

Missoula City Council Land Use and Planning Committee Minutes - DRAFT

August 9, 2023

10:10 am

Council Chambers (in person) or TEAMS (virtually)

Attend in person: City Council Chambers, 140 W Pine, Missoula MT

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Mirtha Becerra, Daniel Carlino, John P. Contos, Gwen Jones, Kristen Jordan, Mike Nugent, Amber Sherrill

Members absent: Sierra Farmer, Jennifer Savage, Sandra Vasecka, Heidi West

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Amanda Vermace called the roll.

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

1.2.1 Approval of the Minutes from July 26, 2023

The minutes were approved as submitted.

1.2.2 Approval of the Minutes from August 2, 2023

The minutes were approved as submitted.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment for items not listed on the agenda.

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Process Overview for Code Reform Midterm Deliverables

Informational item only.

Eran Pehan, Director of the Community Planning, Development and Innovation department (CPDI), gave an introductory to the proposal for midterm deliverables for the Our Missoula Code Reform and Growth Policy update. She expressed appreciation for the council members patience as staff has been working to create a process that recognizes and incorporates changes made during the 2023 legislative sessions. Ms. Pehan highlighted that some changes are legally mandated while others would be identified and prioritized through the engagement feedback already received through work done earlier this year. She also stated this puts the city in a good position overall to meet the state mandate standards while identifying additional changes to support the overall creation of housing.

Laval Means, Community Planning Manager with CPDI, walked the committee through the steps of the process. Ms. Means covered the goals and phases of the project based on the midterm deliverables. She explained the work within the project focus on the city's subdivision regulations and zoning codes. Ms. Means also discussed the approach highlighting the changes that correlate to the state bills and the intent for engagement and timeline. She also explained the two phases to divide the midterm deliverables. The first phase focus on new legislative changes that circle around subdivision and zoning regulations that take effect on October 1, 2023, while the second phase would focus on the legislative changes that take effect on January 1, 2024, and the Our Missoula projects additional code changes. Ms. Means also covered the changes that are effective now, October 1, 2023, and January 1, 2024. She included the anticipated timeline for council consideration.

The committee requested more details on the state legislative changes for parking and the impacts on parking reform. They also sought more details on the state laws around cryptocurrency mines and what that means for Missoula. Lastly, they talked about moving towards a unified development code for better alignment with the new state legislation.

3.2 Icon Apartment Homes Annexation, Subdivision, and Master Site Plan

Introductory presentation and discussion on the proposal and staff recommended motions to approve the annexation, preliminary subdivision plat application, and master site plan, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

Dave DeGrandpre, Planning supervisor with the Community Planning, Development and Innovation department, introduced the subject item and gave details on the overall project requests which includes annexation, rezoning, subdivision and a master site plan review. The proposed development would bring 641 dwelling units over two phases of the project. He provided a visual of the property location and the context of the neighborhood. A portion of the property is located within the Missoula Airport flight path called the extended airport departure area. The portion of the property within the departure area would be park land.

Mr. DeGrandpre went on to explain the Annexation Policy and the existing conditions of the land. He also showed the preliminary subdivision plat which showed the two phases and the planned infrastructure. Another slide shared a more detailed plan of the Master Site Plan. The proposal includes several small parks throughout the development and provides a designated commercial use area. Another map showed landscape plans and more details on the pocket parks that are planned.

Next, Mr. DeGrandpre covered the subdivision review criteria. The project does comply with the city's growth policy. He also went over the proposed zoning and other aspects that fall in the review criteria. The only concern mention was over time the schools may be impacted as the location of the property is in an area that is being heavily developed. The proposed project has 37 (thirty seven) conditions of approval. These are all included in the staff report (available on eScribe). Lastly, Mr. DeGrandpre shared the recommended motions.

Danny Oberweiser, a representative for the applicant, introduced members on the development team. Mr. Oberweiser expressed appreciation for the work put into this project. He covered some of the challenges each project faces to comply with the codes.

Overall, Mr. Oberweiser felt this project meets the requirements along with other projects in the works in the surrounding area.

Will Ralph, with Braxton Development introduced himself and gave some background on his business. He explained what the apartments would consist of and plans for two clubhouses. He expressed appreciation for working with the city and others on the development team.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Molly Blakely, Superintendent for the Hellgate Elementary School District, shared the impacts these projects have on a school district which includes facilities, transportation, addition of busing routes, and safe routes to school. She also expressed frustration for the lack of transparency on these types of projects. She sought more effort from the developers to communicate with the surrounding school districts and include them in the conversations about new development and the impacts they have on those districts.

The committee inquired about if this project would provide permanent affordable housing. The developer confirmed there were no plans for any permanent affordable housing, but they offer discounts to certain tenants. The committee also asked about the conditions of approval regarding woonerf and who would be responsible for paying for it. The developers did explain it would be a city street and maintained by the city. Another topic of discussion circled around the concern over the rapid growth in the area and the impacts on the community. They talked about the bicycle and pedestrian trails, child safety for the trails and bus transportation. Most of the committee sought better communication between the developers involved in the project and the school districts to ensure transparency.

Ms. Blakely reiterated her communication concern and suggested that projects of this size have the districts involved early on in the review phase of the project. She appreciated the committees reaction in taking her concerns seriously as these project impact schools, the question would really be how severe they will impact the schools.

The committee chair, Mike Nugent clarified the conversations about communication with how schools are included in the development process falls outside of the project proposal. He stated that the process was followed and that the conversation was good to allow them to take a closer look at the process and work to fix those issues.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.