



Delegates receive Indian Wells economic development project updates from Division of Economic Development

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Mar. 17, the Permanent Trust Fund (PTF) 5 Year Expenditure Plan and *Sihásin* Fund Projects *ad hoc* task force received project updates from the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development (DED) on the development of a 10-acre commercial site at Indian Wells funded through Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CAP-35-18.

“We have just administered a professional engineering service contract with *liná Bá* to design and generate the construction document for the site work and infrastructure,” said Elaine Young, Small Business Development Department manager. That contract is valued at \$89,867.50.

Young explained the first phase of the project is the convenience store and gas station for which DED has identified a potential owner and operator. However, the original allocation of \$3.7 million for the development was reduced by \$2.7 million after being transferred to other commercial development projects on the Navajo Nation.

Young said other potential funding sources to meet the shortfall include the Fuel Excise Tax (FET), which has previously provided \$300,000 for projects that include gas stations. Otherwise, prior projects have been established for those revenues.

Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tónaneesdizí) gave delegates an overview of the decision making which reallocated project funds to other entities in the region. Tso requested a future discussion among delegates to identify how to improve the overall allocation process for future developments. That discussion would provide information to help the Council decide to recoup those later reallocations.

“I would feel comfortable if it’s a choice to rehome the money to finish up with building, for the sake of economic development, and to pull revenues off the taxes we could generate from it,” said Tso.

Young said the project is coming up on timelines and needed to know if it will be funded under prior amounts, which would require additional legislation. Young added a current infrastructure construction contract awarded to Arviso Construction in the amount of \$601,000 for the project site is proceeding. Without new appropriations, the DED would work quickly to identify alternative sources, Young said.

Speaker Damon said a separate meeting will be scheduled for Mar. 31 with delegates and stakeholders on the previous reallocations and will include the DED.

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