

Applicant letter and pre-application meeting notes
Zone Change #942 – 5640 Grand Avenue

Oct 2, 2015
Project No. 14063.02

**S05, T01S, R25E, E2 GOVERNMENT LT1 38.83 AC
BEN STEELE MIDDLE SCHOOL
ZONE CHANGE APPLICATION**

INTRODUCTION

The attached Zone Change Application is being submitted on behalf of School District #2 for a proposed zone change from Ag/Open to Public for 5640 Grand Ave in Billings, Montana. An exhibit identifying the subject parcels is attached to this application for reference.

The following information is provided to satisfy the supplemental information requirements for the Zone Change Application.

In what way is the proposal consistent with the goals and policies of the adopted growth policy?

The proposed zone change request is consistent with the land use element goals and objectives of the current city growth goals. The proposed zone change will also encourage strong neighborhoods to develop within the proximity of the school and allow a near-by area for children to partake in outdoor activities and recreation.

Explain the need for the intended zone change and why the property cannot be used under the existing zoning. Explain how the new zoning will fit in with the existing zoning and land uses of the immediate area.

The need for the zone change is to allow for a new middle school for the residents and citizens of Billings, Montana. The current zoning of the area is Ag/Open. With the proposed change, the new middle school will service residents in the adjacent neighborhoods and beyond and the zoning will allow for this new education facility. This is congruent with current long term growth planning goals for the City.

ZONE CHANGE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING
ATTENDANCE SIGN-IN SHEET

Date: September 28, 2015

Time: 5:30 PM

Project: Ben Steel Middle School

Project No.: 14063.03

Meeting Location: Billings Fire Station #7 - 1501 54th Street West, Billings, MT 59106

Name: (Please Print)	Address:	Phone Number:		Email Address:
		Home	Mobile	
Bryan Alexander	1308 N. Treva Tech Ln	657-5255		balexander@stevensanderson.com
Mac Fogelberg	"	"	"	mfogelberg@stevensanderson.com
Dick Sires	1131 Wilderness	702-1470		rsires@stevensanderson.com
Tom Sire	"	"	"	"
Dennis Frank	708 56th St West	208-7419		
Bong Frank	"	"	"	
Camie Flantz	5822 Forktail Loop S	489-0508		
Stork Simonson	5837 Fataallap N	827-2410		SSimonson@stevensanderson.com
Doug Keener	5423 Grand Ave.			
Paul Goldammer	608 N. 29th St	248-2273		
Jason Hubbard	2270 Grant Rd	657-0224		
Ben Flanagan	2270 Grant Rd	656-0624		
Lea Anderson	101 10th St. W.	281-5782		648-0041

Ben Steele Middle School – Zone Change Neighborhood Meeting

September 28, 2015

5:30 PM

Billings Fire Station #7 – 1501 54th Street West, Billings, MT 59106

Introductions:

Mac Fogelsong – Sanderson Stewart

Paul Goldammer – A&E Architects

Lew Anderson – SD2

Jason Hubbard – Langlas

Ben Flanagan – Langlas

Overview by Mac Fogelsong:

Purpose of meeting is to present information to the public in order to change the zoning of the property for the proposed middle school from Agricultural Open to Public as it is the best zoning for the proposed use. Annexation into the City of Billings is also in process.

The zone change is a 3-step process, which includes submittal of an application, a neighborhood meeting (this meeting), and then review by the zoning commission [November 3rd].

Questions:

- What if zone change does not pass?
 - (Mac) Preferred to have zoning consistent with use for the school. Because the school is a public entity, the school can be allowed in other zones via a “land use contrary to zoning”. Preference is to follow the process and have zoning consistent for public use.
 - (Paul) Land use contrary to zoning would require a special review/hearing to have the school located in a zone other than public. Also beneficial for subsequent school if built in the future as zoning will be compatible.
- Why is the zone change occurring after school site is selected? Why not prior to site selection?
 - (Mac) Zoning is a planning item and it is typical to occur after site selection for similar projects.
- Why wasn't the annexation and zone change done years ago?
 - (Dick Sire) The original plan was to annex the school property alongside Trails West Subdivision in which the zoning would be amended concurrent with the annexation. The annexation of Trails West was “complicated” and took 3 tries. They decided at that time to separate the school property so Trails West Subdivision annexation could proceed and the school would move forward with annexation and zone change at a future date.
- What is the location of the west property line? Is it the fence line? The developer mows out 3-4 feet beyond the fence line.
 - (Dick Sire) The property line is at the fence line. Maintenance of irrigation ditch right-of-way is the reason for mowing beyond the fence line.
- What is landscaping of southwest corner? Labeled as dryland grass.

