

CITY/COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

TUESDAY, March 11, 2025 at 6:00pm

	Position	01/14/2025	01/28/2025	02/11/2025	02/25/2025	03/11/2025	03/26/2025	04/08/2025	04/22/2025	05/13/2025	05/28/2025	06/10/2025	06/24/2027	07/08/2025	07/22/2025	08/12/2025	08/26/2025	09/09/2025	09/23/2025	10/14/2025	10/28/2025	11/12/2025	11/26/2025	12/09/2025	12/23/2025
Jim Ronquillo	Billings Ward I	1	A	1	1	A																			
Roger Gravgaard President	Billings Ward II	1	1	1	1	1																			
Dennie Stephenson	Billings Ward III	1	1	1	1	1																			
John Staley Vice President	Billings Ward IV	V	1	1	1	1																			
David Nordel	Billings Ward V	A	V	V	A	V																			
Troy Boucher	YC District 1	A	A	A	A	A																			
Dennis Cook	YC District 2	A	1	1	1	1																			
Vacant	YC District 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant	YC District 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Woody Woods	YC District 5	1	1	1	1	1																			
Alexis Bonogofsky	YC District 6	1	1	V	1	V																			
Morgan Tuss	YC District 7	A	A	A	A	A																			
Vacant	YC Cons. District	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scott Reiter	Ex-Officio SD2	A	A	A	A	A																			

Please note: "A" stands for excused absence, "1" stands for present, "V" stands for Zoom participation, "C" stands for Canceled

Call the Meeting to Order: President Gravgaard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Introduction of Planning Board Members and Planning Department Staff

President Gravgaard called for introductions of the members of the Planning Board and staff.

Attending Staff: Wyeth Friday, Planning & Community Services Director; Anna Vickers, Planning Division Manager; Dave Green, Planner; Brenda Berns, Planning Clerk

1. Others in Attendance: Greg McCall, McCall Homes; Gary Owen, Sanbell

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion

Motion made by Board member Staley, seconded by Board member Cook to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

3. Approval of Minutes: February 25, 2025

Motion

Motion by Board member Stephenson, seconded by Board member Cook to approve the minutes of February 25, 2025 as submitted. Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

4. Public Comment: As required (3 minutes maximum per person). Any member of the public might be heard on any subject that is not on the agenda. The Planning Board will not take any action on these items at this time but could choose to add an item to the next meeting agenda for discussion. There were no comments from the public.

5. Disclosure of Outside (Ex-Parte) Communication – There was none.

6. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest – There was none.

7. Old Business – There was no Old Business.

8. New Business –

- a. Annafeld Subdivision, 7th Filing. Preliminary City Major. Plat Review and Board Discussion.

Dave Green provided an overview of the Annafeld subdivision, detailing the layout of the lots and roads. He explained that all streets within the subdivision are public and that existing water and sewer lines are already in place. A master plan for stormwater management has been developed and will integrate with the current system. Mr. Green also discussed the traffic impact study, which analyzed traffic patterns during morning, evening, and peak hours. The study examined six intersections to assess traffic movement, with results indicating that traffic counts are lower than in previous filings. Additionally, projections suggest that these intersections will continue to function similarly to current conditions once the subdivision is fully developed.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the proposed subdivision, subject to the three (3) conditions of approval as presented in the staff report.

The Public Hearing and recommendation will be held at the next Planning Board meeting, March 25, 2025. City Council action will be held on April 28, 2025

Questions

Angled Parking and Street Requirements -It was confirmed that the angled parking will meet the street requirements. The design includes angled parking for businesses and parallel parking for residential areas.

Fire Truck Access - The design provides enough width for fire truck access, as it is a one-way street. The requirements are met with no need for alleys.

Number of Lots - The increase in lots is not due to market conditions but rather due to lower traffic impacts. There will be no reduction in the number of lots.

Parking Spaces per Lot - Vehicle parking is designed according to current code, with at least two spaces per single dwelling unit and 1-1/2 for townhomes.

Lot 22 is designated for future development.

b. City Park Department – Subdivision Evaluation Process for Parks – Presentation. Discussion by Mike Pigg, Parks Director

Wyeth Friday informed the board that no action will be taken at this time, as the discussion is for informational purposes only.

Mr. Pigg explained that when evaluating dedicated parkland within a subdivision, considerations include its size, suitability within the community, and placement to avoid being in a resident's front yard. The board assesses the parkland's value, potential for water storage, and whether it is viable for a playground. Some sites may be rejected due to excessive water storage or collection pits. If the land is unsuitable for a park, it is not pursued due to maintenance concerns. Instead, cash-in-lieu contributions are received as an alternative. Additionally, the proximity of other parks and their existing amenities are considered, with a preference for smaller parks designed for everyday use.

