

Planning & Zoning Minutes

February 3, 2011



CITY OF
REXBURG
America's Family Community

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Commissioners Attending:

Winston Dyer – Chairman
Nephi Allen Thaine Robinson
Gil Shirley Jedd Walker
Cory Sorensen Marilyn Rasmussen
Scott Ferguson

City Staff and Others:

Val Christensen – Community Development Director
John Millar – Public Works Director
Jake Rasmussen – I.T. Intern
Elaine McFerrin – P&Z Coordinator

Chairman Dyer opened the meeting at 7:02 pm. He recognized members of the Commission, City staff, applicants, and interested citizens including several students from a University government class. It is a wonderful thing how this country conducts affairs of government. The P&Z Commission meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order to assure that there will be an orderly discussion. Everyone has the right to be heard, unhindered or not intimidated by others. He wished them well in their work.

Roll Call of Planning and Zoning Commissioners:

Cory Sorensen, Marilyn Rasmussen, Gil Shirley, Nephi Allen, Winston Dyer, Thaine Robinson, Jedd Walker, Scott Ferguson

Mary Ann Mounts, Dan Hanna, and Richie Webb were excused.

Minutes:

1. Planning and Zoning meeting - January 20, 2011

Scott Ferguson motioned to approve the Planning & Zoning minutes of January 20, 2011. **Cory Sorensen** seconded the motion.

None opposed. **Motion carried.**

Public Hearings: None

Unfinished/Old Business: None

Non controversial Items Added to the Agenda:

(Item #1 was addressed before other agenda items in deference to John Millar having other obligations tonight)

1. Status report on corridor planning and transportation studies – John Millar

The Commission's number one priority planning issue, which was determined at the previous P&Z meeting, is an *Alternate Route for 2nd East*. The **Chair** thought it would be appropriate and fitting to have an expert come to speak to them to tell them this issue's status – what kind of studies have been done, and what alternatives have been looked at, to help the Commission understand where

this issue is at this time. Then, as the Commission has discussion and makes plans to move forward, they will have this background knowledge and will be better informed to make better decisions.

Chairman Dyer welcomed John Millar, the Rexburg City Engineer and Public Works Director, who is very well versed in all aspects of this subject.

John Millar said that about 5 or 6 years ago, the City and Madison County did a joint transportation plan. That plan outlined both short and long term priorities for near the City and areas out in the County. The County retained the services of Keller Associates to do a corridor study looking at one of the priorities of the Madison transportation plan - the need for a road that would serve the easterly and northern side of Rexburg, and also the between Rexburg and Sugar City.

A map from the Keller Associates east corridor study was displayed on the overhead screen, showing possible alternative routes for a road.

has been discussion that the road needs to go farther out. The City feels the road needs to be as close to 2nd East as it can be. Two miles out, there is an existing road that will handle traffic for a long time. Another route other than 2nd East is needed as soon as possible. This road would serve the area between Rexburg and Sugar City as the area develops. It also needs to serve the area of the south interchange going toward the University, which is the biggest traffic generator.

The County is looking at these alternatives. It is expected that the City and the County will come up with a final recommendation in February, so the study can be concluded. Once the study is concluded and a corridor is defined, that would allow the start of making application for state grants to start the process of building this road. The hope is that the first section to be built would be the crossing of the Teton River, which would not serve a lot of traffic at this point, but it would start to build the infrastructure to facilitate growth on the east side of Rexburg. At the same time, no matter what is done, 2nd East will continue to be a busy road. It is the connection to two interchanges. It will always be a major arterial for the area. All it takes is an accident or anything that constricts traffic flow, and there is stalled traffic within minutes during the day.

Funds are limited. Roads are usually built through one of two ways – 1) Share the cost with the developer in conjunction with development in the area, as was done on 7th South; or 2) Obtain grants such as the one that paid for the majority of University Blvd.; that road ultimately is planned to be a five-lane road – four traffic lanes with turning lanes. As that southern area of Rexburg develops, and the need arises, the other two lanes would be added to that road.

John Millar said that in the meantime, the City is trying to keep all of their options open.

There are 3 somewhat viable options –

1. 2nd West - It is a natural corridor for the current traffic because it is already a major arterial. There is a problem to the north of a gravel pit filled with water. There is major potential for a corridor here if in the future possibly Walters Ready Mix would relocate to a more rural setting. Then at some point, the City could start filling the gravel pit back in. Continuing to the north is the Basic American Foods land application site. A land application site in the middle of the City would likely not be feasible to maintain. As the City grows, this land would become valuable prime development ground. It is seen as developing into other uses. The City is definitely trying to keep the 2nd West corridor option open.
2. 5th West - It goes north past the fairgrounds. It joins with a major arterial already, going to the south. It could go north across the river, eventually paralleling Hwy. 20 as a frontage road that would then come to 2nd East south of the North interchange.
3. Airport Road – It has the potential to cross over the river. It now ties directly into Pioneer Road, which is a major arterial in the City. It is seen as having the potential to cross the river and serve as a kind of beltway around the west side of the City.

