
Core Committee Meeting #15 - Minutes May 4, 2012

In Attendance:

Core Committee

Julie Stomper (General)
Cleve Booker (General)
Ian Noyes (General)
Dave Hensel (General)- via phone
Amy Verbeten (Natural Resources + Outdoor Rec)
Tim Adams & Jack Haddox (Transportation)

Pete Koson (Economic Development)
Diane Temple (Comm. Events + Facilities)
Dennie Arnold (Ag + Rual Heritage)

Teton County

Angie Rutherford

Public

Richard Berg
Marlene Robson
Caroline Reynolds
Sherry Hill
Laura Piquet
Robert Piquet
Laren Piquet
Kitchner Head
Sonja Head
Leora Wood
Randall Foster
Jim Douglass
Ken Chambers
Chris Ricks
Bonnie Reece
Bruce Arnold
Sandy Mason

Meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm. Continuation of meeting from April 24.

1. **Minutes** - Meeting minutes from the April 24, meetings were approved. Dave made a motion to approve the minutes. Amy seconded. All in favor

Continuation of the Density Discussion- Dennie passed out a worksheet of Fremont County densities. The CC discussed the idea of recommending specific densities. They were not sure it is the job of the core committee to recommend densities. The CC generally agreed that the Comp Plan might be more appropriate for general visions and goals about each area of the County and not specific density numbers. The group felt that people with more expertise should develop specific density number. Subcommittee members felt they didn't have all the information needed in order to make such a decision, but would rather talk in generalities. There could potentially be unintended consequences from a tax payer standpoint, from a market standpoint, and a range of other concerns. Making value oriented recommendations is one thing, but to make it about the numbers is not what a comp plan is about. The Ag subcommittee did not want to see the zones RR-2.5 and A-20 changed. A20 is not real abrasive and maybe A40 with incentives might be palatable. Dennie sees downzoning 2.5 to 20 a problem. Pete Koson arrived. Cleve summed up. The economic development subcommittee has drafted a recommendation which includes recommendations for reducing the total number of potential future lots, balancing the tax base, and to put a priority on commercial land vs. residential. From an economic development standpoint, there is too much supply of residential lots. **RECOMMENDATION:** *To improve the economic stability of the valley, and allow market forces to improve property values, we recommend, reducing future potential residential supply (which the GIS future zoning maps currently estimates at 26,200 future lots) by 75%. This can be achieved in many ways such as base zoning of 20-acres. Our committee also recognizes the need for a minimum goal of a cost-effective and healthy commercial/residential tax balance of 60/40. We recommend that the existing commercial and manufacturing land supply be prioritized.*

Tim asked if the core committee could agree that the CC would not determine densities. Dennie did not agree. He wanted to know how the numbers would then be determined and by whom. Ian wanted to leave things at “low,” “medium,” “high.” He also understands that he was asked to be on the committee to try to incorporate the community’s input, and not a representative group. Ian does not represent a constituency, but is here to be empathic and open-minded and thoughtful. Dennie, on the other hand, is representing a group.

Dave’s big concern (and others’) is high density in the rural parts of the county. The Ag SC would like the 2.5 zoning left where it is. Zoning of 2.5 in the north end of the valley is incompatible with the idea that people want low densities in the rural parts of the county. Dave’s concern is 2.5 outside of the rural neighborhoods. Perhaps densities should be described as high in cities, medium in other areas and low in rural areas. Diane likes the general terms. All parcels are unique in the valley and there are other tools to regulate development such as N-P studies, overlays, state and federal regulations. Low density means a lot of things to a lot of people. In everybody’s mind, that is a different number. Dennie is apprehensive about not providing numbers and rather using general terms. Amy asked if the CC could make a recommendation of low, medium and high and also make a recommendation about what the next step is and how that decision should be made (and by whom).

There is a public process to county government and there will be a public process to revising county zoning code. Dave thinks the process is open and there has to be public input. Angie explained the process of code adoption after the comp plan is adopted, which includes public hearings. Julie recommended tying general terms back to our values. Medium should be tied to our goals and visions. So that when the code writers write the new code, they will have a vision upon which to work. The ED SC’s consensus is that the status quo is absolutely not acceptable any more. The values from the EC SC is that the current supply of lots is not getting us where we want to go. Values for Ag SC- flexibility, options, viability down the road (value of land down the road is in development not farming), Dennie clarified that if people have to stop farming, they want to have options. These are at odds for each other. So we need to balance these values. But nobody wants the county to look like downtown Driggs.

