

**SAGUACHE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**PUBLIC HEARING ON STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**COMMUNITY BUILDING**  
**SAGUACHE, COLORADO**  
**JANUARY 9, 2015**

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Joseph at 10:04 am

**Commissioner Joseph** – Explained the technical difficulties the Saguache County website was having, therefore the comment period has been extended to January 26, 2015 at 1:00 pm. Regular mail comments, comments from the site, and all other comments received will be compiled. The Commissioners are present to listen to comments, this Strategic Plan is a working draft, and no decisions will be made at this time. Commissioner Joseph asked that the sign in sheet be passed around for those in the audience who wanted to speak, address key points, identifying areas within the draft that there are concerns about, and please note that there is a 1 page implementation overview at the end of the draft. The time for comments will be limited to 3 minutes and County Staff will be taking notes as well as recording the meeting. The Strategic Plan draft is for the unincorporated areas of Saguache County where growth is encouraged, but the County would like to also work with the incorporated towns.

**II. GUESTS**

Randal Arredondo	Anne Nielsen	Howard Funk	Margarey Funk
Shane Cox	Carol Augusto	Susan Wolfrey	Carol Case
Dottie Eichhorn	Wyoma Hansen	Mike Cowan	Bill Case
Gerald Gray	Barry Sullens	Allen Jones	Larry Smith
Richard Drake	Gary Davidson	Tony J Fernandez	Peggy Godfrey
Teresa L Bennis	Greg Terrell	Rebie Hazard	May Engquist
John Judson	Lorraine Flewelling	Carita Ginn	Dorraine Gasseling
Faith O'Reilly	Karen D Cowan	Ed Nielsen	Terry Gillette
Brain J Miller	Donna Ford	Lucky Ford	Jim Shepherd
Scott Swartz	Eleanor Mueller	Donald G Baker	Peter Peterson
Tom McCracken			

**Guest who spoke**

Anne Nielsen	Shane Cox	Bill McClure	Susan Wolfrey
Carol Case	Dottie Eichhorn	Mike Cowan	Allen Jones
Larry Smith	Greg Terrell	Faith O'Reilly	Terry Gillette
Tom McCracken	Peggy Godfrey		

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anne Nielsen – Chair of the SCPC – After reviewing the Strategic Plan draft the general consensus of the Planning Commission members is that the draft is a duplicate of the Master Plan except the one area where the County Pay Plan and Evaluation of employees was addressed. Everything is covered in the Master Plan that took 20 years to complete. Strategic Plan draft needs to be trashed, thrown out. Six other members feel same way, one member a maybe. No County manager or planner, the County does not need more government control.

Ben Gibbons – Will the Planning Board be turning in written comments?

Anne Nielsen – yes

Shane Cox – resident – Lives on west side of the county. The Strategic Plan draft has no meat, just a skeleton no details. Page 4 has 1 county 1 community. Communities should have diversity and everyone does not or need to think the same way; page 5 talks about airports and tourism, don't see what is coming through there. Attraction would be fine but there are no actual plans or ideas. Saguache airport has sat for years. Page 6 #2, Research and Development, no form of implementation. Page 7, agricultural manufacturer process, does that mean a feed mill? Page 8, last paragraph, sentence is contradicting.

Commissioner Joseph – implementation of details within next year.

Bill McClure – resident, small business owner, member SCPC – All the information within the strategic Plan draft has been addressed in the Saguache County Master Plan, with the exception of the County employees pay and evaluations. Economic development – yet BoCC hired a company who just became an LLC for \$30,000.00 who is not even in Saguache County. Saguache County is not like Gunnison County, no College, no tourism, no infrastructure, and sales tax. County spent \$150,000.00 on an airport, how many Saguache County residents have airplanes? 2,000.00 - 4,000.00 gallons of jet fuel, total waste of money. Drones, no one wants spy drones flying over their back yards. Could of taken this to the college gotten a better product and would not of cost a cent. Disband and take no action on this.

Susan Wolfrey – Slick contract inadvertently wrapping selves up in. Inadvertently the power is within the people. Common law, free market, we all have one vision. Strange dream about a lollypop coming down the alley. Minimum wage pioneer for entire nation. Horrible, horrible, horrible stuff going to happen to Saguache unless an unanticipated union with Russia happens. Free energy would uphold and revive. Center is the center of meth. Fewer restrictions the freer we are.