Mr. Millar said the City wants to protect these three options. Working hand in hand with Planning & Zoning is very important. As these areas start to move and develop, it is important to get these three routes designated as future arterials. Then, when the opportunity comes, they can work with the developer or apply for state grants for funding to start these auxiliary routes, and the City will not be in a position where they cannot acquire additional land to move forward.

Scott Ferguson asked if one of the options is the priority.

John Millar said that all three options are viable; they have not been prioritized. In a perfect world, 2nd West might be the priority that could develop as an auxiliary route for 2nd East.

Thaine Robinson said as the Commission plans, he sees them protecting all three of these areas, but what about something east of 2nd East, closer to 2nd East than the corridor plans?

John Millar said that area has been lost mostly to commercial development. There are no arterials that tie in east of 2nd East.

Thaine Robinson said roads such as the one between Ace Hardware and Grease Monkey come to an end. He sees these roads as eventually continuing further through what could join a road coming through as an alternate route, such as west of Stonebrook Subdivision. He likes the options on the west but thinks there should be one or two options on the east.

John Millar pointed out the area around East 4th North that has developed into mostly high use commercial, such as the Surgical Center and Teton Radiology. There is no traffic connection other than Barney Dairy Road. 3rd East runs into Walmart. However, he agreed that they still need to look at a possible option on the east.

Thaine Robinson said as planners, they can plan to protect three, four, or five places, but if they do not plan ahead those places will not be there at all. His main issue would be safety of a fire truck or an ambulance or a police vehicle. When there is an accident on the bridge nothing can get through 2nd East.

Chairman Dyer said there have been a number of studies on the east corridor. He understood a primary concern was where to tie into Sugar City.

John Millar said there has been a lot of discussion. Sugar City sees the road as a beltway around the area. Rexburg needs a road that will serve current and projected future growth. There is an excellent beltway around Rexburg, and that is U.S. 20. The City looks at the planned road as serving not only what it can now, but also as facilitating the capacity to handle traffic that will be generated in the areas along and near Moody Road.

Chairman Dyer said the P&Z Commission is an advisory body to the City Council, so they can bring recommendations to them, or urge for an important issue when they can. He asked how this Commission can help bring this corridor issue to a conclusion as the Commission moves forward with this issue being their number one planning priority.

John Millar said that the City's long-term plan is the Comprehensive Plan. It is critical that, as the Commission works to modify the Comprehensive Plan to keep it up to speed, when the Commission looks at what zones are going to be allowed in certain areas, they should keep in mind how high traffic and high volume use will be served as Rexburg grows. It is a long process. They need to keep ahead of the growth, always planning on how to facilitate growth.

One of the busiest areas to develop in Rexburg in the last ten years has been the southwest corner of town and its growth near Pioneer Road – lots of traffic has been generated. The growth has been like dropping Rigby and St. Anthony into that little corner. They had enough foresight to plan ahead for Pioneer Road, which has handled the traffic fairly well.

Now that they have the traffic signal and the realignment of the road near Erickson Pontiac, that area is functioning as intended. That area is about eighty per cent developed. It is felt the road can handle that growth.

The City needs to have the same foresight as other areas of town grow.

Cory Sorensen said one of the hardest problems with 2nd East, is that as they have created the PEZ Zone, which is a high density living area that still has a lot of traffic, 2nd East is the only way out, especially for students. 2nd West would be one of the only other avenues to get out to Walmart or beyond.

John Millar said they have seen a lot of growth in residential development, but not so much growth in commercial development. In the next few years, if a big box or high density store should come before the Commission, wherever location it is proposed, the Commission must carefully look at the roads and the issue of traffic capacity. In addition, wherever such a development goes, it will be a magnet for more development. They need to be prepared.

Mr. Millar worked in Idaho Falls on a project, Grand Teton Mall, when the area was a stubble field. The project was two miles or more from any kind of area of traffic capacity. It is a quintessential example of poor planning. Such planning in Rexburg is something they do not want to happen. With the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning, such a project could be directed to an area that would be able to sufficiently handle the traffic.

Scott Ferguson asked for clarification about the Idaho Falls project.

Mr. Millar said at the time the Grand Teton Mall was built, nothing was in that area; the location was about 2 miles out into the County. Development on 17th Street at that time ended near the KIDK TV station location. There was a crossroads of two-lane County roads that served the mall. It became a tremendous magnet for other development. After twenty years, adequate transportation is being addressed to handle development in the area. If the mall had been built near U.S. 20, Interstate 15, Broadway, or any of the corridors where capacity existed, it could have been developed much more efficiently.