Framework Map- Ag SC did not see the need to differentiate b/t Rural Ag and Foothills. They felt topography would take care of zoning. Incorporate foothills into rural agriculture. CE/F felt the foothills did have a distinction from rural ag- topo, more risk of wildfire, and should be recognized as different. But there are some areas of the foothills that are similar to rural ag. Having separate zones might release some constraints on the rural ag. Less restriction in rural ag and more in rural foothills- if you combine them, it may end up placing more restrictions on rural ag than what currently exists.

NR/OR was willing to accept the map as created. NR/OR would recommend the cities remove undeveloped area from the city boundaries (especially in Victor). NR/OR felt industrial research area could be expanded to reflect what is in gravel pits. Or mixed ag b could be defined that gravel pits are an appropriate use in the zone. Right now gravel pits are CUPs. Tim would like to make sure the town neighborhood zones do not inappropriately take away from economic development opportunities from the cities. Cleve has concerns that the foothills are different in different areas. Dennie is concerned that the line between foothills and rural ag is not in the right spot. Much of the foothills zone is currently farmland. Amy asked if it would be more appropriate to draw the line based on vegetation cover? The CC could generally accept map as is but reassess the location of the foothills zone based on different data.

The CC discussed Mixed Ag B. The character is still very agricultural and seems to be productive farm land and shouldn’t be as focused on residential neighborhoods as the rural neighborhood area. The CC discussed the commercial uses of the Mixed Ag B area and the difference between Mixed Ag B and Mixed A. Dave suggested to make it all rural neighborhood. Cleve suggested turning the Mixed Ag B into Mixed Ag. Amy expressed the appropriate uses in Mixed Ag are more restrictive than the Mixed Ag B. In Amy’s opinion, the area to the east should have higher density and commercial use and some light industrial than what should happen in the wetland. Amy recommends keeping it as its own thing, with a better name. Appropriate uses:

blend of commercial, ag, light industrial and residential- a mixed zone. Dennie suggested calling mixed ag b “mixed ag” and the current mixed ag to “mixed conservation.” “Multi-use” instead of Mixed Ag B had some momentum for a name. Dave is concerned about allowing commercial in the entire “multi-use” area just because of the gravel pits on the north end. If the CC thinks the area to the east of Hwy 33 should be less restrictive, maybe it should be rural neighborhood as an appropriate possible use of this space. It would bring continuity between what’s north and south of it. Amy relayed that Doug Self will support keeping the area south of Driggs as low density. City of Driggs has hundreds of acres zoned manufacturing plus other parcels zoned for commercial. The County is not in dire need of more manufacturing. If the CC wants to keep the industrial areas in or near the cities, there could be a future rezone or annexation. **Dennie made a motion to approve the map with the changes of putting Mixed Ag B into “Rural Neighborhood” and redrawing the Foothills zone based on vegetation data. Tim seconded and all were in favor.**

Density- Generally, what do we want the zoning to achieve? All SC made recommendations to the appropriate future uses. Julie commented if the goal is to reduce lot inventory, then that should be reflected in the description. Dave pointed out in the comp plan implementation chapter, there are fairly specific action steps to accomplish the goals of the comp plan. All code is based on goals and policies and objectives of the comp plan. The CC will have input in the density decision through what they have put in the Comp Plan, even if not meeting as a group. Policy, goals and implementation will help define what high, medium and low is. Town neighborhoods are the highest density, rural neighborhood would be medium density and the rural areas (foothills, mixed ag, rural ag, waterways wetlands) are lower density. Dave thinks there is enough specificity right now. Dennie thinks that the foothills might include cluster development as part of topography. Rural ag should also have cluster development. **“Possibility for cluster development” as a proposed use in rural ag.**

Public Comment-

Sherry Hill: Code Studios has been sent paperwork. Sherry would like a copy of what has been sent and would like their address.

Chris Ricks: #4 to Dennie’s points about why that would affect farmers. There have been a lot of people trying to organize farmers. Farmers are not good at that- they want to be individuals. They want their say themselves. That’s the problem. They want to have their own say.

Richard Berg: Own some farm land, but not his profession. Richard would like the recommendation from ED SC about reducing the number of lots to be considered. He understands the CC doesn’t want to make specific zoning decisions. Are we going to sweep this under the rug or do what’s best for Teton County? You can kick it upstairs [to the elected officials] to let someone else decide how it’s done, but where should we go? Is their recommendation a good one or not? Richard thinks the CC needs to deal with the ED recommendation and then let BOCC or PZC see how it’s done. With respect to zoning – when an upzone is made, the person who benefits doesn’t write a check to the County. If it happens to go the other way, it goes the other way. They are not entitled to enrichment from that decision. If we decide to compensate them, that is what we decide to do and it can be a decision from upstairs. But he thinks the CC needs to deal with the recommendation from the EC SC.

