

# Beaverhead County Planning Board Regular Meeting Minutes

## Multi-Purpose Room- Beaverhead County Courthouse

### Thursday April 13th at 1:30 pm

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**Planning Board Members Present:** Barry Emge, Larry Yuhas, Kelly Rowe, Kristen Bailey, Carl Miles, George Clemow, Larry Volkening, and Vana Taylor

**Planning Board Members Absent:** Justin Stanchfield

**Others Present:** Scott Marsh- Fire Warden, John Jackson- Commissioner, Mike McGinley- Commissioner, Jack Eddie- County Weed Coordinator, and Ken Scalzone- County Rep to City Planning Board, Rob Macioroski- County Planner

**Opening:** Chairman Larry Volkening opened the meeting at 1:30 pm.

**Previous Minutes:** Kelly Rowe motioned to approve the February meeting minutes, Larry Volkening seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

#### Planner's Report

County Planner Rob Macioroski began the meeting by noting that he had attended an informative Floodplain training in Missoula. He stated that there were also some recent surveys submitted, including the Dutchman Springs / Riatta Ranchette Boundary retracement and the amended plat of Dutchman Springs. Rob stated that since the last board meeting there have been three approved Floodplain Permits: Shady Nook, Salmon Fly Fishing Access (MT FWP), and Southern Montana Telephone Company. Shady Nook will have new residences be constructed. Salmon Fly FAS will be receiving upgrades to the entrance and parking lot. And, SMT will be doing some work to bury fiber optic cables.

Also, in Floodplain permit news, Rob noted that the meetings regarding the Joseph Balla and BAM ventures permit on the Big Hole River had taken place and there was quite the turn out in support as well as in opposition to the approval of the permit. The decision now is up to the County Commissioners.

Rob stated that there are some new subdivision applications that should be ready for review possibly by the next meeting. They include a 1 lot subdivision in Wisdom as well as another major subdivision by Ron Towery in the Sweetwater Estates area. It is proposed to be 18 lots, including some commercial lots.

Rob thanked and congratulated Larry Volkening on his hard work to secure a grant for Beaverhead County from the Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program in the amount of \$17,750.00 to create a recreation master plan.

#### Area Reports

**Carl Miles:** No update

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**Barry Emge:** Barry stated that this is the most snow that he has recorded in the last 15 years- 90 inches! He stated that the ski hill did very well and they just closed for the season on March 26<sup>th</sup>. He also stated that he's heard a rumor that the same folks that purchased the ski hill are in the process of purchasing Elk Horn. It sounded like they were hoping to re-open in May under new ownership.

**Vana Taylor:** Vana stated that they've been busy the last couple of months. Inventory is still very low and she predicts that they won't have enough to meet the demand. There is some building starting. Vana also urged the group to find a way to be involved in some sort of Earth Day clean up on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**George Clemow:** George stated that they've got a new contract for the Senior Center roof, same company but they think they've finally got it locked down. They're hoping that construction will start on 4/15.

**Kelly Rowe:** Kelly said the 310 Board is trying to restructure so as to not include an Urban Planning Director. He also stated that the Beaverhead Watershed Committee is looking to replace Jamie Cottom. She is expecting another child and has decided to take a step back from her role there.

**Larry Yuhas:** Larry noted that the agriculture season is starting up, and noted that he's seen some new construction starting with the improved weather.

**Kristen Bailey:** Kristen stated it's been quiet down by Lima. The big Egg Hunt is this Saturday and the following Saturday is the Lima Pool Smorgasbord. She said the snowpack is average in that area. Sheep creek has been high and was over the banks about three weeks ago. It's back within the banks, but still high.

**Larry Volkening:** Larry discussed how helpful the members of the outlying communities were in him securing the grant from Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Program. Larry also discussed the bill before the house regarding the Zebra Mussels and what measures they're taking to try to address those, including where the funding will come from. Originally there was a proposal to have a \$25.00 fee for out-of-state cyclists but that was removed from the bill. At this point it appears that they'll be generating the money they need, 3 million dollars, from extras fees attached to electric bills. All of this is still under deep review. Larry stated that they've also discussed a \$0.02 tax on water bottle caps; they chose this because they've found that is the biggest contributor to pollution/litter in Montana. He also stated that MT FWP plans to hire 1700 seasonal employees for boat checks.