Chairman Dyer asked for clarification on John Millar's earlier comment that the City and the County may be getting together in February to make a final decision on the alternate road for 2nd East.

John Millar said the County and the City met in December 2010 on the corridor issue. At that time, the County had wanted to postpone moving forward until the County's new commissioners and new administration had come on board. They are now planning to meet again soon.

Chairman Dyer asked if a recommendation from the City's P&Z Commission is something that the Commissioners could contribute.

John Miller said a recommendation from the Commission on the corridor issue would be helpful. He does not think there will be anymore public hearings on the issue, as there have been several of them. There now will be a lot of deliberation on the subject.

Cory Sorensen asked about the overall feeling from the public at the hearings that have been held.

John Millar said the hearings were poorly attended other than by people who lived on one of the corridors. The general public was there to discuss their pieces of property. The Sugar City Council was involved as to what might happen in their area.

Marilyn Rasmussen wondered if reading the transcriptions from the last two hearings would be helpful. She could obtain them from the County for the Commissioners. It would bring them up-to-date on what has occurred. She also thought that Sugar City had given a recommendation on which road they wanted.

The **Chair** thought that these transcriptions would be helpful. The P&Z secretary will email the documents to the Commissioners when they are received.

Gil Shirley asked what road alternative is the most feasible cost-wise.

John Millar said cost-wise, there was not a big difference between alternatives.

One of the driving issues is, do they take it down an existing road, or do they do an alignment. There are pros and cons to both choices. Most existing right-of-ways were developed statutorily.

Chairman Dyer said they look forward to more discussion of this issue. He thanked John Millar for coming to this meeting to inform the Commissioners.

New Business:

1. Preliminary Plat - Broulim's Plaza

Jeff Freiberg, of Keller Associates, 356 West Sunnyside, Idaho Falls. He presented the proposal. The preliminary plat for Broulim's Plaza, located on West Main, was shown on the overhead screen. The plan is to remodel and add on to their store. That would include doing some demolition of the existing strip mall to the west, and also adding that area on to their grocery store. They will demolish the house near the rear parking lot to allow for a new truck dock and access.

Scott Ferguson asked about the east wall and if it was still to be moved outward, as was stated at the time the property was rezoned.

Mr. Freiberg said the east wall will move out another twelve feet.

Chairman Dyer said the proposal before them tonight is for a subdivision – dividing up the land so it can be appropriately used according to its zone. A building permit application will eventually occur, in which building lines, walls, landscaping, etc. will be addressed and reviewed. This evening's request for a preliminary plat is a land use proposal, although to understand it properly, some questions on development are appropriate.

Nephi Allen asked for clarification of what Mountain States Easement is on the subject plat.

Mr. Freiberg explained that this existing easement has to do with phone lines.

All existing easements will stay on-site.

Chairman Dyer asked for clarification on the lot divisions.

Jeff Freiberg pointed out the existing lots and the proposed lots on the map on the overhead screen. The final plat will be cleaned up and will show the lots more clearly. There will be three lots on the plat.

Chairman Dyer asked if the developer has looked at utility services, which is normally done in the preliminary plat stage.

Jeff Freiberg said there will be no need for new sewer and water. What is currently there can handle the expanding development. They will need to look at storm drainage regarding the depressed truck access – pumps may be needed.

Chairman Dyer asked Val Christensen to clarify for the Commission the concept of dividing the current lots into different lots at the subject property.

Val Christensen pointed out the existing parcels at the Broulim's location on the projected map. He then outlined the newly planned lots. The applicant is consolidating bits and pieces into 3 lots versus 5 lots.

Chairman Dyer said the proposed uses remain the same. This request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's underlying zoning.

Val Christensen clarified that a few months ago, the entire block where Broulim's is located was rezoned from Community Business Center to Central Business District.

Marilyn Rasmussen asked if this was still in Urban Renewal. It is, but Urban Renewal is not involved in the project.

Chairman Dyer asked the audience if they had any questions about this proposal. There were no questions from the audience.

Chairman Dyer asked if staff had any input or recommendations for the Commission. Val Christensen said all concerns will be addressed when the site plan is provided at the time the applicant requests a building permit. The **Chair** asked if staff was supportive of this proposal. Mr. Christensen said staff is supportive of this proposal.

Chairman Dyer stated that the question before the Commission is, shall the subject property be allowed to be re-divided up as presented; in other words, should this preliminary plat be recommended for approval, or not, to City Council? If the preliminary plat is approved, the final plat will then come before the P&Z Commission and City Council. The **Chair** asked if the Commissioners had any further questions or concerns for discussion about this proposal. None were expressed.

