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**Sun Valley Citizen Advisory Board Minutes of the regular meeting of the Sun Valley Citizen Advisory Board held on September 2, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. at Hobey’s Casino, 5195 Sun Valley Boulevard, Sun Valley, NV 89433.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**
Present – Heidi Soper, Mary Esposito, Michael Rider, Veronica Cortes, Carmen Ortiz

Absent – Amy Owens. Mark Neumann

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**The pledge of allegiance was recited
2. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**
Brian Dugan, representing KUNR Public Radio, introduced the station’s car donation program. He explained that the program accepts vehicles of any condition—running or not—including cars, boats, and RVs. As long as the donor has the title, KUNR, through CarEasy.org, will arrange for removal of the vehicle. The vehicle is then auctioned, with proceeds (after a small service fee) benefiting public radio stations in the community. Dugan noted that flyers with a QR code were available at the meeting and provided contact details: 888-586-7404 or kunr.careasy.org. He also mentioned the possibility of collaborating with commissioners to address abandoned vehicles without titles.

Wayne Cobb stated he had received information in the mail regarding housing proposals in Sun Valley. He expressed concern about increased housing density, noting that while more housing could bring more people to the community, it would also create greater congestion and strain. Cobb emphasized his preference for lower housing density in Sun Valley and concluded by opposing further housing development in the area.

Colton Dunn raised concerns about traffic congestion and parking issues near his home, especially during swing shift hours, making it difficult to access his driveway or for children to walk safely on the street. He stated the problem has persisted for years without resolution. Dunn also voiced frustration with loud music disturbing the peace in his neighborhood and asked what times are legally allowable to call law enforcement regarding noise complaints. He emphasized that the ongoing disturbance is affecting his quality of life and came to the meeting to seek guidance on how to address the issue through proper channels.

Carol Burns expressed concerns about road and drainage maintenance following recent storms. She reported that roads are now filled with stones, gravel, and dirt, and large drains on Rampion are clogged with debris. Burns stated she had called six weeks earlier to request gutter cleaning but was told there is only one person operating the cleaning equipment for the entire county. She criticized the lack of upkeep compared to the past, when parkways and gutters were regularly maintained, and suggested reallocating resources or staff to address these issues. Burns also voiced frustration with difficulty reaching staff by phone and delays in response.

Richard Barnet introduced himself as a recent Sun Valley resident and shared that he has started an online newspaper for the community. He explained the project is free, with the possibility of adding a newsletter in the future. Flyers with more information were available at the meeting. Barnet said his goal is to preserve and share Sun Valley’s history and community stories, especially as people move in and out, and memories or local leadership can be lost. Having lived in the Reno–Sparks–Carson City area for decades, he sees this as a personal challenge and a way to give back. He emphasized that his publication would focus on positive and uplifting stories, rather than crime or negative news, highlighting the good happening in the community. Barnet invited residents to contribute ideas and stories for publication and teased an upcoming feature about a pizza lady.

Cindy Leslie shared that she had contacted School Board Trustee Ms. Westlake to request a presentation on school-related growth concerns, but her request was declined. She raised concerns about traffic congestion on 5th Street near Woods Drive during school dismissal, explaining that the congestion is so severe it could prevent emergency vehicles from getting through. Despite calling school police multiple times, she said the issue has not been resolved. She also reported attending the Reno Senior Fest and shared several resources available for seniors, including a free shredding event on September 18, free technology classes for iPhone and Android users, and monthly social activities. These include the Sun Valley Senior Summit dance party with ice cream on the last Friday of each month, free line dancing classes for seniors at the end of the month, and weekly activities at the Senior Center on Thursdays from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Leslie provided flyers at the meeting with more information.

Veronica Cortes announced that refreshments were provided at the meeting by Mendoza’s Taqueria, a local family-owned business that also operates a coffee shop, food truck, meat market, and restaurant. She noted her long-standing support for the family and praised their handmade tortillas, beans, and salsa. Cortes encouraged attendees to enjoy the snacks and show their support for the local business before continuing with the meeting.

1. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF** August 4, 2025

Michael Rider motioned to approve the minutes of the August 4 Sun Valley CAB meeting. Heidi Soper seconded the motion and the minutes passed unanimously.
2. **PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES**
**Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District**
Ryan Whitlock, Battalion Chief with Truckee Meadows Fire and Rescue, provided an update on emergency response activity in Sun Valley for August, reporting 249 calls in total. These included 6 fires, 158 EMS calls, 22 motor vehicle accidents, and 9 hazardous materials incidents. He reminded residents that wildfire season is still active despite recent weather relief, urging early reporting of fire concerns for safety. Open burns remain under full restriction until at least December, when snow conditions may allow reopening. Whitlock thanked the community for helping by reporting illegal burns. He added that green waste disposal will be available next month, with details posted on the Truckee Meadows Fire website. Fuel reduction projects are ongoing, pending funding, including work planned around the Biggest Little Bike Park near Esther Bennett.
Colton Dunn asked what residents should do about people illegally burning trash in the area. Battalion Chief Ryan Whitlock responded that residents should call 911 to report illegal burning. Fire crews will respond, speak with those responsible, and, if the issue becomes habitual, involve fire prevention staff and escalate further if necessary.

Sean McGrath asked about a program offering free hauling for residents. Battalion Chief Ryan Whitlock clarified that it referred to the upcoming green waste disposal program, scheduled for next month, with exact dates to be posted on the Truckee Meadows Fire and Rescue website.

Michael Rider asked whether the green waste program would begin after October 1 and requested that dates be shared at the next CAB meeting for residents who do not access information online. He also inquired if 158 EMS calls in August was a normal volume. Battalion Chief Ryan Whitlock responded that the number was consistent with past months, noting 172 calls in June, 150 in July, and 158 in August, and said the overall trend was slightly down.
3. **LACK OF LOCAL BANKING SERVICES**Heidi Soper introduced the topic of limited local banking and grocery services, noting it had been discussed at the August CAB meeting. She explained that she and Alexandra drafted a letter to the Board of County Commissioners summarizing residents’ concerns. The letter highlights the closures of Wells Fargo Bank, the community’s only ATM, and Scolari’s grocery store, leaving Sun Valley residents without essential in-community services. The letter outlines the hardships created, including the need for residents—especially seniors and those without reliable transportation—to travel outside the valley for basic needs. It also raises possible contributing factors, such as staffing shortages and security concerns. The CAB proposed potential solutions, including encouraging banks or credit unions to reestablish services, surveying the community to identify needs, collaborating with the GID and local property owners, raising public awareness through media, and exploring funding options such as community development block grants. Soper asked the CAB to consider approving the letter so she could sign and send it on behalf of the board, formally requesting county support to help restore banking and grocery access in Sun Valley.

Colton Dunn, a longtime Sun Valley resident, voiced frustration that while there are many taco trucks along Sun Valley Boulevard, there is no grocery store available for residents. He questioned why the community lacks access to basic food services. Heidi Soper responded by clarifying that the CAB was discussing a letter to county commissioners requesting assistance in addressing the loss of grocery and banking services. She assured Dunn that his opinion was welcome as long as it related to the subject under discussion.

Cindy Leslie pointed out a discrepancy in the draft letter regarding the closure of Scolari’s grocery store. She noted that the letter, dated September 2, stated the store was “set to close” on August 27, but by then the store had already closed. She emphasized that the wording should reflect the fact that Sun Valley no longer has a grocery store.

Judy Jensen agreed with the previous suggestion to update the letter’s wording to reflect that Scolari’s grocery store has already closed. She also corrected an error in the draft, clarifying that Channel 4 is KRNV, not KTV.

Michael Rider moved to approve the letter with the mentioned changes signed by Heidi Soper on behalf of the Sun Valley CAB to the Board of County Commissioners. Veronica Cortes seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Heidi Soper announced that the CAB’s letter to the County Commissioners would also include the Sun Valley Insider header created by Richard Barnet. She encouraged attendees to read it, describing it as a great resource, and confirmed it would be attached when the letter is sent.

