

Beaverhead County Planning Board Regular Meeting
Commissioners' Meeting Room - Courthouse
November 19, 2020 at 1:00 pm



At 1:00 p.m. the Regular Planning Board Meeting commenced.

Planning Board Members Present: Chairman Larry Volkening, Larry Yuhas, Barry Emge, Kristen Bailey, Kelly Rowe, Justin Stanchfield, and Vana Taylor.

Planning Board Members Absent: Ken Scalzone and Rich Lawson

Others Present: County Planner Rob Macioroski, Jessica Murray, GIS Coordinator Tracy Sawyer, County Sanitarian Tom Wagenknecht, and Jamie Flynn.

Opening: Chairman Larry Volkening opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Action on Previous Minutes:

MOTION: Kristen moved to approve the minutes from the October 8, 2020 Planning Board meeting as submitted. Larry seconded the motion. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Planning Board Member Reports:

Larry asked for reports from members.

Kelly reported in his area that they are just winding down for winter. He is staying busy. Kelly said there is a lot of development going on and people building things. He said Jeff Welborn's trailer sales has a new building. He talked about the different properties being developed.

Barry said things are moving in the grasshopper area. There are houses being built more than in 20 years. They had a rash of Covid in the valley and was probably contracted from an EMS training session. They all recovered. The B&B has closed down for a bit.

Kristen reported there are a couple of houses being built in Lima and a couple for sale. The school has been shut down this week with one positive Covid case for a teacher. They got some snow this morning around an inch. Kristen said Landon Ridge in the Centennial Valley has around 18" of snow.

Larry Yuhas said there are a few houses, garages and sheds being built in his area. He said it seems like there is more storage being built in his area. Larry said that if the Monida Pass closes, the shelter will not be open.

Justin reported it's winter already. He said there is snow in his area and it's still snowing. The only real estate news is in Vipond Park. He said it has been pretty quiet.



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Larry Volkening said there are 2 new houses being built in his area. He said the wind was bad and everyone was buried in.

Vana presented her report to the group. She said that in the Dillon area there are 22 active listings, 21 under contract. 109 homes have sold so far this year.

In the Lima area there is one active listing and one under contract. Seven homes have sold.

Wisdom has seven active listings and no under contract. Three homes have sold.

Wise River has two active listings and nothing else.

Land in Dillon just on the MLS shows 27 active listings, two under contract and 22 have sold.

With commercial property in Dillon there are six active listings, there are more, but not on the MLS. Three are under contract and one commercial property has sold.

In Dillon, the days on the market average 57 days. The average is up from other years. Vana said the inventory is very low right now and she has never seen this before. She said we need to get a housing project. Larry V asked about the growth in Lima, Wisdom and Wise River. Vana said that the Lima area is really busy with a lot of growth. If more open properties open up, then they will see more growth.

Planner's Report:

Rob said it has been fairly quiet. He has had zoom meetings on floodplain permit system. He said it may be 2022 before it can be updated. The problems with Covid have thrown everything up in the air. He said they may have a meeting at the college and Zoom regarding the floodplains.

Rob said we will be getting out the floodplain information in January. He hopes it will work and the growth policy results will help with this. There are a lot of different questions coming up. A lot of development is going on. He has fielded a lot of different questions. There are a lot of out of state people inquiring. T- mobile is looking into co-locating tower near Wisdom. Vana said we are getting another tower. Rob said they having been looking at several sites, none specific yet. Kristen asked about a tower in Dell. Rob said he has not heard anything for that area.

Vana said she received a letter from the Sweetwater subdivision regarding someone putting in a three (3) car detached garage.



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Public Comments & Questions:

Boyette Conservation Easement amendment

It is between the highway and Big Hole River. He wants to add a lot in located across the highway and so it's just an amendment to his conservation easement. Located at the Dickey bridge past the town of Wise River. He owns a portion of the river bottom that he put on over 10 years ago. He decided to add this parcel onto his conservation easement. The owner is requesting this. Larry V asked if there were any recommendations on this. Rob said it's just adding land onto the easement. On the Big Hole River before it crosses Highway 43.

They talked about weed control in the area. Justin said it's not too bad in that area. He does make an effort.

