

City of Buhl Planning & Zoning Minutes

203 Broadway Ave N

January 18, 2024 Special Meeting

PRESENT:

Barbara Gietzen Commission Chair
Jeff Gabardi Commission Member
Bob VandeWater Commission Member
Reme Pullicar Commission Member

STAFF:

Karen Drown City Clerk
Pamela McClain Mayor
Jazmine Mills P & Z Administrator
Jason Scott Public Works Director

Concerned Citizens

OPENING— The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM: Jazmine Mills confirmed a quorum.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. League of Idaho Cities P & Z Video Series—Video #1: “City Planning is Important to Idaho” (7 mins):
There was a discussion following the video focused on identifying areas in town that could attract citizens to enjoy, similar to Caldwell's downtown plaza.

Reme expressed his interest in the Chamber of Commerce's contribution to the city revitalization. He suggested using McCall as a model and wondered how Buhl could take advantage of being known as the Trout Capital. Barbara mentioned that the Chamber used to be involved in attracting tourism, while Jeff proposed that comprehensive plan revision is the key. Karen stated that Clearwater Financial is drafting a scope of work for the comprehensive plan update and will involve the Chamber in the business section. Pam mentioned recently awarded grants of \$20,000 for health and \$30,000 for the comprehensive plan.

There was a discussion about the URA walk-about to find areas of improvement and the comprehensive plan providing a broad view to guide the City toward improvement projects, and Clearwater Financial's role is the rewrite.

Pam stressed the importance of the Planning and Zoning Commission in ensuring that application reviews align with the City's vision; for instance, regarding more green spaces in subdivisions, the Commission's approval of subdivision applications certifies compliance with such requirements. There was a discussion about growth and its effects on city resources.

There was a discussion about what Main Street improvements would be needed to imitate Twin Falls and other cities to accommodate outdoor eating, tourism, etc., and the domino effect of these improvements revealing other areas needing change. It was highlighted that Clearwater Financial could help the City determine the best place to start with this vision. Karen stated she and Autumn are meeting biweekly with Clearwater Financial and these are the type of things to bring up for the scope of work.

Pam brought up the idea of relocating Main St to a different side of town to expand the city's growth possibilities. She noted that two highways cut through Buhl and do not allow the commercial properties along Broadway to be a mingling area for residents.

There was a discussion about how Buhl can expand its city limits for proposed developments. Jason stated the Commission should identify the areas for development, infrastructure, etc., and update the comprehensive plan before annexing additional areas.

There was a discussion about Clearwater Financial's experience and knowledge of municipality finances and comprehensive plan updates.

Bob asked about Buhl's vision for a business-citizen space with bike-path accessibility and the expected time frame to complete the updates. Karen stated there isn't a set time frame, but updates typically take 18 months minimum. She added the current comprehensive plan is from 2017, should be updated every ten years or as needed, and meets the state requirements. Karen noted the growth demands sooner updates and a more aligned vision for the applications presented to the Commission. Jeff stated that at the time of adoption, the comprehensive plan was acceptable, but the direction of today's growth doesn't meet the anticipated areas, and now is the time to recoup.

Pam raised a concern from the City and its citizens: the Burley Ave truck route. There was a discussion of the speed concerns, maintenance, and the newly declared school zone, making the truck route relocation a desirable change.

There was a discussion about the water study project with DEQ, which will help determine city water services and supply availability for future developments.

Barbara brought up the trout farm. There was a discussion about it being a great tourist attraction and field trip spot, and that the Clear Spring employees were involved with city events. Barbara suggested to Reme that the Chamber consider promoting it again. Reme stated a conversation with Riverance had been initiated.

2. Road Conditions and Future Growth Discussion: There was a discussion about the drainage design of city streets, Highway 30 not being the destination roadway like it used to be, and the need for restaurant variety to bring in visitors.

There was a discussion about the economic level of Buhl citizens, attracting new residents with larger parcel lots to boost the City's economy.

A subdivision denial that occurred outside the Buhl's area of impact was brought up, but not discussed.