Kitchner Head: Kitchner thinks we need to get back to the foundation. This is a constitutional republic, not a democracy. Our founding fathers said that the rights of the few cannot be overcome by the vote of the many. Constitutional republic stands up for rights of the individuals. We’ve got to get back to basics. We’ve gone too far in the wrong direction. Have we gone too far to stop?

Laura Piquet: Laura asked how the extra lots in the county are crushing the county’s economy.

Pete said that a healthy real estate market has between 6 and 18 months of inventory on the market. We have 7500 lots and we are averaging selling about 4.5 a month. It depends how you break it down. The problem is

that our real estate market drags down the rest of our economy in our community. We didn't do a very good job of managing our resources.

Laura Piquet: Why do all the lots in the County affect your land in Victor? If people want to buy those, they would buy yours. Robert Piquet: It's a free market system. Not the detriment of somebody's land rights. Maybe lots won't sell but it's none of your business.

Pete said a free market is a good thing, but many markets don't operate on the free market system. For example farm subsidies. They are important because they manage the market (but there is nothing about the free market in subsidies). The subsidies are a good thing because they provide some predictability to the market and keep farmers from going broke, and keep people fed.

Laura Piquet: 60-40 commercial to residential. Where is the industrial coming in here?

Pete- a healthy tax base in a healthy community has a 60 % commercial and 40% residential tax base because residential doesn't pay for itself in the taxes. The problem is that right now, we have a lot of residential and almost no commercial. Pete suggests hitting this from both sides. Bring up commercial (business, not factory), and bring down residential. We have enough lots for 7000 more residential. Nobody is telling anybody what then can or can't do. We are talking about what is best for the community.

Ken Chambers: Made huge progress in economic development in the County. Ken mentioned that Pete is making good points. Ken clarified that residential income is in terms of property taxes. Ken is speculating that the current tax split is about 75% to 80% residential and the rest commercial. We need to encourage businesses to bring jobs back. Encourage 60-40. We would then sell more of our inventory if we could focus on economic development. Focus on fostering entrepreneurs. To touch on the lots. There is good and bad. One-acre lot is subsidizing county right now b/c they pay more money in tax than ag land.

Caroline Reynolds: Page 5-4 and 5-5 [of the draft plan]: Caroline has a problem with the use of term "estate residential." Estate is not defined and in the dictionary it means a large piece of land with a large house. It might lead to the prescription of house size. Maybe "rural residential", but "estate" has a connotation of fancy and exclusionary large houses and that's not what she sees.

Jim Douglass: We have spent 6 months or more and we are back to square one. Our committee [Ag/rural heritage] tried to accomplish something. Jim is ready for the nuts and bolts of comp plan. It's time. Someone telling him what to do with his ground is as absurd as him telling someone else how many people can live in their house. That's absurd, but true. Only when he goes to sell it. We're talking acreage, there are a lot of people who own--- one third is federal/state, one third is unbuildable, one third is buildable. Jim has a friend from Colfax, WA- he asked him if he was from Teton Valley. Isn't that the place they denied a church and okayed a vodka plant. What kind of place do you live in?

Marlene Robson: All vacant lots, someone owns them and they bought and paid for them. They need to have a voice in what happens to them. Marlene has a problem with AECOM – there are thousands of pages of attorney language. She thinks we could sit down as people and come up with what's best for our community, and come up with what is best for our county. She would also like information about firm from TX. This is very scary that they can take a map and do what they want with it.

Randall Foster: "Our job is to take all the data that is compiled and come up with a plan..." You can see how big of an area is one district [commissioner voting district] and how small the other two areas are and those are based on population. The rural areas of the county are not getting represented as well as the city areas. These people do have a voice and they are agricultural people. Agricultural people are a bunch of independent lots and don't like to join associations. Price of food would be twice as much as now if they did. We're farmers. We're here because we love to farm and we have to take care of our ground. There are debates about who pays taxes and that's irrelevant. But we do keep open space. We need tools so we can keep farming and sell a piece if we get in trouble and pass on our family. 2.5 zoning- there are a lot of people who purchased ground based on the price of land that was zoned 2.5. If you don't own a lot of land, it'll be a financial burden. If you

do away with 2.5 zoning, I can't even build a house on it. No body wants farm land because it's too rocky. There is a lot of consideration for what we want, but we need to put some consideration into what is there now. My area is saturated with houses. It would not be consistent to change it to another use b/c that would not be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

Bruce Arnold: Thank you to the Core Committee. Some say we don't need government, but that's not right. We need government. The government is really working for us. And I want to thank them for that.

NEXT MEETING MAY 10th

DRAFT