

Latah County Planning Commission
Minutes, 20 January 2004

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

Present/Absent: JDH, SJ, KW, JH, LB present; JS, SS absent. Staff: Michelle Fuson

Packet: Agenda; minutes for 12/16/03; 1/12/04 reminder memo from MF (bring draft version)

Meeting. Minutes for 12/16/03 accepted.

Commissioner Jack Nelson wanted to discuss with the PC the conflicts between rural homeowners and active farmers, and the possibility of devising a buffer zone to minimize the damage/conflict of farming activities on the residential owner. A problem with the Comprehensive Plan may be at the heart of this: the Plan protects farmland and farm uses (which may in fact be leading to larger, but fewer farms). SJ: if we don't protect the land, the land [use], if changed, will never return to farming. When the ordinance revision is complete, the Comprehensive Plan will be thoroughly studied. There is a real problem when people move out into the Ag/For zone with no idea what they are doing and complain about the by-products/results of farming practices; however, a barrier could probably not be devised that would provide protection. Possibly a covenant when the property is sold to make sure that people understand the risk they are taking when they plant trees/gardens too close to property lines. MF: Spokane has a "Code of the West," which instructs potential homeowners about the risks when moving out. Could Latah County provide a brochure or caution of some sort, like PC has proposed for wildfire interface? A perfect project for the Ag Extension service.

SJ explained the 40-acre land division thinking of a decade ago: the only characteristic that could be used for site specificity was soil type (productivity) when the ordinance was changed in 1994; 40 acres was arbitrarily determined by a past county commission. The problem now is that the 70 bushel/acre productivity of 30 years ago is barely break-even today; change occurs continuously.

KW moves that elections for PC be postponed until more members present; seconded and passed.

Discussion of 4/03 (Suburban Residential): 4.03.04 needs to reflect 4.01.04 (signage). 4.04.02: churches should be in CU section rather than permitted so all potential problems get thoroughly vetted ahead of time. 4.04.03 (size and setbacks): have no required setbacks, but if any structure is within six feet of property line, fire protection needs to be required. 4.05 (Industrial; 4.05.01.1 [Permitted Uses]): change "agricultural" to "agronomy" and add back in "animal husbandry"; 4.05.01.2: add "and selling" to "raising, harvesting, . . ."; add new "3" (4.05.01.3) "Agricultural or forestry related commercial or industrial business uses"; old "3" now "4", old "4" becomes "5." 4.05.02.1C should substitute "the relevant regulatory agency" for "permitting agency"; E to state that "residents of Latah County and owners of property within 5 miles of any such proposal may testify at the required hearings"; this is to prevent testimony by those who would not be affected by a change. 4.05.03: a question about a 5-acre minimum parcel size; upon discussion about the need for buffers, parking, setbacks, commercial well, storm run-off, etc., decided to let acreage and setbacks remain as stated. Lighting standards needed; include at least cut-off features, but 100 watt bulbs deemed insufficient; LB will contact Bill Kochman re. lighting for industrial zones; discussion tabled until information is available.

Next Meeting: 3 February 2004 at 5:30pm in the Latah County Courthouse, Room 2B.

Submitted by: _____ 27 January 2004
Louise D. Barber