



YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF PLANNING
CITY OF BILLINGS AND
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA



Project Re:Code
Steering Committee
AGENDA
October 25, 2017
3:30 pm to 5:00 pm
222 N 32nd Street
Yellowstone Room
1st Floor



- I. Chair's Report –
Chair D. Goodridge reiterated the participation rules to the committee and public.

- II. Why Are We Here?
PB President D. Tunncliff explained the process the City took to update its growth policy and why the update triggered a need to align and update the city and county zoning code.
Planning Director W. Friday discussed the growth policy updates – City and Lockwood – the current effort underway to update the County's growth policy. Mr. Friday stated the policies and plans need good implementation tools such as subdivision rules and zoning regulations. Many of the stated goals and guidance in the growth policies cannot be achieved without updating the regulations.
Member G. McCall explained how they decided to write their own zoning when they kicked off the first Josephine Crossing development. He stated this was necessary because the current standard districts and rules did not allow enough housing choice, did not help create safe shared spaces for a new neighborhood. He stated it was a difficult but worthwhile learning experience writing a code just for their neighborhood.
Member M. Connell stated his experience working with local codes – including zoning, building & fire codes – has been frustrating at times. He supports the new form-based code adopted for the EBURD where he owns the Kairos Building at 15 N 15th St. He stated property owners with non-conformances are in dire situations. He stated the form-based code in the EBURD helped eliminate a ton of non-conformances. He stated it is important as the process moves forward to make sure the development is in synch with the zoning designations.
Member S. Arveschoug stated the committee should put together a set of expectations or guiding principles to use as new regulations are drafted, amended and recommended for adoption. He stated some of these principles

would be to ensure the process is fair, open and flexible. He stated the current state of development for the community was a big opportunity arena – a lot of big interest in Billings. He stated the zoning rules helps create our future community and it is important to engage together to make this happen. He stated the future prosperity of the community was bigger than 1 person’s viewpoint. He stated it was important to set the stage for improving economic conditions.

Member T. Boucher asked if the proposed direction and alignment would bring more regulations to bear on developers. He stated it was important to remember who would bear the cost and burden of following these new regulations.

Member K. Knatterud stated he thought the committee was still in the big picture stage of working on new regulations and we should work on these guiding principles first.

Member M. Noennig stated he was initially frustrated with the process so far but has a better understanding of the “why” and now would like to move forward. He agreed the guiding principles should come first.

Member S. Arveschoug and M. Connell both stated the need to hire this work out to a consultant after the guiding principles are set.

III. Proposed Subcommittees

- a. Landscaping Requirements (City & County)
- b. Sign Codes (City)
- c. Mixed Use Districts (City & County)

Action on this item was postponed to the November 29 meeting

IV. Public Comment

Kevin Nelson stated he is concerned with the lack of good land use decision making in the Southwest Corridor. As an example, Mr. Nelson stated the Highland Project property at 301 Orchard. He explained a short history of how this mistake happened. First Anderson Steel got a zone change to industrial and then set up a standard fabrication operation – not 3 shifts, not outdoors except to stage finished materials and all was well for many decades even though the property was right next door to a city neighborhood. Fast forward to the early 2000s and Anderson Steel moves out and Highland Projects moves in. This fabrication project is much bigger, includes outdoor sandblasting 2 or 3 shifts a day, tank painting and all kinds of obnoxious activity. But there is nothing the city neighbors can do. Then just 2 years ago, the City Council approves an industrial zone for Hanser’s to expand a junk storage yard on the east side of S. Billings Blvd. Almost an identical situation. Hanser’s has a nice quiet operation but what happens when they move on? What kind of obnoxious business will the neighbors have to tolerate in the future? He stated there should be a mandate in this new set of rules that requires a big buffer zone or transitional zone between industrial zones and residential zones.

Ian Williams stated he is interested in the code update because of his background in planning in the U.K. He stated the local code is bloated compared to codes used in the U.K. He stated it would be an important goal to deal with more issues with fewer words in the new code.