Wendi Maez – letting Ms. Wolfrey know she had 30 seconds remaining.

Commissioner Jason Anderson – Don't restrict time.

Carol Case – resident – Has been a full time resident of Saguache County for 4 years. Questioned the BoCC, do we the people of Saguache County get to vote on this plan or is this a plan that will not require the citizens' vote?

Commissioner Joseph – Strategic Plan draft is a guiding document, not a citizen vote, listening to comments.

Carol Case – This plan seems to be a duplicate of the Master Plan already adopted. As residents of Saguache County, we choose to live here in an area that is free from a lot of government control. Commissioners need to

listen to the people. Plan talks about growth in areas, most of the residents of County would prefer that there not be a lot of growth, happy with the way it is.

Shane Cox – Questioned the funding coming from DOLA and if any further funding would be coming from the same source or another.

Commissioner Joseph – Indicated that the funding was for the process and there would be no additional funding for implementation.

Dottie Eichhorn – Very disappointed that the Strategic Plan was so vague and needs to be more specific. Where is the money coming from? Be more specific and don't put a plan out and tell the residents of Saguache County we will tell you later. What happens if project goes on and money runs out? Money has to come from somewhere. Saguache County is one of the poorest counties, is money going to come from taxes being raised. Do the people get to vote or not? Grants are very specific on what can or cannot be done. Seems like BoCC is being dishonest and surprised they would put something like this out there. If Master Plan covers everything then why spend money on this? **See attached written comment.**

Mike Cowan – resident – read his comment letter. Suggested there be a question and answer time at the end of the meeting? **See attached written comment.**

Allen Jones – resident – Differs with Commissioner Joseph and their policies and personal. Feels Commissioner Joseph has done a piss poor job as Commissioner the last 8 years. Alamosa has alternate energy, Saguache County has Federal Government lands, no bids received. Blames Commissioners for lack of bids. \$80,000.00 for a County Manager, what are the three Commissioners if not County Managers. Commissioners have 1 day a week, managing, Strategic Plan is a piece of trash, information in the plan is already in the Master Plan, Strategic Plan is junk, throw it out, set down specifics, be business friendly, initiate tax incentives, it should not be about free grants. Residents should have more and more rights, promote tourism, infrastructure, restaurants, and hotels. The residents of Saguache County like their quality of life, simple, lower taxes.

Larry Smith – resident – Has been a victim of this type of plan, taking of private property, taxes sky rocketed. Stop taking grant monies. Jason and Ken level headed, common sense men, this is not Linda's legacy. Shame on you for lack of transparency. Plan will strangle people, don't need more government. Stand up for residents of Saguache County (Jason and Ken) work with existing community and quit pretending you can create more. Land Fill issues still not fixed and how many jobs have you created so far.

Greg Terrell – resident – Aside from the Strategic Plan draft concentrate on finances. County has not done a good audit. Figure where it can be trimmed, embark on another way. Nowhere in plan is water protected.

Commissioner Joseph – The County does get an audit yearly and is on the website.

Greg Terrell – Means a real audit, a Forensic Audit.

Faith O'Reilly – resident – Plan is vague, implementation not clear. Strategic Plan should involve the people, plans are the resident's visions. Plan does not lay out what is needed. Lack of detail, open up the process. See attached written comment. **See attached written comment.**

Susan Wolfrey – True events that she was involved in. Here we are in Saguache. Mandate from Hickenlooper was bogus. We must harmonize for a real Strategic Plan and to prosper. Same thing happened in Boulder

County and she was repeatedly told to be quiet and sit down. She got her constitution out and also ran for governor. You are not supposed to hear the truth. Sorry Hannah Strong.

Anne Nielsen – Research and development implementation. San Luis Valley already has, Alamosa College, partly funded, work with the County, experience for students.

Shane Cox – Residents in Gunnison County voted down several items on their agenda, but their BoCC went ahead. Need to scrap this draft.

Terry Gillette – resident – Economic growth, taxes doubled, does not help new businesses, pay excessive taxes, drones coming in would be a nuisance and noisy.

Carol Case – Let's take a vote (audience with a show of hands if they want this Strategic Plan) unanimous vote of hands (NO). Question: regardless of what the people think is the BoCC just going to pass this Strategic Plan?

