by the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency Construction is scheduled to begin in October 2025 in Lyon County, with Washoe County work expected by late 2026. Initial activity will include surveying, staking, and environmental assessments before structure installation. Hutchinson emphasized that the project will not involve fencing or long-term barriers, so wild horses will still have access to water and grazing. While temporary noise and activity may displace them during construction, animals will return once crews move on.

A citizen asked whether their neighborhoods would be directly affected by the Greenlink Nevada transmission project and requested clarification on the exact location. Charles Hutchinson explained that the line does not go through any neighborhoods and is routed on the far northern edge of the Citizens Advisory Board boundary. Goshen Nordak from NV Energy added detail using the project map, noting landmarks such as Rio Wrangler, the new Toll Brothers community, and Poulakidas Elementary School. He clarified that the transmission line will be placed behind the hills visible from the valley, alongside existing transmission infrastructure, so there will be no direct visual impact to nearby homes. He also emphasized that the project is located on private property and that new access roads will only be built where necessary, with existing roads used whenever possible.

Jay Collins asked whether NV Energy had considered placing transmission lines underground to reduce wildfire risk, pointing out that during the Davis Creek Fire, rural residents lost water when power was shut off and arguing that undergrounding could provide long-term safety despite higher costs. NV Energy representatives responded that burying high-voltage transmission lines is not standard industry practice because it is 10–15 times more expensive, less reliable, and much harder to repair. Underground lines generate heat, require cooling systems, and are prone to faults at splice points, which take days or weeks to fix, while overhead lines can often be repaired within hours and inspected visually. They emphasized that new transmission structures will use thick steel poles, which are highly fire-resistant, and noted that NV Energy follows wildfire protection policies mandated by Nevada Senate Bill 329. These policies include real-time monitoring with cameras, weather stations, and meteorologists, as well as replacing vulnerable poles with steel or fire-treated alternatives. They also confirmed that power shutoffs during extreme conditions are part of their fire prevention strategy to avoid lines sparking additional fires.

Penny Brock asked whether the transmission project would lead to rate increases for customers. NV Energy representatives responded that they could not provide a specific number because customer rates are based on the overall “rate base,” which includes the cost of all infrastructure. Each type of equipment has a federally defined lifespan for cost recovery—for example, a transmission line may be spread over 50–70 years, while other equipment may be 10–20 years. As new projects are added to the rate base, older ones that have reached the end of their recovery period come off, which helps balance costs and generally keeps rates at an average level.

1. **VIRGINIA RANGE HORSES NEW FENCING & CATTLE GUARD -**Naomi Duerr, a Reno City Council member and professional geologist with decades in water and natural resource management, outlined a decade of work focused on reducing horse–vehicle collisions in South Reno while maintaining humane access to water and habitat for Virginia Range horses. Drawing on her background as Nevada’s former State Water Planner, she framed wild horse management as a public-safety issue that all sides can rally around. She described the Virginia Range as largely private land unlike most Nevada ranges, making management complex, and noted strong public support for horses alongside fast growth in South Reno that has displaced wildlife and increased crashes. Between 2019 and 2021 there were 30 collisions in South Reno, 21 of which killed horses, with most crashes at night because horse coats absorb headlight illumination. Early steps that helped included public education, “don’t feed” messaging, consistent gate management, and targeted speed changes: Rio Wrangler and Steamboat Parkway dropped from 45 to 35 mph, and Veterans Parkway adopted Nevada’s first dual limit of 45 by day and 35 at night. Even before fencing, collisions began declining; in 2025 to date, South Reno has had zero, though fall typically brings more. Duerr distinguished the City of Reno’s fencing program from the Nevada Department of Agriculture’s, stressing they have different money sources, goals, and on-the-ground execution. Phase 1 of the Reno project is complete: five miles of wildlife-friendly fencing, cattle/“horse” guards, and pedestrian grid gates that don’t require latching, plus removal of legacy fencing found on BLM land to open a corridor into a new wildlife preserve along Steamboat Creek. Photos show large bands already using the preserve’s roughly 3,000-foot opening, sized wide to minimize crowding and territorial conflict. Phase 2, now bid and about to be awarded, will add about seven miles from Kenneth Way to Geiger Grade, across Toll Road and towards South Virginia, with horse guards designed to stop a hoof before a leg drops too deep. Phase 3 is planned to arc west toward South Virginia Street, intentionally leaving access to established water sources near Toll Road and Ravazza where residents have historically provided water. Because NDA has since installed a separate fence line across part of this area, Reno’s plan now functions as a “backstop,” creating a closed loop so vandalism or an open gate on one line won’t funnel horses into neighborhoods or onto high-speed roads. Volunteer groups have agreed to monitor and repair the city fence, while developers are now required by permit conditions to fence behind projects, close and monitor construction gates, and fix any damage within 48 hours. She emphasized that the city project is about separating horses from dangerous roads without fencing them away from water. To that end, she secured land returned from the Southeast Connector project to create a permanent wildlife preserve; long-term, she wants diversionary water stations required in permits, a wildlife over- or underpass at Geiger Grade to replace guards, and a continuous Virginia Range trail corridor for recreation and habitat connectivity. Funding remains the immediate obstacle: tariffs and costs pushed Phase 2 about $200,000 over budget on a roughly $1.5 million program that has pieced together ARPA funds, county and NDOT contributions, partner support, and over $45,000 in public donations. Duerr invited residents to a fundraiser at her home, urged continued turnout and testimony at County Commission meetings, and asked constituents to press candidates, the Governor, and federal representatives for accountability and targeted funding. She closed with contact information and a call to stay engaged so the fence network, water access, and safety measures can be finished this fall and sustained beyond her remaining 18 months in office.

Attendees asked what could be done about the Nevada Department of Agriculture’s fencing that’s blocking horse access to Washoe Lake—citing about 250 horses displaced and a band of roughly 30, including a nursing mare, that spent three days without water along the fence. Naomi Duerr said she has already testified before the NDA commission urging them not to extend the fence because the next phase would fully cut off Washoe access. She believes some horses are now stuck on the Washoe side, wary of returning after being deprived of water. Her guidance was to press the NDA to modify or remove the barrier and coordinate with Reno’s plan that routes fencing toward Virginia Street instead, and to contact the Governor directly now that the legislative session is over, since executive agencies and the Governor’s office are the levers for change and funding.
2. **FREQUENCY OF CAB MEETINGS -**

This item got chaired until the next meeting due to time constraints.

1. **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOOPMENT HUB & OTHER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITES**

This item got chaired until the next meeting due to time constraints.

1. **CAB BOARD MEMBER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**This item got chaired until the next meeting due to time constraints.
2. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT -**

This item got chaired until the next meeting due to time constraints.

 **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.