

Latah County Planning Commission
Minutes, 16 July 2002

Planning Commission [PC] Members: Skyler Schlueter [SS], John Hunt [JDH], Suvia Judd [SJ],
Kathleen Warnick [KW], James Smith [JS], Janet Hohle [JH], Louise Barber [LB];
Planning Director, Michelle Fuson [MF]

Present/Absent: SS, SJ, KW, JS, JH, JDH, LB present. Staff: MF.

Packet materials: agenda; 7-2-02 minutes; drafts of articles 2, 3, 5, 8.

Handouts: articles 6, 7; 7/10/02 memo from Steve Janzen (Wildland Setbacks); 7/15/02 letter from Jim Teare, Idaho Fish and Game re. migratory birds and wind-generating equipment; draft of Article 4 (for public in attendance); comments by Richard Battaglia re. animal containment misunderstanding due to Daily News article.

Meeting:

7-02-02 minutes accepted. MF explained to the PC that a Daily News article had created an uproar (explaining the large audience); the article suggested that the PC was recommending limiting livestock on farms. SS explained that the ordinance revision was *in process* and far from complete – no decisions yet, and input to be sought; he also explained that the commission was attempting to come up with an ordinance to forbid giant feedlots (akin to giant dairies in southern Idaho) while protecting the economic viability in Latah County of smaller, home-owner farms. SJ further explained what the revision of the ordinances was about and that “AUM” was animal science language whose purpose is to keep land from overuse – an idea that appealed to the PC as it was deliberating (which clearly appealed to the farmers in attendance since it is their livelihood). Audience commentary ranged from: leave it completely alone; leave all numbers out; restrict residential development next to farming; wait until there’s a problem to fix it; effluent problems are caused by people – not animals; and questioning why county farmers should have to comply with regulations if the university doesn’t have to. SS noted that the water regulations were coming down the pike, so easing in regulation was an exercise in foresight (problems with fencing near/in floodplains noted).

Feedlots and large dairies remained the problem for the PC; SJ noted that the PC sees a big difference between a home and an industrial business: Do we want industrial farming in Latah County? JDH: Is there a way for the PC to find out an unacceptable number of animals or problem level of animals in order to prevent problems? Stated that the state regulations have already stopped a feedlot in the county so the county doesn’t have to regulate.

Richard Battaglia (UI Animal and Veterinary Sciences) presented his *correct* information (in response to the news article). Putting a number on this is impossible; PC should use existing Department of Agriculture facts. A dairy shared between the UI and WSU, in his eyes, would be a good thing for students (would be developed with a major emphasis on waste management); UI probably must comply with higher standards than anyone in the county. He responded to an audience question that the UI would normally comply with regulations, because to not do so would be unsound, politically and otherwise.

The letter from Jim Teare indicated that Fish & Game would be willing to evaluate any site for wind-generating devices re. migratory birds. Should F&G be the stopping point in the process and/or determine the conditions for a CU? Or the ZC? MF will work on the language, but PC leaning toward the position that an application should be denied if the field of devices (i.e., commercial operation) is in the path of migratory birds (if in the case of a dispute when mitigation is impossible).

Tom Stroschein was in attendance and remarked on the things in the county that are of interest to him.

Next meeting: 6 August 2002, Room 2B, Latah County Courthouse. Agenda: Junk (2.06); articles 3 (Flood Hazard), 5 (Conditional Use Permit and Variance), 6, 7, and 8 (Rezoning).

Submitted by: _____ 18 July 2002
Louise D. Barber