



Geyserville Planning Committee
Minutes of the Meeting, Geyserville Fire Department
Tuesday, January 23, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Paul Connors called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

- Present
 - Treasurer Steve Sachs by phone
 - Secretary, Marshall Kilduff
 - Daisy Damskey
 - Jo Diaz

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Without objection, the minutes of the prior meeting were approved.

3. ANY BUSINESS OR PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THIS AGENDA

There was no comment.

4. Agenda: Presentation by Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit General Manager Eddy Cumins.

Speaking to a crowd of over 20, Cumins presented an update on SMART's status and plans for the future. The rail system, he noted, has bounced back from low passenger counts during the pandemic to the 750,000 riders in 2023. The system now includes freight operations and a variety of fare packages to attract riders. Since the pandemic, SMART passenger totals have rebounded more than other Bay Area transit agencies, Cumins said.

The next phase is opening an extension to Windsor, now scheduled for 2025. After that, plans call for the rail line to reach Healdsburg. That link has secured \$106 million with another \$55 to \$62 million remaining. Cumins believes that sum is within reach given federal infrastructure money targeting rural areas such as the proposed extension. The construction cost takes in new equipment, a pedestrian and bike pathway, a rebuilt bridge and station in Healdsburg, which may be the existing one some distance from downtown or a new location adjacent to City Hall. SMART engineer John Reilly estimated that if construction began now, completion would take 5 years.

Cumins then turned to the final phase of SMART: a final link to Cloverdale including Geyserville. Present legal language bars a stop in Geyserville, which can be changed by state legislative action. Though the reasons were not clear, the past decision to rule out a Geyserville stop was

based on wishes to control urban growth, members of the audience suggested. Allowing a stop in Geyserville is outlined in SB 904, a pending measure authored by state Senator Bill Dodd. Cumins said the Geyserville Chamber of Commerce favored the bill. .

Cumins said the Cloverdale/Geyserville extension is estimated to cost \$308 million with no timeline offered. Despite the steep cost, Cumins said federal funding policies look for rural areas, indicating a favorable atmosphere for lining up the money.

A general discussion followed. Members of the public generally backed a train stop in Geyserville though there were questions about noise and train crossings. Several homeowners with property abutting the train tracks asked if it was possible to minimize horn warnings and other effects of the trains. Cumins said he would consider such requests and indicated that train noise could be lessened under certain rules.

Daisy Damskey said it made no sense to have the train pass by Geyserville without stopping. Such a stop could enliven the town, she said.. Jo Diaz said the train could be an antidote to the pollution of freeway traffic. Paul Connors added that change emanating from Healdsburg will be felt in Geyserville in the coming years and the train should be part of that shift.

Jo Diaz asked Cumins if a petition around town would help muster support for a change allowing a Geyserville stop. He said it might not be necessary. He said what would be helpful are support letters from Geyserville organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, GPC and Alexander Valley MAC. That suggestion led to a motion from Daisy Damskey to have Paul Connors write a letter allowing for a train stop. Diaz seconded it and it was approved unanimously.

A motion to adjourn at 8:11 p.m. was made by Jo Diaz and seconded by Daisy Damskey and passed unanimously.