Allen Jones – Commissioner Joseph initially involved in the starting of ScSeed, grant monies for the County, slush fund, who will be the new Saguache County Manager.

Tom McCracken – resident – business owner – County website was not working, Landfill hours still on the county website, Saguache County potential economic development, need public meetings. Is the BoCC going to listen to the comments, otherwise what is the purpose of the comment period? Letter in the paper was cut off. ScSEED Julie Mach taken comments for Economic Development, not even here, no one knows what those comments were. A lot of huff and puff with grant writers. **See attached written comment.**

Peggy Godfrey – resident – Wanted to make it clear she did not raise her hand so the vote was not unanimous. Sees things differently. Strategic Plan is like planting trees. We have planted trees before and didn't work. To have really nice trees we need planters, irrigation, and trees that work here, whether they be fruit or shade trees. We need to make sure someone will prune the trees that knows how, someone will rake and take care of the trees. Connect the dots, Saguache County Planning Commission, ScSEED, BoCC, plant trees and make it work.

Commissioner Joseph – The intention of the Strategic Plan is that the year-long implementation plan will be created by all those who to choose to participate and people who are in areas to contribute.

Teresa Benns – resident – addressed Tom McCracken – Sorry for the letter in the paper being cut off. The entire letter is on the website and Facebook.

Wyoma Hansen – resident – Heard about planting trees. Appalling, at a public meeting when told the draft Strategic Plan was unavailable for public view. BoCC evasive and transparency didn't exist. People are upset with lack of transparency and the disrespect from the BoCC if you disagree.

Comments completed, Commissioner Joseph began a Question and Answer period:

Gary Davidson – What plans do the BoCC have to work with the incorporated towns, are the Counties intentions to work with the towns, together for the county. What about infrastructure in towns?

Commissioner Joseph – No jurisdiction over towns.

Bill Case – Direct question to Commissioner Joseph – Are you going to run for the position of Saguache County Manager.

Commissioner Joseph – NO, and thank you for asking that question.

Cathy Geddes – Thinks BoCC should give and look into history of County and the County Manager position, we have never been without that position.

Richard Drake – Would like to know who is all involved in the acknowledgement section of the Strategic Plan and how their involvement relates to the Strategic Plan?

Commissioner Joseph – The BoCC acknowledged people involved in things that relate to the Strategic Plan.

Donna Ford – She first learned about the Strategic Plan at a meeting held in Sargents, was told the public would not be involved, glad that has changed. BoCC should always involve the citizens. How confident is the BoCC that the Strategic Plan will be successful within the parameters of property tax revenues and how do you know without an implementation plan? A great deal of transparency is needed.

Commissioner Joseph – We are at the very first part of the Plan.

Commissioner Ken Anderson – The draft is not cut in stone. Was involved in the creation of the Master Plan, several meetings were held with the public. There are a lot of complainants but no ideas. Think about Saguache County no matter where you live, and think about Saguache County first. Doesn't think anyone wants development or growth. You want solar but don't want to send the power out of here, but a lot okay with sending water out of here. Property rights not what we are after and drones are not checking your property.

Lucky Ford – Gunnison County should be a red flag for Saguache County. Zoning policies, how will they affect the residents of this County?

Commissioner Joseph – BoCC has not taken further steps on where incentives could be implemented, has not been explored nor studied, possible tax incentives, supportive programs, or building into Land Use codes.

Mike Cowan – Will the BoCC allow this to go before a vote of the County residents? Need to sever the connection with DOLA and MR.

Commissioner Jason Anderson – The money we received from DOLA is because DOLA is doing so well with oil and gas. People pulling a lot of oil and gas from this State and making a lot of money, money is then paid to the State. That money goes to the people of this State and we should take advantage of it. DOLA's job is to support counties, towns, and the people.

Bill McClure – Will the BoCC set a time frame, allow additional public input, form committees, or take a stand with the voice of the people?

Commissioner Joseph – The contents of the master plan is a guide. The process of the Master Plan is to conduct a 6 month review.

Larry Smith – Another layer between the County and the residents, County Manager, do we need it, another salary and another building?

Anne Nielsen – Too much government.

Larry Smith – Wendi and Lyn are competent Co-County Managers. Will this be put before a vote?

Teresa Benns – Is there a list of DOLA grants?

