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TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2010
Town Hall Council Chambers
10:00 A.M.

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – Mayor Aragon, Council Member Cotton, Council Member Holt, Council Member Jackson, Council Member Lattin, Council Member Pierce, Council Member Volger

- II. **NEW BUSINESS**
 1. **Reservoir Hill Chair Lift** – The Town Tourism Committee found a chair lift and rope tow that was offered to the Town free of charge except for dismantle and transportation to Pagosa Springs. The TTC presented the information to the Council at the December 7th meeting, thinking the lift could be used for the newly developed Reservoir Hill site. The Town asked for the Parks and Recreation’s approval before moving forward. The Parks and Recreation meeting held Wednesday December 8th gained a 3 to 1 approval to get the lift. The lift and tow rope will be ready for transport on Tuesday December 14th, so Council’s decision is needed immediately. Mr. Bob Hart said the TTC has met with Mr. Richard Lindblad to discuss the proposed business plan for the chair lift on Reservoir Hill. Mr. Lindblad said he has offered to build a business plan for the Town Council for this project. Council Member Pierce asked the price of a business plan; Mr. Lindblad explained the price ranges from \$2,500 - \$3,000 and would take approximately 30 days to complete. He has not previously completed a business plan for a recreation facility like this, but he said he would go to Fort Lewis College to look into a grant to pay for the business plan. Mr. Hart said John Lafferty, a lift builder, thought the Town could sell the lift and keep just the rope tow and recoup the money expended. Mr. Hart appreciates the Town Council’s support of the TTC’s projects and the increase in lodging tax shows that support. Town Manager Mitchem explained the insurance costs would increase approximately \$1,200 during the construction year, and half that cost for operations in subsequent years. Council Member Volger believes this project is a gamble, and that all Town projects need to be either an investment or an economic development opportunity for the community. He has heard from one of his constituents that feel this project is not a wise investment. Council Member Volger feels the lift is a safe gamble and would approve the purchase of the lift. Council Member Jackson said Steamboat Springs is a community that is “in business” and would like Pagosa Springs to also be “in business”. He believes jumping a step to get the lift and then start the first step process with a business plan is a good idea and is in favor the purchase. Council Member Cotton said it’s worth the gamble and not a financial gamble and wants to give it a shot. Mayor Aragon says there are other priorities like the river walk to get going on, but feels these can be completed simultaneously. Council Member Pierce said the Parks and Recreation Commission agreed to the purchase if there would be future community involvement before installation occurs. She believes there are a level of care to the parks and the construction of a skate park that needs to be addressed. Mr. Hart explained the initial idea for Reservoir Hill included community input using the model, to install a lift from the spa trailhead to the cabin area for access to the festivals and hiking/biking and access to the sledding and boarding slopes. Future visions include another chair from Hwy 84 to the top where the picnic table is currently. This would allow for ski slopes on the north east side of the hill. Council Member Pierce asked about the noise, Mr. Larry Fischer said the lift is silent except if the backup motor would be needed. Council Member Pierce said Mr. Pitchers said the cost to fun a lift five days a week is approximately \$142,000 which would mean the Town would need to sell 7,000 tickets at \$20

Copies of proposed Ordinances and Resolutions are available to the public from the Town Clerk

per ticket. Mr. Larry Fischer said a business plan will show what the price would have to be to run the lift. Council Member Pierce feels there are a lot of projects that are uncompleted and would rather do those. Six of her constituents are not in favor of this project. She would like the TTC to reimburse the Town for the funds it takes to make it work. Council Member Cotton said over 150,000 visitors goes through the hot springs and believes there will be more than 7,000 riders. Council Member Holt said the upside is tremendous if the business plan works out and in the minimal the town can sell the lift and come out even. He believes there is very little to lose and a whole lot to gain and is for moving forward with this minimal risk that could change the community for the better. Council Member Lattin said the lift is little risk, agrees there are a lot of projects to complete. She has heard from three of her constituents and they are not in favor, but feels perhaps they are not looking at the long term benefit to the community. She agrees with going “into business” as Council Member Jackson suggested and believes this is worth the investment. Council Member Pierce explained to Mr. Cappy White that Mr. Pitcher has said this may be the wrong lift. Due to it being only 850’ in length and needing 1,150 feet and the elevation change is twice as much as the lift if currently providing. She said he had concerns with riders going down the lift after a festival due to the available beer garden. Additionally, renovations would be required to the chairs to install footrests. Mr. Hart explained that every used lift would require modifications and that Tramway engineering and John Lafferty would splice cable to make it longer and possibly install a larger electric motor if necessary all included in \$300,000 estimated price. Mr. White believes the ski area has the same problem with riders drinking alcohol. He believes from a downtown business point of view this lift could have a great impact on his business and others in downtown. Mr. Thad McKain has heard several positive comments, and ideas including bike events, snowboarding events, he believes it will draw attention to the downtown. Mr. Norman Vance said he has been looking for people who are excited and he has found lots of people who are very excited about this project. He said people are talking about getting used boards for kids to use, and he believes the hill will get use by people going up to look around and spend time on the hill and for other things year round. Council Member Cotton doesn’t want to discount what people think, but if the business plans work, the future of the town is going in a positive direction and we owe it to ourselves to take this opportunity. Council Member Holt said the people who come to Wyndham might stay a few extra days with smaller kids to play on the hills. Mayor Aragon believes the town should utilize the hill to the best opportunities. Council Member Pierce asked about the TTC paying for the lift, Town Manager Mitchem believes there are not sufficient cash reserves in the TTC to pay for this. If next year is a strong year, then maybe, but the reserves go to cash flow for the first few months of the year. Council Member Cotton agrees the estimated cost of \$41,000 could be a loan to the TTC. Council Member Jackson thinks it’s a good idea that should be factored into the business plan. Council Member Volger agrees that the business plan will determine and the council needs to evaluate potential problems. Council Member Holt would like to get the lift right now and not deal with the long term issues until the business plan is complete. Council Member Jackson moved that the Town approve the expenditure for the cost to dismantle and transport the chair lift from Cuchara Ski Area to the Town, Council Member Holt seconded, motion approved with one nay, Council Member Pierce. Town Manager Mitchem explained these funds will reflect a use of 2010 Capital Fund reserves and will be presented at the December 16th meeting. Staff will respond to the Council’s comments regarding unfinished projects. The river features are currently underway and work on the riverwalk is also moving forward. The material removed from the river feature project is being placed in the area between the spa trailhead and behind the post office to create 250 parking spaces.

III. ADJOURNMENT – Upon motion duly the meeting adjourned at 10:55am

Ross Aragón
Mayor