MOTION: Kelly moved to make sure they maintain weed control on the property for the conservation easement. Justin seconded the motion. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Rob reported that he got a call from the nature conservancy and the man (Jim Berkey) said they were talking about conservation easements in the previous Planning Board Meeting. There is some concern about the conservation easements. Jim Berkey wants to come back to the Planning Board to talk about it. Rob said they are mapped out by Tracy Sawyer.

Tracy mapped out the conservation easements. He talked about the stats for the county. 124 conservation easements owned by 65 landowners 41 landowners have a Montana address, seven are corporations or conglomerates. 170,317 acres. A discussion took place about easements and acreage.

Rob saw an article that the Montana land alliance sent out a quarterly report that reported the Paradise Valley by Yellowstone Park is getting the most attention.

MOTION: Justin moved to approve the conservation easement amendment. Kristen seconded the motion. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comments and Questions*



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Growth Policy Survey Results

Larry started that we need a goal for the results. He said that Kelly and him have worked on this before. We need the impression of the results, so we can get a growth policy. He wants us to work as a group on this, so we can all be together if the public asks questions. Each board member will have 3 points of interest from the survey. He said to first address the general stuff.

Rob was encouraged that we had 439 results of the survey. 4% of the county population responded. A discussion took place about the different counties and what kind of response they got. It was good that we saw both sides of the thinking. Larry V asked the group if they thought that we had a good response and that we should move forward.

Growth Policy

**Discussion on Growth Policy – Survey*

Question 1 – is ok. Area of the county you reside in.

Question 2 – County's greatest assets. Quality of life, rural lifestyle, and abundance of and access to were the three highest. Justin said there may have been more retirees that responded to the survey. Barry said the virus may have affected the survey. Tom said the people he is dealing with are from out of state or taking early retirement or working remotely. This could impact the Planning Board with the way we deal with things for growth in our area. A discussion took place. Rob said Quartz Hill is an example of that.

Kristen asked about somebody coming in and buying land by the forest and if the county can say they can't build there. She wanted to know if we have any teeth in this. Vana said access is a big issue for some of those places. Vana said that insurance is higher when they try to build next to forest. This would only apply to a subdivision with egress and ingress. Single family homes would not have the same restrictions. Tom talked about access. Tom talked about the fire restrictions and how it should be handled. Kristen thinks the general public says where the growth is going to be and how do we deal with not putting subdivisions in forested areas. She talked about easements and possibly being in a good area for development. Larry V said that the Planning Board recommends to the commissioners what they think should be done.

Tom stated that there are restrictions from DEQ or FEMA regarding floodplain and septic systems that would take place. He talked about mining claims and restrictions that would be needed. They talked about the mining claims.



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Question 3 – Weaknesses in Beaverhead County. Discussion took place about growth in the county. Vana stated that we can't compete with amazon and all. Small shops and businesses are having a hard time. Justin said we should educate people what it's like to live in rural Montana. The expectations need to be spelled out. We need to think of 20 years. Larry V thinks that subdivision should be shown to be commercial, recreational, housing. 20 acres and \$1,500 can be considered ag. Growth area was a point on this question. Housing was discussed. Vana said we need to have some affordable housing in our county. She thinks we need to get to Helena to get it taken care of. Butte-Silver Bow County has a mill levy they vote on for economic development. Rob thinks we should do something here.

The remaining seven questions from the growth survey will be discussed at the next Planning Board meeting.

Larry V asked the board to send three points of interest to Rob, so the process can keep going.

**Public Comments and Questions*

Larry asked if we should have a meeting in December. Larry V said we could to keep the process going. We don't need a quorum to do this. The other questions will be discussed.

Public Comments & Questions of Non-Agenda Items

Kelly talked about the solar farm and if the commissioners should give them a tax break for the company doing it. The group thought they shouldn't get tax breaks. The letter would need to be from the County Planning Board to the commissioners. It was discussed that there are two ways to look at this for our county.

The next Planning Board meeting will be held on December 10th at 1:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's meeting room of the Courthouse.

ADJOURN:

With no further business to discuss, Barry moved and Larry Yuhas seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Submitted:


Secretary

Approved By:


Chairman