Commissioner Jason Anderson – Informed everyone that the list of DOLA grants is on the DOLA website.

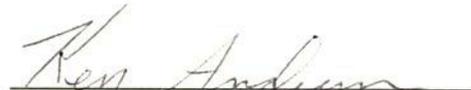
**IV. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

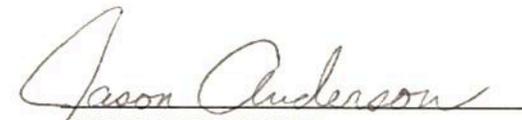
**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

**Wendi Maez, ACTING SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES APPROVED FEBRUARY 17, 2015**

  
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**CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**ATTEST  
CLERK & RECORDER  
CARLA GOMEZ**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**COMMISSIONER**



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**COMMISSIONER**

# Comments on the Saguache County DRAFT Strategic Plan

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT?

The first question is why a Strategic Plan? And why now? What is the purpose of the Strategic Plan? This question becomes more important when considering paragraph two of the letter from the commissioners on page 3. This part of the plan appears to be directed at requirements of a DOLA grant.

Strategies are generally used to determine methods for accomplishing major policy goals. If the county needs a strategic plan to make all or part of the County Master Plan or some new vision of the BOCC become a reality to meet the challenges discussed in the commissioners' letter, wouldn't it make sense to go to the Planning Commission and/or the citizens and business groups rather than paid "approved" consultants? Unless as seems most likely this Strategic Plan is a first step in acquiring other DOLA grants.

So what is it that the commissioners are trying to accomplish? Could it be more than to get grant money for an implementation project hinted at in the DRAFT plan? The plan should provide an answer that question. There are some hints but unfortunately the plan doesn't set out the purpose fully and clearly. Why not put all the cards on the table so we can decide together (BOCC and the citizens of Saguache County) if this is what we want and are willing to support. Whatever road we are heading down, the grant road or some other, let's be open and honest about it.

## THE DOCUMENT - NOT REALLY A PLAN

This document is not really a plan just a set of numbered bullet points. Here's what I see: The document has ten pages. Only four pages set out strategies for Saguache County. The other six pages are document fillers and extraneous matters. The plan has the following pages: a cover page (#1), a table of contents page (#2), a letter from the commissioners page (#3), an announcement of the meeting page (#4), an implementation overview page (#9) and, a second credits page (#10). Pages #5 and #8 have 1/3 of a page stating a strategic goal and 2/3 of each page is timelines related somehow to a strategic goal. Pages #6 and #7 set out points that are the actual strategic plan.

Pages #6 and #7 present groups of numbered bullet points. It looks and reads like an outline of a plan. It is seriously lacking in comprehensible detail. At best, the lists on pages #6 and #7 hint at what the County's plan for the years 2015 to 2020 will be. This is really important stuff for all of us.

Side note: Hopefully, this draft document does not represent an entire year's work by the BOCC. And hopefully it is not the only work product we get for the \$30K in consulting fees which were paid for half by county taxpayers and half by state taxpayers through DOLA.

## CLARITY

The commissioners ask, "Is it clear and understandable?" With no real substance the plan offers only the foggiest indications of what is actually being planned. NO, it is neither clear nor understandable. Citizens of Saguache County, who should be the beneficiaries as well as the financers of the strategic plan, have no clearer idea of the direction the BOCC wants to take Saguache County with this plan than they had with no plan. Hopefully, the commissioners, who have had a year to study lots of things in putting this set of bullet points together, really do understand what their plan is. If so, why not clearly share that vision with those of us who will live it and pay for it. Perhaps that will happen at the comment meeting.

These are some of the questions that need to be answered: WHAT is BOCC's vision for Saguache County? What will be changed? What will be added? What are the priorities? How will it all be paid for? This document offers precious little insight on these important topics. There are hints but nothing is clarified. For instance, what are the "current connections" mentioned in item (I)(1) on page #6? What sort of "collaboratives" do the commissioners think local tourism businesses need to serve visitors? See, (I)(2)(page #6). Do the items in section (II) (1-6) of page #6 called R&D hint at the rumored drone company? Is there something new in the concept of "telling the story" of Saguache County or is a new document with our history being contemplated? What are "pivotal locations" mentioned in page #6 (I)(4) – mines, mountains, ranches, towns? And what strategy is focused on them?