**Scott Marsh:** Scott noted that he checked the numbers for the area snowpack and everything, with the exception of the Centennial, is at 100% or higher snowpack. The Centennial is significantly lower. Clark Canyon and Lima reservoirs are looking good and it's anticipated that everyone will get their full irrigation amounts.

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**Rob:** Rob also brought some handouts from the Economic Outlook Seminar that had numbers specific to Beaverhead County and how we stack up to other counties. He also brought a tourism report handout. Larry Volkening noted during a short discussion on the economy that cattle prices are back up, he heard on the Ag Report that this was due to less pressure from China.

Rob also discussed a handout he brought regarding the House and Senate bills that the Association of Planners has been tracking. There was short discussion within the group regarding some of the bills that have been tabled for various reasons as well as HB49 that has been passed into law regarding the transfer of water rights.

**Public Comment:** Larry Volkening asked for public comment on anything that was discussed during the regular meeting. There was no comment. Larry turned the meeting over to Jack Eddie, the Beaverhead County Weed Coordinator for a presentation.

#### **Jack Eddie, Beaverhead County Weed Coordinator Presentation:**

Jack presented information on what the Weed District does, their budget, some projects their working on, and some information on County and State listed weeds that are a concern in Beaverhead County. Some of the highlights of Jack's presentation include:

Information regarding Medusa Head, a newly listed weed in Montana, there is one confirmed sighting in Sanders County, but there is a report that it may have been spotted at Clark Canyon. Jack also noted that Absinth Wormwood was County listed last year; there is one area near Maiden Rock that they're working on containing.

Jack discussed the budget he is working on for the 2018 fiscal year, approximately \$600,000.00. There is some concern regarding money that is usually received from the BLM because they haven't yet been funded for this season. They had this problem with the Forest Service last year, but it did eventually work out and they received proper funding, so they're hoping for that scenario again this year. They have secured funding from the Noxious Weed Trust Fund; in fact they've been granted more money than Beaverhead County residents actually contribute to the Fund. Jack speculates that this may be because Beaverhead County is very proactive with their management plan. Vana inquired how the funding was disbursed with some counties being much less proactive. Jack stated that it was a very loose disbursement system because State law requires that every County have a Weed District, but doesn't require that they actually do anything in particular. For example, Missoula receives about \$1 million, yet they don't spray any weeds. They spend the majority of their budget on education for the public.

The District is looking forward to many co-op projects with landowners. Last season they were able to use \$287,000 in grant money assist landowners with managing their weeds.

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The District does sometimes sell chemicals for a very small profit, but for the most part they direct citizens to purchase their chemicals from the local businesses because they don't want to create competition for the local businesses.

Last season they received 25 non-compliance complaints regarding landowners not managing their weeds. When all was said and done, they only needed to spray for 1 of those complaints. They do their best to work with people that are not compliant.

This season they have a large project at Maiden Rock with Knapweed and Wormwood. Because of the terrain and the scope of the project they've received a \$10,000 grant from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for a helicopter to spray. The project covers a large area, extending approximately from Canyon Creek to Fleecer.

They're struggling, as they have in the past, to come to an agreement with UPRR about who should pay for and spray the weeds within the Railroad Right of Way. The spraying crews are currently working through some training required by the Railroad in order to be on the property.

Last season the Beaverhead County Weed District sprayed approximately 9800 acres.

Jack also noted some staggering facts:

- In the US there are 758 new non-native species introduced daily. These weeds are introduced mainly from the ballast water on ships coming to port in the US.
- The Department of Agriculture estimates that 10% of State lands are lost to noxious weeds every year.

A new mapping system is going to be required by the state in a few years. Jack believes the technology will be very helpful especially with the large size of our county. The system will allow for a downloadable phone app that will allow users to photograph weeds and will mark a GPS point of the location of the picture. Then, when the user is in service, the picture and information will be sent to the District and either Jack or Amber will be able to verify the species. This will allow them to gather more field data and hopefully help them locate noxious weeds throughout the county more effectively. The data will also, hopefully, help pass laws and provide funding opportunities through the legislature by providing a visual to lawmakers that might not otherwise understand the severity and impact of invasive weed species.

At the conclusion of Jack's presentation George Clemow moved to adjourn the meeting, Kelly seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00.