Scott Ferguson motioned to recommend approval to City Council of the Preliminary Plat for Broulim's Plaza located on West Main. **Gil Shirley** seconded the motion.

Chairman Dyer asked if the Commissioners had any further discussion on this proposal. There was no further discussion.

None opposed. **Motion carried.**

Compliance: None

Additional Non controversial Items Added to the Agenda:

2. **Chairman Dyer** reported on City Council meeting last night, February 2nd. The City Council has been in the process of establishing their priorities for the coming year. The P&Z Commission had established 3 top planning priorities at their January 20th meeting. The P&Z Commission was invited by the Mayor to attend this City Council meeting to discuss these planning priorities. **Chairman Dyer** made the presentation. It was a good discussion. City Council had concerns about open space and about sprawl. Entrance corridors were also high on their priority list. A citizens Safety Committee was formed and has been working on some safety issues.

Chairman Dyer said at noon today, there had been a luncheon at the City to meet and greet newly elected County officials and administrators. They are all working together for the greater good of the community.

Cory Sorensen commented that he had seen the small pamphlet the City uses to promote Rexburg to developers/companies. He feels the City needs something better. How can the Commission help to promote our City better? This concern could be looked at more closely in the future.

3. Design Review Committee Meeting for Broulim's - scheduled for Wednesday, February 9th. Val Christensen said that Broulim's representatives will bring in preliminary drawings regarding their building's east wall, as per the Commission's concern expressed at the earlier rezone hearing about this wall.

This meeting will be reported on at the next P&Z meeting of February 17th.

The corridor issue/alternate route for 2nd East was brought up again.

The Commissioners made the decision to discuss this issue after having the chance to read over the County hearing meeting notes that **Marilyn Rasmussen** will obtain for them, rather than discussing the issue tonight.

Marilyn Rasmussen thought the transcripts, which included public testimony, would be helpful.

Cory Sorensen thought the Commission might accomplish more if they read the documents before their discussion.

Discussion of this issue will be scheduled for the next P&Z meeting agenda, February 17th.

Scott Ferguson asked the process of how the road issue will move forward.

Chairman Dyer explained that the elected officials (County Commissioners, City Council of Sugar City and of Rexburg) are charged with making a decision. They are working hard to try to arrive at a consensus of what is going to be done, or what is to be done first and then later. Once there is consensus, one group will step forward, possibly the City of Rexburg, because the need for the link is in Rexburg. They will step forward to pursue the necessary funding and other needs, such as a possible development agreement between the participating entities.

The **Chair** said the Rexburg P&Z Commission could send up a recommendation on the issue. They could give solid consensus and input. The P&Z Commission is an advisory group, but they do carry a lot of weight.

Gil Shirley thought the Commission should have more discussion on Pioneer Road as soon as possible regarding improvements, safety, etc.

Cory Sorensen said the Safety Committee would be meeting to discuss Pioneer Road, and other roads.

Val Christensen will find out when this meeting is scheduled.

An audience member asked about the new road that is being planned— what is its purpose, to relieve traffic or to join Sugar City and Rexburg?

Chairman Dyer said the purpose of the road is twofold. First, it would be to relieve traffic on 2nd East. Secondly, it is to facilitate growth. There are some designated growth areas. The area east of 2nd East and north of the river is one of those areas. It is zoned for some major residential development. A church has been built there. There is one subdivision; other subdivisions are in the wings, depending on the economy. Not only will it help the 2nd East traffic situation, but it would also encourage and facilitate growth where the City wants it, when they want it, and how they want it, which is what the P&Z Commission is all about.

The audience member said she has notice many potholes, some huge, throughout Rexburg as the snow melts. She wondered if anything was being done to fix them.

Chairman Dyer said Street Department trucks were out today. They are beginning to clean those potholes out and fill them in. Getting repairs done is dependent on the weather.

Val Christensen said the extreme weather plays havoc on the City's roads. They will be repaired. If it is felt that the potholes are large enough to cause car alignment problems, the location of the potholes should be called in to the City.

Chairman Dyer thanked the audience for attending and for their interest in this community and the American process.

Report on Projects: None

Tabled Requests: None

Building Permit Application Report: None

Heads Up:

February 17th P&Z meeting - CUP – 208 East 3rd South and 345 South 2nd East

Val Christensen explained that this CUP is to allow less than a 10-plex (they want to build an 8-plex), and it also is to allow PEZ reduced parking. The area was viewed on the overhead map.

Two items for discussion, the 2nd East Alternative and Pioneer Road, will be scheduled for the February 17, 2011 P&Z meeting.

Chairman Dyer adjourned the meeting at 8:22 pm.