1. **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB & OTHER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**Alexandra Wilson reviewed the Neighborhood Development Hub, which provides information on developments across Washoe County and allows residents to give feedback. She highlighted two recent projects: a proposal near West 2nd Avenue involving a master plan amendment and zoning change from suburban residential to urban residential and open space, presented at Hobie’s Casino on August 26, and the Sanctuary of God Church project, which she noted would be discussed further once more information was available. She added that developer Chris Baker will attend the November CAB meeting to provide additional details on the West 2nd Avenue project. Wilson also informed attendees about board and commission opportunities, noting one current opening on the Board of Equalization, where members hear property tax appeals. The position includes compensation of $80 per meeting, with terms beginning in January and lasting three years. She encouraged anyone interested to apply and said she would continue to update the group about future openings.

A resident asked when decisions would be made regarding housing density in the proposed West 2nd Avenue development, expressing concern about whether the project would result in more clustered housing with higher population or fewer homes spread farther apart. Alexandra Wilson clarified that the project discussed was a zoning change proposal presented on August 26. She explained that the developer, Chris Baker, will attend the November CAB meeting to provide details and answer questions directly. In the meantime, she offered to share the planner’s contact information so residents could reach out for more specific details about the project and its density impacts.
2. **BOARD MEMBER/COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/ REQUESTS/ DISCUSSION**Commissioner Garcia, who represents District 3 and is a Sun Valley resident, provided updates on both education and county priorities. She shared that Virginia Palmer Elementary School has been approved for a full modernization project. Planned improvements include a secure single-point entry, upgraded fencing and security cameras, a new shaded outdoor learning space, a new play structure, and a remodeled library and media center. The project will also feature interior upgrades such as fresh paint and new flooring, along with an expansion near the basketball courts, which will be temporarily used for construction staging before being rebuilt. Garcia emphasized that these upgrades will significantly improve safety and educational facilities for students. She also highlighted her participation in a busy day of county business, including speaking with students about local government, attending a fire commission meeting, and participating in the State of the County address—the first in more than a decade. Garcia explained that while the county provides many essential services such as elections, jails, parks, and human services, commissioners identified key priorities to focus on this year. Commissioner Clark discussed senior services, Vice Chair Herman focused on CABs, Commissioner Andreola spoke on mental health, and Garcia herself highlighted housing. Garcia concluded by noting the importance of CABs and shared a new video produced by the county’s media team that showcases their work and community engagement. Commissioner Garcia played the following video for the CAB: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVdOzFr0BeA.

Commissioner Mariluz Garcia expressed deep appreciation for the Sun Valley CAB, noting the value of their collaboration and community involvement. She praised their efforts, including the recent letter addressing the loss of local services. Garcia explained that she has been actively working to raise awareness about the closures of Sun Valley’s only grocery store and bank, including speaking with the media, state legislators, and a Sparks city councilmember who is also dealing with food desert issues. She emphasized that a community of 20,000 residents should not be left without basic services and called the situation unacceptable. She assured the group that she will continue to advocate at the County Commission, stressing that the CAB’s letter will carry weight because it reflects the voices of constituents. Garcia encouraged the community to stay engaged and reaffirmed her commitment to fight alongside them for solutions.

Carmen Ortiz asked if Commissioner Mariluz Garcia had spoken with the property owners of the vacant Sun Valley shopping center. Garcia confirmed she had been in contact with the local property owner, as well as the family in Los Angeles and Malibu who own the former Scolari’s site and most of the shopping center, excluding the bank property, which is separately owned by First Interstate. She explained that the landowners have expressed interest in securing a new grocery tenant, and she remains hopeful they will follow through. Garcia added that she has been actively advocating for Grocery Outlet’s leadership, elevating discussions with their regional representatives, and has also connected with two local residents interested in starting a community grocery store. She emphasized that while the county cannot control private property decisions, ongoing communication and advocacy give her cautious optimism that a new grocery store tenant can be secured.

