LINCOLN COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024 – 5:30PM
LINCOLN COUNTY COURTHOUSE – LIBBY | NORTH ANNEX VIDEO CONFERENCE

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: *5:30 PM*

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

☒ *John Damon, Chair*	☒ *Veronica Bovee Anderson*	☒ *Paul Johnson*
☒ *Ernie Anderson*	☒Jim Frank	☒ *Jim Gibson*
☒*Kurt West*	☒ *Scott Mattheis*	☒ *Doug Fryer*

STAFF: Kristin Smith, Alisha Osborne (Assistant Planner)

PUBLIC: Sherry Turner.

AGENDA

- Meeting called to order at 17:30.
- Approval of October 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes.
    - S. Mattheis motions to approve.
    - J. Frank seconds the motion.
    - J. Damon calls for the vote. All in favor, motion passes.
- Board Member Term Discussion
    - J. Damon begins the discussion on terms and says applicants should have contacted the Clerk and Recorder with their new applications for recommendation to the Commission.
    - J. Frank says he got the email and is unsure of being able to fulfill the two year obligation due to availability, and says if there is a candidate who is able, he would give up his seat for them.
    - K. Smith explains that the roster had to be corrected due to bylaws, and that we can take Mr. Frank off after next month if he wishes.
    - J. Damon agrees.
- VGF meadow Creek North Conservation Easement Review. 17:33
    - K. Smith explains Montana state law regarding conservation easements and says the purpose of this is to get comments from the Planning Board on this matter. There is a small 40-acre parcel requiring comments or questions for the Conservation District.
    - P. Johnson asks about the benefits of a conservation easement.

- K. Smith explains there are tax benefits and property preservation benefits for wildlife corridors. The board discusses the numerous benefits of nature and wildlife corridor preservation and the benefit of lower taxes to preserve the land.
- J. Damon says it is similar to a property that was across the river.
- K. Smith gives examples of questions that have come up before for conservation easements. The board discusses terms, easements, benefits and living easements to the land. V. Bovee-Anderson mentions that it is registered as a foreign non-profit corporation. The Eureka-based members are asked if they have any questions. They answer in the negative. K. Smith says this is a private transaction.
- E. Anderson motions to accept. J. Frank seconds the motion. All in favor, motion passes.

- Parsons Lakeshore Permit Application (Angel Island-Bull Lake)
  - K. Smith provides an overview of the staff report and the retaining wall, explaining that there is actually no evidence of erosion or undercutting that would merit a retaining wall. She explains the reasons for recommending denial, including that aside from Dorr Skeels, there is not a retaining wall in that area and there is no erosion or undercutting evidence.
  - J. Damon says that even the Dorr Skeels wall is different, as it is over twenty-five feet away from the bank and was something the Forest Service did.
  - K. Smith says the criteria indicating it is not warranted is on page three, and page two has the policy.
  - E. Anderson adds that retaining walls are also not allowed below the high water mark.
  - J. Damon concurs.
  - K. Smith says that research indicates that native vegetation enhancement is better than retaining walls.
  - P. Johnson asks if the applicants had to have HOA and counsel approval prior to the permit.
  - J. Gibson asks about the topography and the sloping.
  - J. Damon responds that he saw the house and there were topsoil piles there that could push the lawn to the top of the proposed retaining wall at the waterline. It seems excessive. The board briefly discusses the high-water mark.
  - V. Bovee-Anderson asks if the recommendation is consistent with previous ones.
  - S. Mattheis references the pictures.
  - J. Damon confirms it is not erosion.
  - K. Smith says yes, it is consistent and gives examples. She says it is not like Glen Lake and you can see the soil profile. The impacts are in number five.
  - V. Bovee-Anderson motions to deny. J. Frank seconds. All in favor, motion passes.

- Planning Staff Update 18:00
    - K. Smith says we have three subdivisions we are currently reviewing.

- Public Comments 18:02
    - S. Turner discusses grant applications for tourism purposes. She explains that they want to restore the Shay steam locomotive train to encourage tourists to visit. She discusses the effort put into obtaining grants and cost estimates. She says that according to a Glacier, MT study, Libby does not have an attraction that would cause tourists to stay in town. She says that the pond lining, train restoration and the growth policy could be rolled into one grant.
    - J. Frank asks how that would affect tourism.
    - K. Smith asks what is needed from the board.
    - S. Turner says a letter of recommendation.
    - K. Smith asks if she intends to add the growth policy to the grant. The board briefly discusses busy season at a museum and what might be needed for improvements.

- Adjournment
    - J. Damon asks if there are any other questions or comments. Hearing none, the board adjourns. 18:18