- (Paul) Would be native-type dry land grasses; won't be irrigated turf and helps reduce cost of irrigation.
 - Maintenance mowing and weed control will be provided.
 - Area kept available for future use as park, playground, etc.
- Weed control a concern for dryland grass area.
 - (Lew) We will mow and provide weed control. Will still be some weeds, but will control them.
 - Hired out weed control for current site; have not done late-season weed control this year as a bid package is proposed which will install 400 rammed aggregate piers and substantial excavation. Not the best use of taxpayer dollars for weed control this fall.
 - Working with City Parks (Mike Whitaker) to develop park area for soccer fields. Current plan is for 2 soccer fields and a future elementary school.
 - (Paul) Plan for 2 soccer fields and possibly a 3rd in the future in dryland grass area.
- Is there going to be a park or open space as originally planned? Many children in Trails West playing in the street and don't have somewhere to play.
 - (Lew) Long term, there will be a playground when the elementary school site is developed, but not in the middle school project as funding not available.
- Sidewalk setback from street on 56th Street?
 - (Paul) Yes, sidewalk will be setback from street.
- Curb & gutter on 56th Street & Grand?
 - (Bryan) Still in discussions with the City on what improvements will ultimately be. Grand Avenue may include curb & gutter, but 56th Street will likely remain a county-type road with turn bays at the school.
 - City pursuing funding for improving widening Grand Avenue from 48th Street West to 58th Street West.
- Any consideration to farm machinery in improvement design?
 - (Bryan) No design work has completed for Grand Avenue. This will be a separate project.
 - (Mac) Working with City Traffic Engineering to develop a plan for improvements.
- Concern with safety at Montessori on Grand Ave. & 48th Street.
 - (Lew) Montessori is a private school and not SD2. Aware of the issues there and concern with traffic on Grand Avenue.
 - Busses will enter from 56th Street in a separate bus parking lot. Will require some added discussion how Grand Avenue parent drop off parking lot will function. Possibly right turn only.
- Does the football field have to be built? Seems like others, specifically Lewis & Clark do not get much use.
 - (Lew) It is a school sport and can be used for multiple uses...football, soccer, etc. Lewis & Clark actually gets a lot of use. Pretty standard for middle schools to provide a football field.
 - (Lew) Also mentioned parking lots provide significantly more parking than in Heights due to narrow county roads to preventing parking on the streets.
- Are you accounting for groundwater or holding ponds?
 - (Lew) We are anticipating to utilize ditch water from a holding pond for irrigation using pumps. Do same thing at Sandstone and Castle Rock.
- Clarification on traffic / off-site improvement design?
 - (Paul) City was to determine mid-September if they could secure funding for Grand Avenue improvements. City is having difficulty securing the funding and has pushed back the schedule to try to secure the necessary funds, so the level of improvements has not yet been

fully developed at this time. A number of items have been discussed including traffic calming, crosswalks, HAWK signal, crossing guards, etc.

- Will there be a deceleration lane on Grand Avenue?
 - (Paul) Not yet confirmed, but on the table. Depends on what City wants to do as well.
 - (Bryan) City is looking to do a project for improving Grand Avenue. The project will likely go out for an RFP to a number of design firms. Safety at the school will be a design consideration for the Grand Avenue improvements.
- Are you planning on any special things for the school?
 - (Paul) Currently in construction documents, which should be complete in the middle of December.
 - Special design elements include: commons/multi-functional open space, collaborative learning spaces, after hours entrance to gymnasium (option to have afterhours access to library)...security for closing off remainder of school, future greenhouse, fab lab spaces, nice courtyard, etc.
- What about parking for baseball / softball fields?
 - (Paul) Parking is available in lot along Grand Avenue; parking is also available along drop off loop. These spots will likely be utilized first; other parking to the southeast would then be utilized.
- Handicap parking?
 - (Paul) Handicap parking is to be located near building entrances per code requirements. We can look at the possibility of an accessible parking area near the baseball/softball fields.
- Will parking lots be lit?
 - (Lew) Yes, there will be LED lights on a timer to allow plowing. Lights are directed down; Will James recently re-done and would be a similar lighting example. Not going to light football field.
- Traffic study, is it public information? Can I (Steve Simonson) get a copy?
 - (Mac) I believe just wrapping it up and in discussions with City.
 - (Lew) I can get you a copy or update you where it is in process. Send me an email anderson1@billingschools.org
- Concern is west bound traffic from 62nd Street West and anticipating school will add to traffic.
 - (Lew) Traffic study does evaluate this concern and projects out future growth. City actively reviewing these items.
- (Lew) Offered contact information and asked group to call or email with any questions. Want to be a good neighbor. Langlas will be the contractor and Ben will be onsite every day. Thank you for coming out.