Cindy Leslie asked whether the property owner or a future tenant would be responsible for remodeling the vacant Scolari’s building if a new grocery store were to move in. Commissioner Mariluz Garcia responded that while she did not have a definite answer, the property does need revitalization. She added that historically, economic development efforts have been stronger in Reno and Sparks than in unincorporated Washoe County, and she intends to advocate for economic vitality to be a priority in the county’s next strategic plan to better support communities like Sun Valley.

A resident asked whether the property owner of the former Scolari’s building was willing to make improvements to the site now that the store has closed. Commissioner Mariluz Garcia responded that it remains to be determined but emphasized she has established communication with the landowner, who has been receptive to ideas. She noted ongoing outreach efforts to local organizations and said she plans to continue applying pressure at the County Commission level to push for solutions.

Michael Rider noted that while Sun Valley lost its main bank and ATM, there are still a few limited ATM options in the community, including at CVS and 7-Eleven. He emphasized that these only provide basic access to cash and do not replace full banking services, which now require residents to travel farther to Golden Valley or Lemmon Valley. Rider said he wanted this on record, so residents were aware of the few options that remain, while also stressing that the broader lack of local banking still needs to be addressed.

Veronica Cortes reported that she has been reaching out to Greater Nevada Credit Union and Great Basin Credit Union about possible services for Sun Valley. She explained that while banks are reluctant to establish a permanent branch due to existing locations in Golden Valley and nearby areas, she is exploring options such as mobile banking services that are used in other rural communities.

Cortes also highlighted a Washoe County Sheriff’s Office survey now available to residents, encouraging people to participate to ensure community concerns are heard. She mentioned longstanding issues such as parking at the Sheriff’s Office, which affects her ability to conduct notary work there. Cortes closed by thanking attendees for their engagement and expressing her appreciation for the community.

Mary Esposito raised concerns about dirty streets and clogged ditches following storms, echoing earlier discussions about the need for cleanup. She suggested that inmates from the county jail could be used for such work, noting she had previously seen prisoners assisting with community projects like repainting vandalized walls. Esposito emphasized that the ditches and streets in Sun Valley need maintenance and proposed that this could be a productive use of inmate labor, especially since the issue continues to affect residents, including on their own street.

Heidi Soper thanked attendees for coming and welcomed the many new faces, encouraging everyone to return with ideas and topics for future discussion. She reminded the group that the next CAB meeting will be held on Monday, October 6 at 6:00 p.m. in the same location, noting that the current meeting was moved because of the holiday.

Soper also encouraged residents to visit SVInsider.com, highlighting it as a valuable new community resource, and she thanked Veronica Cortes for providing snacks. She ended on a lighthearted note about her meeting attire before officially closing the session.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –**

Cindy Leslie expressed concern that after contacting an elected official about Sun Valley schools, she was told there was no need to worry about overpopulation from new housing developments. She disagreed with that response and emphasized that school issues in Sun Valley go beyond enrollment numbers. Leslie said that when residents request a trustee to attend meetings, they expect the trustee to show up in person rather than receiving written reassurances. She insisted that elected representatives have a responsibility to meet with the community directly and discuss these concerns.

Carmen Ortiz thanked Heidi Soper and Alexandra Wilson for their work on the community letter and for consistently supporting Sun Valley residents. She encouraged others to get involved by applying for county committees, even if it takes multiple attempts to be selected. She also expressed gratitude to Mendoza’s for donating food and to Chris Baker, the developer, for attending and discussing upcoming projects. Ortiz said she hopes developers will continue participating in CAB meetings, which are now held regularly. She thanked the creators of the *Sun Valley Insider* and emphasized the importance of making printed copies available for seniors who do not have internet access, suggesting that paper versions could be shared at CAB meetings or local gathering spots so everyone in the community can stay informed.

