

Planning & Development Board

December 18th, 2014

Park County, Montana

Attendance: Planning Board Members Peter Fox, Rich Baerg, Bill Berg, and Traci Isaly. Also present Mike Inman, Planning Director; David Fine, City of Bozeman; Henry Hansen, Park County GIS; Erica Hoffman, GIS/IT Director; Steve Caldwell, Commissioner Elect; Ed Meese, Livingston City Manager and numerous citizens.

Call to Order: 4:00 p.m., Peter Fox called the meeting to order.

Public Comment on Agenda Items not Scheduled for a Public Hearing: None

Approval of Minutes: The board reviewed minutes for the November 20th, 2014, meeting. *Bill Berg moved to approve the minutes. Traci Isaly seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

Conflict of Interest: None reported

Bozeman Broadband Initiative: Lew Wilks gave an introduction to Bozeman Broadband Initiative and presenter David Fine. Lew has been part of the steering committee looking for ways to use broadband technology to create differentiated infrastructure as a tool for economic development in the Bozeman and Gallatin County communities. David Fine is an Economic Development Specialist with the City of Bozeman, has his Masters in Public Administration from MSU, been a field representative for Senator Tester and worked for the city of Livingston.

David Fine said there has been a lot of community support for the project, Bozeman Deaconess Health Services contributed \$20,000.00, Bozeman Public Schools put in \$10,000.00 and they also received several grants.

The focus on fiber optics is due to the ageing infrastructure which is as much as fifty years old and it's what is needed to move into the twenty first century. There are a lot of community uses for fiber and it can help drive down the cost for consumers and telecommunication companies. Shared fiber infrastructure will be more efficient, lower costs and allow choosing services from multiple providers. Building one shared infrastructure gives consumers more choice, more competition and lowers the cost.

David said they were about a month from rolling out the final study including a detailed financial report and three phases of route. They expect to present the plan to the Bozeman City Commission in early 2015. Mistakes were made along the way and David is happy to share lessons they learned to any community interested in pursuing a similar project.

Lew Wilks said with broadband, base level services to the home would be mbps and gbps to businesses at a cost that is dramatically lower and performance that is dramatically

higher than what is available with the current infrastructure. Boosting performance ratio 100 to 1. Feedback from employers is that some of the workforce is going virtual with many of these jobs paying very well. Also there are many people and businesses who would love to work and live in this part of the world but need the better infrastructure to operate.

Questions from the Board and Audience: Peter Fox asked David Fine, since he has worked for the City of Livingston and now Bozeman, if there was anything instructive to Livingston and Park County. David said one of the big advantages of Livingston is its small size so there aren't as many places to get too. Bozeman has twelve schools and that's a lot of fiber to get through a lot of areas that don't have a lot of paying clients. He said being compact allows a small city to do a lot all at once. As for challenges David said the City of Bozeman, Bozeman Schools and the business community all work well together, and it's his understanding the same is not true for Livingston and Park County. Bill Berg said sewer and water lines were just replaced in Gardiner and asked if perhaps providers or the county should look at laying fiber before pavement is put down next summer. Lew said the incumbent providers are not motivated to engage in capital improvement projects that don't show adequate revenue generation. Lew said there is a very low cost to lay conduit in the ground when the street is being torn up as part of a project. Bozeman Public Works said absolutely it would be much more efficient to do it that way than to go back after the fact and were happy to be a cooperative partner in the process. Lew recommended the forming of a steering committee to look into the capability of Park County to extend these types of projects into Park County and the communities within the county.

Online Atlas Presentation: Mike Inman introduced Henry Hansen, GIS Technician and gave a brief introduction and background to the online interactive Atlas project. Henry said the original Atlas development team recognized that the paper version of the Atlas had limitations and planned on an online interactive version. The objective of the interactive Atlas is to compliment and expand data of the paper Atlas and increase interface quality, interaction amount and accessibility via the web. On screen Henry went over the general structure of the Atlas including photos, interactive maps, videos and hyperlinks. He explained the process of navigating through the Atlas and various tools. Peter Fox, congratulated Henry on the work done and said it surpassed what was originally expected and it was excellent work.

Grizzly Meadows Conservation Easement: Mike Inman said the subject property, owned by Richard and Judy Childress, is two, twenty acre tracts. Both tracts adjoin 585 acres also owned by the Childress', and is currently under easement with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. The owners and the RMEF feel the easement will strengthen the current easement, together with conserving wildlife habitat and important winter elk range.

Lew Wilks made a motion to endorse the Childress Conservation Easement, Rich Baerg seconded that motion. Motion passed.

Continued Discussion of Public Land Use Outreach & Education Process: The Board decided to move the discussion to the January Board meeting.

Discussion of January Agenda: Continued Public Land Use Process discussion.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: 5:36pm

Peter D. Fox
Chairman