

**GUNNISON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
PRELIMINARY AGENDA: Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

9:00 a.m. Managing for Results Training; members of the Planning Commission may attend a Managing for Results training; being held in the Information Technology Training Room, Blackstock Government Center

Lunch

1:00 p.m.

- **Call to order; determine quorum**
- **Approval of Minutes**
- **Unscheduled citizens:** A brief period in which the public is invited to make general comments or ask questions of the Commission or Planning Staff about items which are not scheduled on the day's agenda.

1:15 p.m. Seaglass Holding, Inc./Minex Exploration, work session/no action, request to conduct mineral exploration activities in the Powderhorn area to quantify the extent, volume, grade and type of mineralization in the exploration area for rare earth minerals. Drilling is proposed to take place at five locations, with 2-3 holes drilled per site. The exploration activities are located in two separate areas; one area approximately 8.5 miles south of Powderhorn, in the vicinity of Rudolph Hill and one area approximately 6 miles northwest of Powderhorn, west of County Road 26. Rudolph Hill sites include: Site No. 1 is located within Section 24, Township 46 North, Range 2 West, N.M.P.M. and Site No. 2 is located within Section 24, Township 46 North, Range 1½ West, N.M.P.M. County Road 26 sites include: Sites No. 3, 4 and 5 are located within Sections 4 & 10, Township 47 North, Range 3 West. All sites are located on federal lands.

2:15 p.m. Seaglass Holding, Inc./Minex Exploration, leave for site visit/no action, (weather dependent) request to conduct mineral exploration activities in the Powderhorn area to quantify the extent, volume, grade and type of mineralization in the exploration area for rare earth minerals. Drilling is proposed to take place at five locations, with 2-3 holes drilled per site. The exploration activities are located in two separate areas; one area approximately 8.5 miles south of Powderhorn, in the vicinity of Rudolph Hill and one area approximately 6 miles northwest of Powderhorn, west of County Road 26. Rudolph Hill sites include: Site No. 1 is located within Section 24, Township 46 North, Range 2 West, N.M.P.M. and Site No. 2 is located within Section 24, Township 46 North, Range 1½ West, N.M.P.M. County Road 26 sites include: Sites No. 3, 4 and 5 are located within Sections 4 & 10, Township 47 North, Range 3 West. All sites are located on federal lands.

**GUNNISON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
January 11, 2012**

The Gunnison County Planning Commission conducted a regular meeting, in the Commissioners' Meeting Room in the Blackstocks Government Center, Planning Commission meeting room. **Present were:**

Chairman- Ramon Reed	Director of Community Development- Joanne Williams
Commissioner-Kent Fulton	Assistant Director of Community Development- Neal Starkebaum
Commissioner- Jim Seitz	Planner-Cathie Pagano
Commissioner-Susan Eskew	Community Development Department Services Manager-Beth Baker
Alternate Commissioner- AJ Cattles	
Alternate Commissioner-Warren Wilcox	Others present as listed in text

With a quorum present Chairman Ramon Reed opened the regular meeting of the Commission.

MOVED: by Fulton seconded by Seitz to approve minutes of December 2, 2011 as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Managing for Results Training: Members of the Planning Commission attended a Managing for Results training. It was conducted at the Public Works Facility.

SEAGLASS HOLDING/ MINEX EXPLORATION: The Gunnison County Planning Commission (Commission) conducted a work session.

The commissioners reviewed a request to conduct mineral exploration activities in the Powderhorn area to quantify the extent, volume, grade and type of mineralization in the exploration area for rare earth minerals. Drilling is proposed to take place at five locations, with 2-3 holes drilled per site. The exploration activities are located in two separate areas; one area approximately 8.5 miles south of Powderhorn, in the vicinity of Rudolph Hill and one area approximately 6 miles northwest of Powderhorn, west of County Road 26. Rudolph Hill sites include: Site No. 1 is located within Section 24, Township 46 North, Range 2 West, N.M.P.M. and Site No. 2 is located within Section 24, Township 46 North, Range 1½ West, N.M.P.M. County Road 26 sites include: Sites No. 3, 4 and 5 are located within Sections 4 & 10, Township 47 North, Range 3 West. All sites are located on federal lands.

Minex representative Greg Schifrin said Minex is in several Colorado counties mining for rare earth minerals. He said there is a large demand in the space exploration and defense fields, as well as for cell phones, electric cars, and alternative energy. He noted currently China supplies 97% of the demand.

Schifrin said there is a lot of pressure from the Departments of Energy and Defense to identify where rare earth minerals can be found in the U.S. Minex is in the process of determining if it makes economic sense to mine in the Gunnison area, or anywhere else. He noted money has been raised and an exploration program has been put in place. There will be field mapping done this summer.

Schifrin explained the County had placed a cease and desist order on the operation. He said there had been a misunderstanding and they were now applying for the County permit. The State permit is in place.

Schifrin described the proposal as the initial exploration. They have identified their three main target areas; Rudolph Hill, the Powder Horn area, and Sapinero Mesa. They will complete detailed mapping and traversing on the ground to collect data. Approximately 500 surface samples have been collected. He submitted a map of areas in Gunnison County. They have permits from the State. The BLM does not issue a permit.

Schifrin said they will be diamond core drilling, using small rigs. The rig comes in on a small track-mounted piece of equipment. The boom extends 10 ft. to 15 ft in the air. A lot of water is needed to cool the bits down. Ten ft. of drill core is extracted at a time. There will be a geologist on site to evaluate the samples.

Schifrin explained that all the sites will be close to existing roads. He said any minimal disturbance will be filled in. They will use big water trucks instead of sump pumps. Bonds have been posted for reclamation of the drilling sites. This permit application is for five drill sites, with one to three holes per drill site. The shallow holes take approximately one day to drill, and the larger holes take two to three days. The deepest hole is about 600 ft. deep, it is on Sapinero Mesa. They hope to complete this part of the program next summer. They have drilled four holes so far. There is currently one hole on Rudolph Hill and three holes on Sapinero Mesa.

High Country Citizens Alliance representative Matt Reed asked how much water is needed and where will it come from; Schifrin responded noting they are permitted to use water from the Lake Fork of the Gunnison, and water trucks will haul water to the site; it could take a maximum of 10,000 gallons per day. They will use stock tanks for water storage. The cuttings are discharged in sumps.

Schifrin agreed to provide a map of active streams, in response to a request made by Reed.

Starkebaum asked if the core samples contain radioactivity; Schifrin said yes they all have small amounts of radio activity. He added that the cuttings will also contain it; it is being quantified and identified to determine how they should be handled in the sumps.

A referral request for comments has been sent to the Gunnison Fire protection District.

County Wildlife Coordinator Jim Cochran said there are five leks along County Rd. #26. The site analysis is not complete. Two of the actual drill sites are on rock knobs which are of lower quality/ value for Sage grouse habitat. Cochran said mitigations can be made and drilling can be done. He explained time of year restrictions will take care of many of the issues; no activity March 15th to May 15th. The road is closed at that time as well.

Schifrin will provide a statement concerning a cultural study, as requested by Eskew.

Schifrin stated Minex is currently trying to determine if there is value and if this is an economic resource for them.

The Commission will conduct a work session on January 20, 2012 and a public hearing on February 3, 2012.

Reed adjourned the meeting at 2:20 P.M.

/S/ Beth Baker
Community Development Department Services Manager
Gunnison County Community Development Department