

MINUTES
CITY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Bonnors Ferry City Council Chambers
7232 Main St.
(208) 267-3105
November 16, 2023
5:15 pm

Chair Andy Howe called the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting for November 16, 2023, to order at 5:15 pm. Planning and Zoning Commissioners present were Chair Howe, Chris Rawlings, Dave Gray, Sue Larson and Darci Price. Also, present were Contract Planners Clare Marley and City Clerk Stephanie Lewandowski. Contract Planner Samuel Stringer from Ruen Yeager was present via Zoom.

Present from the public were Dottie Gray, Larry Bighouse, Tim Gorshe, Judy Gorshe, and David Vandevort.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of October 19th, 2023, Minutes: **ACTION ITEM.**
Commissioner Dave Gray moved to approve the minutes of October 19, 2023.
Commissioner Chris Rawlings seconded the motion. The motion passed all in favor.
- **NEW BUSINESS: PUBLIC HEARING: Files #SUP012-23 & #S03-23 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT & PRELIMINARY PLAT: ACTION/RECOMMENDATION.**

Clare Marley summarized the agenda items, including possible downtown restoration opportunities, with Mr. Stringer presenting via Zoom. New business will include a discussion of the 2024 code updates.

Sam Stringer presented two opportunities to participate in some downtown revitalization techniques and implementations.

- a. **Main Street America:** The first opportunity is the Idaho Main Street America funding opportunities.

These ideas play into the comp plan and there have also been people approaching the city planners and asking if there are any incentives for restoring downtown buildings or putting new business downtown.

The National Main Street Center is a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Places that focuses on the revitalization of downtowns, specifically main streets. They provide opportunities, tools, funding, assistance, and insurance to areas seeking revitalization. This organization began from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980 after noticing that historically booming downtown areas were now fading away.

The National Main Street Center's focus is to help downtowns with grant opportunities. They also assist in community workshops where an assessment can be done which will point to improvement opportunities. They also have an online business tool, and they provide insurance for some downtown areas and provide resources with tools, studies, and business data.

T-Mobile is currently doing a project with Main Street America called T-Mobile hometown grants. This project started in 2021 and will run for five years. Every quarter they select 25 towns with a population of less than 50,000 people. Their main goal is to provide grants and funding to these areas for local libraries, increasing technology, or even new hiking trails. Their focus, however, is the revitalization of historic buildings.

Funding can be received to turn historic buildings into a mixed-use building with housing on the upper floor and businesses below. This helps with the current housing crisis. This opportunity seems to fit in well with downtown Bonners Ferry and some of the historic buildings that aren't being used to their full potential.

Another opportunity is a big win for older buildings, main street, and climate. The goal is to reuse and adapt current buildings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions created by building new. This grant incentivizes up to 40% of the total building costs.

b. **Certified Local Government:** The second opportunity is Certified Local Government in partnership with the Boundary County Historical Society and the Idaho Historical Society, which will work together to support historic preservation and funding opportunities.

The focus of Certified Local Government is historic preservation. The local CLG is made up of 5-10 members of a community that are appointed. Ideally two of the members would have a historical preservation background whether it be working at the local museum or having a history degree or having a focus on historical planning. This is not required but it is something they look for when going through your application.

A CLG is a partnership between the state historic preservation office and local government. The whole entire point is for the state to help preserve historic buildings, providing services and exclusive grants that are only given to CLG's in the area. The U.S. Department of the Interior sets aside a certain amount of money every year specifically for Certified Local Governments.

Some of the upkeep items that need to be done to stay as a CLG are mainly historical preservation things such as conducting a survey of possible historic preservation buildings that are on the national registry. They do provide cities sample of ordinances that you can adopt and use right away.

Some of the buildings on the National Registry in Boundary County are the Post Office which went on the registry in 1989, the Fry Trading Post from 1984, the Harvey Mountain Quarry from 1978 and the most recent landmark to be added in Boundary County is the Russell and Pearl Soderling house, which was added in 1998.

Commissioner Price asked what needs to be done to get a building added to the registry. Sam explained that there are 4-5 components that must be presented to the Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service to get a building added to the list.

