

# **Planning Board Subcommittee Presentation**

Thursday, July 20, 2023

# **Commissioners: create a Planning Board subcommittee to investigate how we can improve outreach and the public process regarding planning issues in Park County.**

## Subcommittee members

Bryan Wells, chair, Zachary Park, Taya Cromley (first three), Anne Buckley (remaining seven).

Ten meetings across Park County between February 16 and July 6, 2023.

First three at County offices, then Emigrant, Gardiner, Cooke City, Doughnut/ETJ, Wilsall, Clyde Park, Boulder/Springdale.

## Participants

- ~150 individuals (residents/voters) in person or online
- Planning Office staff Mike Inman (most) and Lawson Moorman (all)
- Kate Stewart– volunteer professional support, information compilation, facilitation
- all three County Commissioners (various meetings)
- at least two City Commissioners (various meetings)
- members of several interest groups

# Format

First three meetings:

- variety of formats, including a roundtable discussion
- kicked off the brainstorming process
- identified the value of seeking input from seven areas of the county

Following seven featured consistent format:

- Bryan introduction—what we are doing and why
- Zach introduction—Planning Board, Planning Office, mechanics and areas of authority
- Anne facilitation—key questions and discussion
- Kate assisted with the facilitation and record-keeping; Lawson recorded.

## **Questions to determine “What needs to happen to make it easy to engage with county issues and believe your voice matters?”**

- How do you want to be notified about planning issues in this area of the county?
- How do you want to be heard, and feel confident that your voice is indeed heard?
- What would success look like? (Free-form conversation when time was available after the above discussion; not transcribed.)

***Robust and engaged discussion in every meeting.***

***Heartfelt input; excellent ideas and feedback.***

# 1) How do you want to be notified about planning issues in this area of the county?

- Between 85-90 suggestions listed (some were duplicates).
- A variety of ideas; themes consistent, including taking advantage of local channels.

## Modes of communication most noted:

- Website
- Emails from county departments/boards (opt-in)
- Email lists from affinity groups (churches, schools, Chambers of Commerce, 4H, nonprofits, etc.)
- Social media (This is Really Livingston, Shield Valley FB, etc.)
- Local newsletters (Cooke City)
- Posters in central locations
- Word-of-mouth
- Enterprise, other county-wide publications (pro/con)

## **2) How do you want to be heard, and feel confident that your voice is indeed heard?**

Between 120-130 suggestions on how to improve communication and build trust between citizens and government.

Dot voting on the top six means for ensuring effective communication (voting more challenging through course of meetings with cumulative number of ideas).

## ***Transparency, Participation, Accountability***

*As we reviewed participants' suggestions, three interconnected values emerged. Folks in Park County want from their Planning Board (and other governmental bodies):*

- Transparency (in process, rationale, and result of decisions)*
- Participation (make it easy to for those who desire)*
- Accountability (confidence that citizen voices have been heard)*

***Effective two-way communication supports these values.***

***Improved trust is the outcome.***

**Transparency**  
***(in process, rationale, and result of decisions)***

- How do Board/Commission meetings work? What are the procedures?
- How are policies determined?
- What are legal constraints on the Board/County?
- What were the votes/decisions?
- How did the Board members/Commissioners decide to vote the way they did?



## *Participation* *(make it easy for those who desire)*

- Notify residents about Board and Commission meeting times, locations, and agendas effectively and in advance through a variety of channels.
- Make meetings easy to attend through:
  - technology
  - varying the location (e.g., matching the agenda with the location of the meeting around county, coffee discussions, etc.)
  - varying the times (not always during workday)
  - (some asked for consistent locations and times)
- If not able to attend in person, and in general for the record, make it easy to see and comment on what happened through mechanisms such as clear minutes, recordings with time stamps, a YouTube channel, and post-meeting emails.
- A neutral one-page summary of the issues before and after a meeting with decision results, etc.
- Provide a mechanism for education and conversation between public and Board/Commission, such as discussion or focus groups around the county with a Commissioner and Planning Board member.

**Accountability**  
***(confidence that citizen voices have been heard)***

- Informing the public about the outcome of votes and next steps.
- Acknowledgment and follow-up of comments and emails—can be brief as long as authentic.

# County Website

## *Embodiment of Problems and Opportunities*

*A tool that, when effective and useful, supports our values;  
currently not serving them.*

- Mentioned in every meeting.
- Revamping it is a top priority.
- Must be user-friendly featuring complete and helpful information in an easily navigable format.
- Prioritize the citizen-user.
- Meeting notices on home page with clear links.
- YouTube videos—meetings, updates.
- Department lists with clear links.
- Facilitate opt-in email lists.