Items (I)(4) and (5) on page #6, that set out improved signage and event marketing, have genuine promise. Can the county help businesses take on CDOT. Signage laws are overly restrictive and allow only signage that is ineffective in the extreme. Marketing is a continual problem. It is expensive and the results are hard to judge.

On most other topics, this documents leaves too many questions unanswered. More time to revise more consultation with local groups and more time to come back to the public is needed.

## ENERGY ALTERNATIVES

The Alternative Energy section of the Economic Growth Priority (Part II on page #6) is sketchy but seems unimaginative and incomplete. The ideas in it appear to be recycled old ideas which, so far, seem to be going forward very slowly or more likely going nowhere. Maybe a strategic Plan is not the place to take on Xcel Energy, the obstructionist energy monopoly holding much of Saguache County hostage. But it would be nice to hear that trimming the Xcel grip on residents and businesses is being considered. How about a little push back?

Are the Commissioners aware that innovative and energy efficient products and concepts are being developed by residents here in Saguache? Wouldn't it make sense to include development of those assets in a strategic plan?

Energy conservation and reduction of carbon based mega-suppliers of energy is part of the national debate. It is possible that Saguache County can play a positive role in that debate. However, nothing in the draft plan seems to point to a brilliant or innovative concept with promise. This part of the plan if implemented as written is not likely to produce much positive change nor will it result in a benefit to residents. This part of the plan needs a lot more work.

## THE R & D FACILITY

Here are the questions about that idea: What does the county think an R&D facility might do for the county. We've heard something about the prospective drone company, is there more than one R&D group interested in our "airports" and "abundant open land" or just one? What zoning and land use changes are being contemplated to accommodate this prospective project? How is Saguache County "invested" in R&D? If we are not currently "invested", what is the plan to get us to a competitive position? Again we have only hints about what the actual plan is to please this company.

If a county financed and owned facility is contemplated, more than occasional use for the testing of drones would be needed to justify county investment or even a grant-based project. Although companies often want secrecy, taxpayers deserve transparency. Will you tell us what you know?

## MOTO AND LOGO

Two things that won't help pan-county harmony are a county logo/brand and the motto "One County, One Community" (page #8). There are places in the world where a trademark or logo based on place identity works well – examples would be Provence in France or Napa and Silicon Valleys in California. But in each case, one or more very famous product has made the place name famous enough to create the brand type identity. When that happens, other products and services from the same place benefit from the branding created by the place name. The strategy of this plan seeks to reverse that process. Which Saguache County products are famous enough to bring brand identity to other products, places or activities in this county?

As to "One County, One Community," motto, it is a high sounding slogan but it won't bridge the very real differences that exist here. Trying to press this motto on this community as a working strategy is ill-advised. Saguache County towns and communities prize their distinct identities. Resistance to this effort is predictable.

Woven into the points offered about "One County, One Community," seems to be the suggestion that county employee responses to citizens varies by place affiliation. To have county employees serve all county citizens without distinction should always happen. If there are

problems in the county offices with differential reactions based on community origin, they need to be addressed. Will this motto be enough to cure whatever problems exists?

The diversity of this county is one of its strongest features. The uniqueness of each town should be seen as a strength of Saguache County not something that needs a fix. Neither lovely mottos nor kumbayah fests will bring east and west, and north and south parts of this county together. Our communities have very different issues, values and priorities. Struggle between opposing views, needs and priorities is the essence of politics. In a democracy it is not a weakness; it is a strength. A “One County, One Community” reality is not what Saguache County needs or wants. Unwelcome efforts to bring disparate communities and groups together, when they are separated by both distance and cultural chasms, could create more friction rather than lessen tensions. A better approach might be to foster a climate of mutual tolerance coupled with acceptance of a pragmatic approach that encourages compromise, cooperation and trade-offs in regard to county governance issues and project funding.

Finally, county business being conducted outside the county seat could be problematic. If work sessions are to be scheduled in communities across the county, care needs to be taken to get notice out to all parts of the county well ahead of time as to meeting places and times.

## TIMING OF THE PLAN

If this plan has been in the works for a year and under contemplation for five years, as indicated by the commissioners’ letter, why haven’t interested local individuals, affected business and civic groups been brought into the process earlier?