Judy Jensen reminded attendees that although the Sheriff’s Office survey was supposed to close the previous day, it was still open on Facebook and encouraged residents to complete it. She also shared information about a senior discount with Waste Management, noting that residents over 70 may qualify for a reduced $27 monthly rate, though she cautioned seniors to compare it with their current rate before switching. Jensen added a personal note about the upcoming Great Reno Balloon Races, her favorite event of the year, highlighting that more than 50 balloons would launch on Thursday morning during media day at Rancho San Rafael, with free parking available.

Susan Severt, chair of the Sun Valley General Improvement District (GID), provided an update on the recent road closure along Sun Valley Boulevard. She explained that the disruption was caused by a service line break under the road, not a main line, which helped prevent more severe damage. She noted that some of the lines in the area are 70 years old, and while repairs were completed successfully, the age of the infrastructure remains a concern. The GID worked closely with Washoe County and NDOT since the affected section is a state highway. Severt emphasized that while the GID does not manage roads, it helps coordinate communication during service disruptions. She reminded residents that the GID board meets on the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m., and meetings are open to the public. The board’s role is to ensure that new developments meet water and sewer requirements. She added that meeting minutes are posted on the GID website, svgid.com, and encouraged residents to reach out with questions.

Colton Dunn, a longtime Sun Valley resident, expressed frustration with increasing traffic congestion in the community. He noted that while the population continues to grow, the roads have not expanded, leading to long delays—sometimes 45 minutes—from the freeway to homes during peak hours. Dunn stated that new development should be halted until road improvements and widening projects are completed.

Richard Barnet announced an upcoming service project at Sun Valley Elementary School, scheduled for the Saturday after next. Volunteers will help with landscaping and improving the playground grounds, while an alternative option will be available indoors for those interested in sewing projects. He noted the event coincides with the Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful cleanup at Highland Ranch, where volunteers will remove trash from the foothills. Barnet encouraged residents to participate in either project or provided flyers with more details.

Alexandra Wilson addressed concerns about school overcrowding raised at previous CAB meetings. She reported that she had reached out to the Washoe County School District’s Chief Operating Officer, who explained that the district carefully analyzes all new development projects, projecting student impacts based on updated household data and enrollment trends. Current figures show declining enrollment, with the 2025–26 school year recording one of the lowest kindergarten enrollments in 25 years. Local schools such as Allen, Bennett, Palmer, Sun Valley, and Hug High have all seen decreases, while Desert Skies Middle School gained 29 students but still has room for hundreds more. Wilson emphasized that the district remains actively involved in long-term planning and assured residents that concerns about overcrowding are being addressed. She also encouraged attendees to suggest future topics—school-related or otherwise—through a QR code on the agenda or by speaking directly with her, noting she regularly communicates with the CAB chair and staff to incorporate community input into agendas.

Michael Rider commented on traffic safety issues around schools, specifically problems with student pickup and drop-off. He noted that parents often block roads and intersections and ignore traffic laws, creating congestion and endangering children. Similar problems have occurred at other schools, including Hug High, and are now affecting Sun Valley schools.

Rider stressed that the issue is solvable if given proper attention and urged the CAB and public officials to apply pressure for change. He committed to being personally involved in addressing the problem, emphasizing that it is both a safety concern for children and a matter of keeping roads clear.

Carmen Ortiz reminded residents that with the closure of Sun Valley’s grocery store, they can access food assistance at Catholic Charities on West 5th Avenue. She explained that the program allows people to shop once a month on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, providing items such as produce and milk for those in need.

Veronica Cortes spoke about three main issues during her public comment. She encouraged shopping at local Mexican stores, noting they provide good produce, support the local economy, and reduce food waste compared to large supermarkets where bulk purchases often end up discarded. She also shared her perspective as a longtime Washoe County School District employee, having worked as a lunch lady since 1999. While teachers may have 20 to 30 students, she serves 650 children daily, and she stressed that overcrowding in schools is not just about space but also about the lack of funding and support for teachers to deliver quality education. Finally, she expressed frustration with unsafe traffic conditions around schools and her inability to get responses from school leadership, saying she will continue to advocate for improvements. She closed by affirming her pride in her service and her deep ties to the district as both an employee and a graduate.

1. **ADJOURNMENT –**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm**.**