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Resources and Development Committee discusses land withdrawal to boost commercial and economic development in Shiprock

WINDOW ROCK – The Resources and Development Committee on Tuesday addressed five legislations. One particular legislation sparked considerable committee discussion as it could potentially boost commercial and economic development in Shiprock, NM.

Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) presented Legislation No. 0143-13, a bill he sponsored which sought to relinquish 4.43 acres of Navajo Nation trust land for community development, and withdrawing the same acreage amount for commercial and economic development purposes.

The land is located west of U.S. Highway 491, approximately one-half mile south of the junction of U.S. Highway 491 and State Highway 64.

“We would like to take that one section, and use it for commercial development,” Delegate Begaye said.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) questioned the exhibits attached to the legislation.

“I’m looking for proposals... exactly how the land will be used,” said Delegate Tsosie. “Is Shiprock thinking of the idea of a township?”

“As long as we have this land withdrawn, we can be ready for proposals that come in,” responded Delegate Begaye. “We [Shiprock Chapter] are currently bouncing ideas around for a township.”

Sally Begay, senior economic development specialist for the Shiprock Regional Business Development Office Shiprock, told the committee that her office already has two interested developers, one of which is interested in building a mini-mall.

Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) expressed concern about the multitude of administrative regulations that hinder development.

In effort to streamline land withdrawals Delegate Pete said, “Right now, the RDC is working with land administration to get all withdrawn lands into one central area to improve the process.”

Delegate Begaye explained that he and the Shiprock Business Regulatory Office would work with potential developers to prevent them from becoming discouraged about their investment.

“We want to let businesses know this land is available. It has great potential for small businesses like restaurants, mini-malls and retail,” Delegate Begaye said.

The RDC, which serves as the final authority on the matter, voted to approve the legislation with a 3-0 vote.

As the next step, Delegate Begaye and the Shiprock Business Regulatory Office plan to review the two development proposals they have received.

In September 1993, the Resources Committee of the 17th Navajo Nation Council unanimously passed resolution RSC-212-93, withdrawing 36.674-acres of Navajo Trust Land in Shiprock for community development purposes.

It is of the original 36.674 acres, that 4.43 acres will now be withdrawn for economic development purposes.

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