Jeff stated that at the Highway District meeting, Fair St's complexity, the recently annexed hay shed property, its increased agricultural traffic on 1500 E and 4000 N, and maintenance of these roads were discussed. Jason stated the property owner could have developed this property while staying in the county because it met the current zoning, yet, they annexed it to take advantage of the easier Buhl building permit process. Jeff stated this property is a frequent topic of discussion which has influenced the way he considers future applications and how they will affect water and transportation. He urged the Commission to look at the bigger picture and suggested the updated comprehensive plan should have stringent conditions for Commission approval. Karen stated this property-related issue was discussed at the Highway district meeting due to traffic complaints from the residents living in the surrounding areas. She explained that the ownership of the roadways in the area is divided—a portion of the northern half of the 4000 N road belongs to the city, while the southern half is owned by county residents up to half of the road. Karen also mentioned the City has concerns regarding the maintenance of this road, the funding required to carry it out, and how the trades or funds will be divided between the County and the City. Jason added that this is a common issue; the ownership of roadways like Clear Creek Dr, Sawtooth Ave, Fruitland Ave, and multiple other streets are divided in the same manner around the city limits.

There was a discussion about the working relationship between the City and the Highway District.

There was a discussion about bicycle-compatible roadways starting from the city to the river. It was suggested to Reme to ask the Hagerman Chamber of Commerce how they implement it and reach out to ITD for their input.

3. P & Z Commission meeting Process and Dates Discussion: Jazmine presented the schedule for the working session and an updated application submission date for applications. She explained the increased growth and citizen input require more time for thorough research of the multiple applications that come to the admin office. Jazmine also proposed scheduling public hearings at different dates or times to allow the Commission to gather all the facts from staff and discuss them among the Commission members before hearing the applicant and citizen input. She gave the example of Twin Falls County, which had two separate meetings for this purpose. Jazmine proposed scheduling two meetings on the same day: a working session in the morning and a public hearing in the evening. Jazmine added that evening meetings will not be scheduled if no applications requiring a public hearing are submitted. She also stated if there are no pressing agenda items, the Commission could use that time for training videos. Karen added that citizens often complain about the timing of public hearings and suggested that the discussion portion of the meeting should not include any conversation with the applicant or those who provided testimony.

There was a discussion about contacting the Twin Falls County Juvenile Diversion Board, which uses the time slot for the third Wednesday evenings, to see if they can reschedule.

Barbara stated that changing to a different day was not an issue and it was worth pursuing. Jeff stated he preferred to have two meetings on the same day, rather than two separate days. Bob agreed. Karen stated this would be an action item to recommend to the council since it is an ordinance change. Barbara asked to have this topic on the February agenda.

There was a discussion about the Commission's role not changing for Buhl citizens who reside inside city limits, modifying the sign-in sheet to provide clarity and the terminology for the notification of the two separate meetings.

COMMISSION COMMENTS— Jeff asked for an update on the approved developments. There was a discussion about the progress at Harvest Hills Subdivision, Sage Crest Assisted Living, Gietzen Subdivision, and others.

There was a discussion about South Central Community Action's partnership with Region IV for future housing at Harvest Hills.

Jason mentioned that the County's takeover of the AOI would encourage residents adjacent to city limits to annex into the city.

CITIZEN CONCERNS— Onnie Granados of Buhl, spoke about Buhl's potential for boosting tourism through cycling. He shared his experience with cycling and how his father started a race in their hometown. He gave an example of a challenging race that Buhl could organize that would take place in the middle of summer, designed to appeal to cyclists worldwide by combining the local terrain and summer heat to create an intense racing experience, and it would bring visitors to Buhl.

Reme stated the Chamber has discussed sponsorship of an event whether it be cycling, a motorcycle ride, or a speed race similar to Sun Valley's Tour de Force where they shut down Highway 75.

There was a discussion about simplifying the language of the updated comprehensive plan to make it more user-friendly.

MEETING ADJOURNED— Bob motioned to adjourn. Jeff seconded. All voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.