



**NAVAJO NATION  
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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CONTACT: Rick Abasta  
Public Information Officer  
Phone: 928-871-6560  
Fax: 928-871-7090  
Email: rabasta@nndcd.org

## LeChee and Kaibeto communities achieve CLUP certification



Legislation sponsor Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) and former Navajo Nation President and Kaibeto Chapter President Kelsey Begaye listen to concerns and recommendations of committee members of the Resources and Development Committee on their community land use planning document and presentation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK-Planning for the orderly growth and development of Navajo communities is the purpose behind Community Land Use Planning efforts, said Arbin Mitchell, director of Navajo Nation Division of Community Development.

On July 26, 2011, the 22nd Navajo Nation Council Resources and Development Committee certified the land use plans of LeChee Chapter and Kaibeto Chapter.

“We are working with Navajo chapters to grow their communities for the future generations” Mitchell said. “There are now 95 chapters that are CLUP certified.”

Sponsor Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) said the community land use planning documents were compiled by the communities.

“Moving forward, we have planned for the community of LeChee with this document,” Benally said.

Preliminary efforts with the land use plan began in 1993, when Cornoyer-Hedrick worked with LeChee to sketch out early plans. The Phoenix-based company laid the foundation for what would later be built upon by Randall Ewers and Associates, and Irene Ogata.

Utilizing the consultant services of outside architects and planners provided education to community members on the development of their chapter.

Irene Nez-Whitekiller, president of LeChee Chapter, said the

CLUP document began in 1997.

“This Community Land Use Plan wasn’t just talked about or planned on recently. This all started back in 1997,” Whitekiller said.

Community members from LeChee gathered during CLUP committee meetings and voiced their need for development like a convenience store, laundromat, trailer court and housing complex. Practical considerations like a cemetery and post office were also included in the plan.

Wilfred Lane, community services coordinator, said LeChee’s CLUP was developed according to guidelines provided by the former Transportation and Community Development Committee of the Navajo Nation Council.

Public hearings were held to provide community education, assessments, prioritizing, and vision for the future of LeChee.

“We would hold meetings and everybody would discuss these issues. That’s how this document came to be,” Lane said.

The land carrying capacity was studied, along with open space, residential and commercial areas, economic development, and the thoroughfare for streets and roads.

“We are thankful and we will begin to implement this land use plan for the chapter,” Lane said.

Sarah Dale, chapter secretary and CLUP committee member, said the community supports the renewal for the lease by Navajo Generating Station, especially since so many community members work there.

“Some of our Navajo Nation tribal members from across the reservation work (at NGS). They get a lot of job skills,” James said.

LeChee Chapter Vice President Yvonne Bigman agreed.

“We support Navajo Generating Station. I worked there for 25 years and retired from there,” Bigman said. “This is a historical moment for us as chapter officials to come before you.”

The LeChee Chapter CLUP was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Katherine Benally was also the sponsor for the Kaibeto CLUP.

“This is another one of the community land use plans that we’re seeking your support for the community of Kaibeto,” Benally said.

Kaibeto Chapter President Kelsey Begaye spoke in Navajo and said the community has followed leadership and planning to this point and is thankful for the opportunity of certification.

“Looking back, it’s been over six years now that we’ve really started working on this plan,” Begaye said.

He said the community was involved with CLUP meetings, emphasizing the need for small businesses and employment opportunities.

“Small businesses are the backbone of the whole Navajo Nation and the United States,” Begaye said. “Orderly growth and infrastructure development was planned.”

The first community store in Kaibeto was opened in 1912, followed by the first BIA school opening in 1937. The first Bureau of Indian Affairs elementary school opened for the community in 1965.

Navajo Housing Authority built 10 homes in Kaibeto in 1970, which was followed by the construction of Highway 98 in 1972. The 1980s brought housing communities, churches and a new IHS clinic.

Franklin Fowler, CLUP committee chairman, said, “Everybody played a role in developing this.”

Fowler said the purpose behind the plan was to create jobs for community members and to bring economic opportunity for Kaibeto.

“We need to give something to our children to work with,” Fowler said.

Ernest Goatson, vice president for Kaibeto Chapter, said there are nine major projects that have been identified for development in the next five years.

An 80-acre commercial multipurpose building tops the list, followed by eight and 10-acre business site leasing. A solid waste transfer station and recycling center is also planned, along with a 120-acre industrial site. A public safety complex is also planned, plus a 12-acre senior independent living center. Rounding out the development projects are a 1.8-acre flea market, five-acre one stop tribal building and a one-acre feed store lease.

Land was identified for the nine major projects, followed by the completion of archaeological and environmental surveys by JJ Clacs.

The chapter also met with Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, where commitments were made for power line, waterline and sanitation.

The Arizona Department of Transportation was consulted for right of way permits, along with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Roads Department.

“We want to grow, expand,” Goatson said. “We’re looking to develop a laundromat, fast food, convenience store, auto parts,

towing center, and self-storage.

“Another good resource is the tourism,” he added.

The Kaibeto Chapter moved steadily through the planning process, utilizing the marketability studies from the Tuba City Economic Development Committee to hit the ground running.

The chapter is also planning to become a satellite school of the Page School District, providing educational services for Kaibeto, Navajo Mountain, Inscription House and Shonto.

The Resources and Development Committee approved the CLUP for Kaibeto by a vote of 3-0.

Information: [www.nndcd.org](http://www.nndcd.org)

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**LeChee Chapter President Irene Nez Whitekiller responds to questions from the Resources and Development Committee. Legislation sponsor Katherine Benally said the plan was planned and discussed by community members of LeChee Chapter. (Photo by Rick Abasta)**



**Kaibeto Chapter Vice President Ernest Goatson said the chapter is moving forward with nine major projects that have been identified for development in the next five years. Development plans include a multi purpose building, tribal building, public safety complex, and small business initiatives. (Photo by Rick Abasta)**