Parts of the plan are already being implemented (i.e. the decision to hire a county manager and scheduling “work sessions” at various locations) How does implementation prior to adoption square with proper legislative procedure?

This plan was put out to the community as a completed working draft ready for adoption in mid-December. The window for public comment spanned the busiest holiday season of the year. In addition, the comment period ends just one day before the public comment meeting. One day is not sufficient time to digest and give serious contemplation to whatever comments, objections and ideas the public may offer. Will the comment meeting be *pro forma* or is real dialogue possible? Are the originators of the plan committed to coming to the meeting or not? Will the “consultants” be there? Will citizens who come and who speak be shouting down an abandoned mine shaft or discussing ideas with their county representatives?

## OTHER IDEAS

Many of us have spent time and energy researching, working on and discussing ideas about economic growth. There are good initiatives out here. As a county we could do a much better job of supporting existing businesses and pressure state legislators to remove commerce stifling

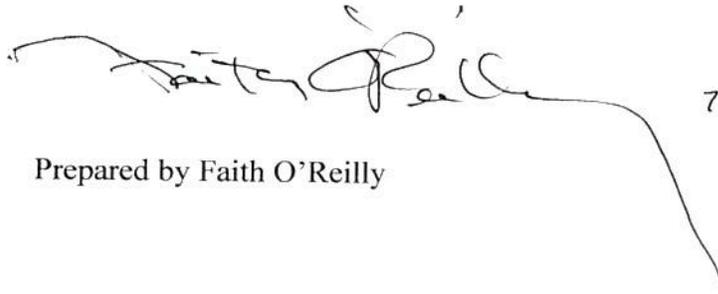
regulations. Finally smart counties like Colby County KS use property tax laws to encourage both individual property owners and businesses to upgrade facilities and expand.

### **Basic Requests:**

- 1. Slow this process down.**
- 2. Strive for complete transparency in every phase of strategic plan development.**
- 3. Try to see the meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> as a chance for dialogue or at least be open to answering questions.**
- 4. And schedule another meeting or even several more.**
- 5. Extend the comment period and provide a question time.**
- 6. Seek out public input and ideas.**
- 7. Create time for revisions of the draft.**
- 8. Invite business groups, affected property owners and the general public to have real input in creating the plan that will shape our future.**
- 9. Get public buy-in before approaching DOLA or any other grant funders or lenders if expensive projects are being contemplated.**
- 10. Carefully research unintended consequences experienced by other counties (including Gunnison) and local governments that have undertaken similar projects i.e. cost overruns, maintenance expenses associated with planned projects and taxpayer revolts.**

The process involved in creating a strategic plan can deepen divisions and raise suspicions. Or it just might bring us closer together if it is approached right.

Thank you for listening.



Prepared by Faith O'Reilly

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saguache.lodge@centurytel.net



Lyn Zimmer Lambert &lt;lzimmer@saguachecounty-co.gov&gt;

**Fwd: Strategic Plan**

Linda Joseph <ljoseph@saguachecounty-co.gov>  
 To: "administrator@saguachecounty-co.gov" <administrator@saguachecounty-co.gov>

Fri, Dec 19, 2014 at 4:10 PM

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Thomas D McCracken" <tom@greeneearthfarm.com>  
**Subject:** Strategic Plan  
**Date:** December 19, 2014 1:08:27 PM MST  
**To:** "Tim Lovato" <timnlovato@yahoo.com>, <janderson@saguachecounty-co.gov>, <ljoseph@saguachecounty-co.gov>, <kanderson@saguachecounty-co.gov>

Note, When I sent this to the email address link for the administrator on your website, the email bounced undeliverable. Hard to comment if you can't use the link provided...

Dear Commissioners and Administrators:

As a business and land owner in Saguache County for the past 35 years I would like to comment on the proposed "strategic plan". I appreciate that the county wishes to promote economic growth in the county and hope that principles of sustainability, environmental protection and quality of life will guide any actions taken.

Generally it is accepted theory that any money spent in the community could be recycled through the community up to 10 times, benefitting local service providers and businesses. This leads me to ask if the developers of this plan and the recipients of grant money are residents of the county, i.e. the Weidner's and also the administrators of SCSEED? I also see no mention of SCSEED in the plan and wonder if input from all the meetings they have had with the public concerning economic development issues have been integrated into the plan?