There must have been a famous person that lived there, the title of that person, an event that happened at that house or landmark and the architecture of it must be a pristine example of that type of architecture in that area.

The Russell and Pearl Soderling house is on the list because of its architectural style. The National Historic Registry will show why each building is designated to be on the list.

Commissioner Price asked if the city could promote more historical buildings by promoting it to the building owners. Commissioner Gray mentioned the original hospital that is now a home and the fact that the Rex Theater would be turning 100 years old soon. Commissioner Price also mentioned Captain Gray's house on the hill.

Sam said that if the community had a CLG, it could receive help with records research on these buildings. There would also be funding available to help revitalize those buildings.

There is a total of 40 CLG's in Idaho right now. Some local ones are Wallace, Sandpoint, Hayden, Coeur d' Alene, and Priest River. There are different levels of Main Street membership with the most expensive one being \$525 a year. This allows access to Main Street news, webinars, a digital library, a person to help with Zoom meetings, free tools etc.

There are no application fees to become a Certified Local Government. CLG's fees would be more along the lines of writing a historic preservation ordinance. There is no upfront annual fee.

To become a Certified Local Government, a city must:

1. Create a historic preservation committee.
2. Adopt local historic preservation ordinance.
3. Complete an application.
4. The State Historic Preservation Office reviews the application and makes a recommendation.
5. The National Park Services determines the final decision.

Clare asked Sam if he had a recommendation for which program would work best for Bonners Ferry. Sam said he thought that forming a CLG would be the best bet in the long term. It will take more outreach and city involvement to get off the ground. It would help to invite people to the next Planning and Zoning meeting who have an interest in historical properties.

Sam said that if the city wanted to have a faster revitalization for the downtown area, Main Street America would be a better fit for a faster impact.

Clare suggested that moving forward the City could have a community meeting and invite a speaker from one of the programs. Sam agreed that this was a great way to get started.

Commissioner Price said she thought the first step would be in forming the committee for the CLG and seeing if there are people interested in doing that. A community invite meeting would be a great way to get that started. Clare suggested involving city council moving forward, since there will be some costs.

Commissioner Gray asked if this revitalization would include areas south of town that are not downtown. Sam said that CLG would work for anything within city limits.

Chair Howe said that the City already have a Boundary County Historical Society that seems like the natural group to move these projects forward.

Discussion followed about getting support from the downtown businesses and city council. The Planning and Zoning Commissioners were excited about the possibilities.

c. Zoning Code Update, ACTION ITEM: Clare stated that the comp plan was adopted in March and now the task is to update the city code in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan policies and the Future Land Use Map, principally the city's zoning map, uses, standards and subdivision regulations.

The items that need to be looked at in that are:

- a. The provision of appropriately scaled housing types within residential areas.
- b. Design standards for new development to ensure compatibility within existing neighborhood connections.
- c. Block lengths and road standards to provide for multi-modal and accessible intra-neighborhood connections.
- d. Requirement or incentives for the provision of usable open space and pedestrian oriented amenities.
- e. Local economic opportunity and the protection of health, safety, and welfare.
- f. Appropriate types and locations of industrial uses.
- g. New and updated zoning districts to implement land use policy.

- **OLD BUSINESS: Discussion/Direction to Staff** Follow up discussion on subdivision update.

Clare suggested leaving enough time at the November meeting to have a discussion and provide her with things to work on until January. Then P&Z would come back with a good robust January meeting for the zoning districts. She suggested gathering around the table with some images of the zones and potential uses and deciding what goes where.

Judy's Subdivision would like to be scheduled before the end of the year. If it is added to November, it will take an estimated hour. It still needs to go to an agency review. Chair Howe said that he is open to adding extra meetings to fit people in. Clare shared that she needs to get Judy's to the newspaper immediately to address it at the November meeting.

Clare advised that Judy's Subdivision is a planned subdivision with duplexes, so she expects to hear testimony.

After discussion of other dates, the commissioners agreed to address the timing of extra meetings at the November meeting.