Cole McQuillan, Parks Superintendent – Mr. McQuillan explained that park maintenance and potential repairs are key considerations. Park Maintenance Districts (PMDs) contribute solely to the upkeep of their respective parks, each of which presents unique challenges. By improving efficiency, cost savings can be passed on to homeowners. Experience over the years has shown that narrow corridors are particularly difficult to maintain. Given the city's size, the goal is to remain responsive to community needs and ensure a positive experience for residents.

Discussion

The board discussed the usability of sloped parkland, particularly for sledding. While slopes are not automatically excluded, factors such as maintenance and safety are considered. Parks with retention ponds at the bottom of sledding hills present a hazard, but some subdivisions, like Copper Ridge, have designated sledding areas designed for safe use.

Concerns were raised about private parks, which are developed without city maintenance funding. It was noted that developers may propose parks in less desirable locations, such as floodplains, rather than dedicating a buildable lot for park use. While city guidelines require parkland or cash-in-lieu contributions, challenges arise when developers prioritize profits over dedicating suitable park space.

Board members emphasized the importance of long-term planning, ensuring that subdivisions have accessible parks, particularly in neighborhoods expected to exist for decades. They acknowledged that cash-in-lieu payments do not directly contribute to park development or maintenance. Some members suggested exploring options to use these funds for larger regional parks through a bonding process.

The discussion also touched on safety concerns related to park placement, particularly regarding arterial roads. Board members agreed that crosswalks and other safety measures are crucial but acknowledged the challenges of balancing accessibility with potential risks.

Applicant

Greg McCall provided insight into his company's approach to parkland development within the Annafeld and Josephine Crossing subdivisions. He explained that his team has worked to find more effective solutions for incorporating park space into these communities.

Initially, they dedicated "parklets" or pocket parks, but the city did not recognize them as adding significant value as public parks, despite homeowners valuing them highly. From a maintenance standpoint, the city's parks department was unable to support them, leading to the establishment of a Park Maintenance District (PMD) to assist with upkeep. Ultimately, at the city's request, these parks were designated as private, and the company took them back.

McCall noted that riverfront areas were intentionally developed as public parkland, as maintaining public access to these spaces was a priority. However, he emphasized the challenges in creating a public park while incorporating the costs into the development and lot pricing to align with city requirements.

Currently, the HOA maintains the parks, as their small size makes it more practical for the HOA to manage them, given the city's lack of resources and willingness to take on maintenance. McCall also mentioned the potential for larger regional parks, suggesting that cash-in-lieu funds could be allocated toward such projects. However, he acknowledged that the logistics of implementing this approach remain uncertain.

9. Other Business

Wyeth Friday informed the board that Council Chambers would serve as the designated meeting room moving forward and encouraged members to provide feedback on the setup. He also noted that security would be available until the meeting's conclusion.

Additionally, Mr. Friday provided an update on legislative matters, mentioning a transmittal break and ongoing legal discussions regarding Montana land use laws. He assured the board that updates would be shared as more information becomes available.

Mr. Friday also reported that the district court in Bozeman recently issued a ruling on the lawsuit filed by Montanans Against Irresponsible Densification (MAID). This case, which began in 2023, was related to Accessory Dwelling Units, Duplexes, the Montana Land Use Planning Act (MLUP), and other zoning regulations. While an injunction had been in place for some time, last week's district court ruling determined that aspects of the MLUP were unconstitutional, specifically concerning public participation requirements.

The decision was outlined in a 55-page opinion, and discussions are ongoing with the Montana League of Cities and Towns to assess its implications. Mr. Friday noted that there is a consideration of an appeal as well as potential legislative adjustments to address the ruling.

10. Future Agenda Items

The next board meeting is scheduled for March 25 and will include discussions on board training, the subdivision process, and remote meeting attendance. It was requested that board members make their absence requests known in advance and communicate with the board President.

The PCC meeting on March 18 has been canceled. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was presented to the BOCC, which rejected it, and the City Council tabled the discussion, which they may bring back at the March 24th meeting. The PCC will reconvene in April to review the TIP Amendment #2 and may have discussion regarding the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The board voiced concerns over the rejection of the approved plan, highlighting that it did not require any financial commitment. Members stressed that decisions should prioritize the interests of the public rather than individual preferences. Additionally, they raised concerns about new legislative changes that could reduce the board's authority in planning matters, cautioning that such changes might limit the board's ability to address critical issues and could lead to setbacks rather than progress.

Mr. Friday will provide updates on the Planning Zoning Commission, which is still in development with a contractor.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:07 PM

Brenda J Berns, Planning Clerk

--Draft to be approved by motion at the next scheduled meeting.