1) Tourism - The most obvious asset we have here, the Great Outdoors, should be promoted. Any work the county can do or support to promote tourism is a good thing, provided the goal is not to be the ATV capitol of Colorado for example which would impact quality of life for existing residents. Marketing our clean air, water and wildlife will benefit everyone. I really don't like to read about "leveraging existing connections", and "building local collaboratives". This means nothing to me and mainly sounds like grant writers hot air. The plan should have specifics in it, not just an outline of lofty idealistic goals. Signage can be a good thing and the Forest Service and BLM have done a nice job of directing folks to trailheads etc. Signage can also be an eyesore if not done properly. Mainly the areas to be promoted need to be developed to accept larger numbers of tourists with restroom facilities, parking, road and trail maintenance, grooming, etc. If people have a positive experience, they will tell others and that marketing is free. Winter tourism is sadly lacking and there is huge room for development in that category. Local businesses always seem to suffer in winter so anything that could be done there such as the development of separate cross country and snow mobile trails, ( which nearly all surrounding counties have) would be huge.

2) R & D - Developing County owned land might be a good idea. Creating a business park near an airport sounds good on the surface. It might be a better idea to offer an interested business a tax incentive and a low cost development option based on a long term contract so that the county is not making expenditures that could be all for nothing. As I recall back in the day the Baca POA wanted to or did create a business park opportunity that has gone unused. A state of the art landfill and recycling center would be a good start toward attracting business. Of course we already had that and could not sustain it. Perhaps we should try to keep up the facilities we already have before we go out on a limb with new development. The biggest obstacle we have to attracting business is the lack of a workforce. The education suggestion in the plan is the most realistic in terms of actually attracting entrepreneurs. In fact the most likely way to increase economic activity here is to educate the local population, youngsters in particular in areas that specifically relate to local existing businesses such as agriculture and tourism. Keeping kids with potential here should be a priority. The current way schools are operating seem more to me like a day care facility than a way to integrate kids into the agricultural way of life. The average age of a farmer is now 57 years old so there will definitely be opportunities available in the near future. Work study programs might be a viable, low cost option. Purchasing a farm or ranch, along with the needed equipment in this day and age is nearly impossible, so new ideas about ways to keep locals on the land are needed. Otherwise stand by while large agribusinesses scoop up the land that goes on the market. Protecting our water resources will be absolutely critical. If the aquifer goes dry or our water gets exported to the front range, you can forget about long term economic growth. Processing of ag products we already do or could produce represent a realistic opportunity. If the land grant universities would redirect their activities toward sustainability on a local level, perhaps we could create

businesses around processing local product. For instance, could the county ask for or help subsidize research into creating a high protein animal feed from local grains and legumes that could replace imported GMO and chemical intensive feed, supporting the burgeoning businesses in chicken and egg production, and perhaps even swine? What about local meat processing? Could subsidizing compliance with the endless USDA food safety requirements lead to a local slaughterhouse and packing facility that would create jobs in the short run and perhaps spawn businesses that capitalized in marketing our locally raised meat products. I don't know about you but drones just don't seem to fit in and I do not want drones hovering overhead. Have the "improvements" at Leach Field lead to increased activity there? If I lived near there I would be very upset about the spinning lights at night.

3) Alternative Energy - Yes we should support solar energy to the extent it would not harm the environment or upset our existing quality of life. Wind should also be looked at. The land that will be supposedly idled to sustain the aquifer could be used for this purpose. My question is, what happened to the solar garden project? That seemed like a good project that would have reduced our communities reliance on imported energy, but it just seemed to die a quite death. If we can't keep a project like that alive, I don't think we should be thinking on some much grander scale.

We already have organizations or people dedicated to planning and economic development as well as land use and administration. My take is that we should require more from the existing organizations and individuals tasked with these duties that are paid for with taxpayer funds. Competition for county jobs might lead to increased productivity. Additionally the county should cease funding any operation that competes with existing businesses. Grant funded operations typically go away as soon as the money dries up. Grant funding should be tailored in such a way as to involve entrepreneurs that have skin in the game so that when the grant is gone the business continues. The counties basic function is to maintain and improve the infrastructure. Roads, bridges, schools, public buildings, public safety, communication, parks, and sanitation, stay on top of those duties and you will be doing a better job than most. Then economic growth will follow naturally.