Clare's stated that since the commissioners have one more meeting of the year, the new zoning districts should be addressed in November in a workshop setting. There is a brand-new designation of mixed use off to the west of the fairgrounds and there will need to be discussed. The same goes for the industrial areas.

Then in December, the staff can begin to shape that up and bring it back for discussion after the first of the year. Clare talked to City Administrator Lisa Ailport about whether there should be a planning subcommittee, and she stated that it was up to the planning commission.

Clare stated that several of the things that need to be done are the nuts and bolts like what is working for the city and what isn't working for the city and what does the comp plan say. Clare's thought was that the commissioners could begin to formulate that and then bring the subcommittee back in to see what they think.

Commissioner Price stated that when formulating the comp plan it seemed to work well to make decisions and then get feedback. Chair Howe agreed and suggested that the commissioners get moving forward on it and then include the subcommittee once they have a draft in place.

Clare discussed public outreach with Lisa, who suggested it may not need to be as robust as the comp plan, like going to the fair and the farmer's market. Instead, it was suggested to do some news releases on the website and social media.

The biggest impact on the rewrite of a zoning code will be when specific zones are applied and proposed uses are discussed. Then people will want to know how it will affect them. This is where the City need to spend time in outreach and educating the public with an open house.

The results of the discussions from June and July centered around lot line adjustments, parcel adjustments, street trees, and regular and minor plat processing.

One of the discussion points was whether a house could be built across a property line. In the past couple weeks, there were several applicants wanting to build across property lines and the zoning code does not specify what standards apply. The city has a lot line combination form that can be used. Part of the discussion for the lot line zoning code is whether the City will continue to allow that.

Building across property lines is a common practice because there are a number of lots that are only 25 feet wide. Many people have bought several of these lots at a time and then build across the lots. Part of the planning will include whether they need to do a lot line adjustment where they apply for a re-plat and have the property surveyed.

Currently there are no specific requirements or standards. The practice has been to request a lot combination agreement to document that the structure occupies more than one lot or parcel. The reason for this is to address obvious setback issues and to document for future owners that the structure straddles property lines.

Other jurisdictions require lot line adjustments, allow it through their zoning standards, ignore it or require a recorded agreement. Clare suggested that the city allows it through the zoning code.

Currently Boundary County is silent on the construction across contiguous lots/parcels. It says that the building must meet setbacks from "property lines."

Bonner County used to require the recording of a notice of lot combination but repealed the notice of lot combination and now requires that unplatted land be combined through a boundary line adjustment process platted land must file a replat.

Clare shared a handout on property line adjustments. Clare shared that she spoke with the accessor, Olivia Drake, who asked that there be no remnants. They have a problem with boundary adjustments where small parts get let off and create parcel tracking problems.

The big departure would be from staying silent to instead requiring an administrative re-plat.

The procedure for this is that the administrator would have to look at it and it would have to go to city council to be signed. There would be no notification to neighborhoods because it's a simple adjustment of interior boundaries. It does take a survey which increases the cost of the process.

- **Commission, Council and Staff Updates: Advisory/Direction to Staff**

- a. **November Meeting:** The November agenda will be light on code amendments.
- b. **2024 Calendar Draft:** Clare addressed the 2024 calendar draft which shows:

Month	Task	Personnel
November	Zoning Districts	P&Z & Staff
December	Rough Draft of Zoning Districts Introduction of Possible Standards And Uses Outline of Future Zoning Code Include Sections to be Retained	Staff
January	Review First Draft of Zoning Districts Review Uses and Standards Discuss District Boundaries	
February	Second Draft w/Districts Described, Uses and Standards Refine Boundaries	P&Z & Staff
March	Review Mapped Boundaries Review Tables for Uses and Standards	P&Z & Staff

The calendar must be adopted annually so that will be on the agenda for November.

- c. **Announcements from Staff on Commission:** The mill site annexation was completed. All the year's annexations are working through the state processes right now for adoption into the official map of the City of Bonners Ferry.

Clare will work on getting Judy's Subdivision onto the agenda for November. There are some loose ends, but they can be worked into the conditions.

Commissioner Price moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 and Commissioner Gray seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.