Sincerely,

Thomas D McCracken  
Green Earth Farm  
PO Box 612  
Saguache, Co. 81149  
719-655-2655 hm

Thomas D McCracken  
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[www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

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Linda Joseph  
Saguache County Commissioner, Chair  
[ljoseph@saguachecounty-co.gov](mailto:ljoseph@saguachecounty-co.gov)  
719 588-7828



April Quintana &lt;aquintana@saguachecounty-co.gov&gt;

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**Strategic Plan Public Comment**

message

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**no-reply@saguachecounty-co.gov** <no-reply@saguachecounty-co.gov>

Fri, Jan 9, 2015 at 3:50 PM

Reply-To: no-reply@saguachecounty-co.gov

From: administration@saguachecounty-co.gov

## Tom McCracken has a comment on the Strategic Plan,

They filled out the form and sent the following information:

Name\*: Tom McCracken

Email\*: tom@greeneearthfarm.com

Comments: The meeting scheduled for 4 hours was cut short to two hours and some of us with questions were not able to ask them. I had a couple...

1) SCSEED has been conducting public meetings asking for citizen input on economic development. Have those results been reported to the Commissioners?

2) What are the top 5 or 10 ideas people have for development? Have those ideas been incorporated into the Strategic Plan?

3) Why was the Planning Commission not tasked with developing the Strategic Plan, and why were they not privy to it's development by outsiders?

I agree with Jason that a goal is a good thing to have, but the tools you have at your discretion seem not to have been utilized.

Comments submitted to you in writing and on line should be available for viewing by the public, other wise we have not means to know what other residents are thinking. Thanks

Submitted 2015-01-09 15:50:13

On:

IP 199.47.67.59

Address:

JAN 03 2015

It is difficult to comment on an outline to a plan. There are no details to indicate who the partners are, where the grant money will be coming from, what obligations are attached to the grant money or if there are top-down directives coming from outside the county to implement and sustain the plan.

The people of Saguache County were not asked if we wanted this plan. Few people even knew there was a plan being formed. This lack of inclusion and lack of transparency fosters nothing but distrust and resentment toward the planners. For this reason the plan was ill-conceived.

You don't bring people together by going outside the county to formulate a plan and then try to impose policy on them without their knowledge and in some cases against their will. Transparency is not defined by concealing the implementation structure. Everything must be out in the open or there is no trust, and where there is no trust there is no unity.

Relying on government grants and taxpayer funded programs to create jobs and develop the economy is a recipe for failure, because it ignores the fact that private commerce drives the economy and always has. The failed concept of redistribution has been proven repeatedly to be unsustainable, and because it can't sustain itself it always results in a drain on taxpayers and lowers the overall standard of living. County government has no business trying to develop the economy by usurping the role of private commerce and industry as the mechanism to establish economic stability.

If you want to regain the trust of the people you should sever your connections to DOLA and Managing for Results LLC concerning this plan and start fresh. This time include the business community, the planning commission and any Saguache County citizen who desires input. We don't need outside interference to address our economic challenges.

Mike Cowan / Saguache

655-6202



January 5, 2015



Saguache County Administration  
P.O. Box 100  
Saguache, CO 81149

Dear County Commissioners:

After reading the Strategic Plan, I found myself having more questions than answers. The plan is so general, one does not know what is going to happen. When one writes a plan, one has a specific objective that one wishes to accomplish with specific points to reach that objective revealing the cost. The Strategic Plan does not do this.

If the County Commissioners *really* want to improve Saguache County, it would be fitting for them to talk to the residents of this county to find out their needs and wants either through a survey or meetings allowing residents to voice their concerns. After doing so, the County Commissioners, not an outside entity, puts the residents' suggestions in an appropriate order. It is then presented to the residents of Saguache County to get their input. After that, the County Commissioners come to a conclusion and begin to specifically reveal how they will reach the goal or goals and the cost, which is shown to the residents of Saguache County. Again, the County Commissioners get the residents input, before putting anything into action.

It appears that this plan has not been transparent, which leaves people suspicious of what the County Commissioners' agenda really is. It is a shame for everyone that it has come to this.

I know you have put thought and time into this plan, but it is not about what the Commissioners want. It is about *all* the residents of Saguache County and what we want you to do for our county.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dottie Eichhorn".

Dottie Eichhorn