

Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission

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Neal Thompson, Chairman
Ken Roberts, Vice-Chair

Sasha Childs, Commissioner
Katlin Caldwell, Commissioner
Scott Freeman, Commissioner

MINUTES

Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission

April 19, 2022

Valley County Court House - Cascade, Idaho

WORK SESSION - 5:30 p.m.

A. OPEN: Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Thompson. A quorum exists.

PZ Director – Cynda Herrick:	Present
PZ Commissioner – Katlin Caldwell	Present
PZ Commissioner – Sasha Childs:	Excused
PZ Commissioner – Scott Freeman:	Excused
PZ Commissioner – Ken Roberts:	Present
PZ Commissioner – Neal Thompson:	Present
PZ Assistant Planner – Lori Hunter:	Present

B. Work Session

1. Meet with Fire Departments and SITPA

Attendees:

- Travis Smith, McCall Fire and EMS
- Stephanie Nelson, Valley County Fire Wise and Valley County Fire Working Group (VCFWG)
- John L Lillehaug, Valley County Fire Working Group Legislative Committee
- Steve Hull, Cascade Fire Chief
- Juan Bonilla, Donnelly Fire Chief
- Paul Wagner, Southern Idaho Timber Protection Association (SITPA)

Valley County Code has fire-related requirements for new subdivisions. John Lillehaug submitted handouts for review: Valley County Code 10-7 Wildland Urban Interface Fire Protection Plan, Fire Protection Plan Manual (aka guidance manual), Valley County Fire District's Fire Code Standards (March 25, 2021); and VCFWG Legislative Committee's Proposed Changes

This work session is a dialogue between fire departments and PZ Commissioners. It is a time to review and propose changes to Valley County Code and increase the effectiveness of wildland fire plans

VCFWG proposed changes to definitions in the Valley County Code for Fuel Break, Valley County Fire Working Group, Wildland Urban Interface Area, and Wildfire. Fuel breaks were discussed. A proposed change to Valley County Code 10-7-3 would change the date to conform code to the currently adopted edition of the International Fire Code, as adopted by State Fire Marshall. Valley County Code 10-7-4 Submission Requirements were discussed.

The Valley County Fire District's Fire Code Standards are **recommendations** based on the International Fire Code. These state that a subdivision of 30 homes or more require a central

water system. This was discussed further. Other items discussed include fire hydrant requirements, the IDAPA Idaho Administrative Procedures Act (IDAPA) rule, water sources for firefighting, and inconsistency of water supply for McCall, Donnelly, and Cascade Fire Departments. If requirements are not in Valley County Code, they cannot be enforced by Valley County. Recommendations and requirements of the fire departments were discussed. This will be further discussed. Fire water flow requirements were discussed. The source of water flow can vary (e.g., tanks). Deferring to fire departments allows for flexibility versus having an ordinance with set requirements. The 30,000-gallon water tank requirement comes from insurance requirements. The recommended "standards" could be changed based on site-specific locations.

Conditions of approval for a conditional use permit typically include a requirement that Fire Department requirements are met. If the PZ Commission determines that the requirements are not reasonable, then the PZ Commission does not have to require this condition of approval. Generally, the applicant/developer has already corresponded with the appropriate fire department and discussed requirements.

The Fire Protection Plan Manual is not referenced in Valley County Code

Valley County Code 10-7-4 contains submission requirements for fire protection plans. What requires future lot owners to maintain requirements of plan and how enforced? CCRs include maintenance and enforcement. Another possibility is a recorded development agreement that states requirements. Community education is an important, including free-dump sites, fire mitigation and fire wise discussions at HOA meetings, etc. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation properties were discussed. The Fire Departments stated that developers should take responsibility for fuel breaks, etc., on their property and not assume that adjacent property will be fire-wise landscaping. Deed restrictions are recorded by some counties in Northern Idaho requiring that future property owners follow the fire protection plan in perpetuity. Fire-resilient vegetation and future plantings are recommended in the site-specific fire protection plans.

Every subdivision application must submit a Wildland Urban Interface Fire Protection Plan. A developer can write their own or hire a professional. Less than 20% forested proposed subdivision are not required to submit a fire protection plan. However, sites adjacent to forested areas or in rangeland/grassland areas are also subject to wildfires. When reviewing a subdivision application, Fire Departments can say "Plan is insufficient; a professional written plan is required."

The Fire Protection Plan Manual contains guidelines. It is a tool that contains what information should be included in a fire management plan and the recommended format.

Director Herrick stated that subdivision regulations are being revised and the Commissioners are reviewing recommendations for minimum standards for a road that would access multiple building sites in a "off-grid" subdivision. Possibilities were discussed. The main road needs to meet county-standards; the individual driveways do not. Fire departments can make recommendations for long driveway width, turn-arounds, etc. Shared driveway requires approval of fire department. The roads/driveways need to meet specifications of SITPA vehicles also. A single-family driveway requires a minimum width of 12 feet. If fire truck is unable to drive to the home, then the home cannot get fire protection service resulting in either higher insurance costs or no insurance coverage available.

Fire departments require an all-weather and plowed road. Most all land divisions now require a subdivision plat in Valley County. The Idaho version of Fire Code was discussed. The International Fire Code requires that fire apparatus access roads support the load of a weighted

fire truck. Valley County has adopted the International Fire Code; thus, this requirement must be met. Fire district boundaries were shown on the PZ GIS map. Areas outside of the fire district boundaries, including Smith's Ferry and the west side of Lake Cascade, need minimum standards required for platting

Further discussion items included:

- minimum number of lots
- minimum lot size; density is a concern as fire spreads from home to home
- water tanks for firefighting
- building material requirements; fire-resistant roofs are required in Valley County while fire-resistant siding and other construction materials could be required
- defensible space landscaping
- enforcement
- ingress-egress roads

Making the changes recommended by the VCFWG will require an ordinance amendment, public hearings, and approval by Board of County Commissioners.

C. OTHER ITEMS

The consensus of the Commissioners was to continue the work session, items 2 and 3, at a future work session meeting.

1. Amendments to Comprehensive Plan with Guidance for Zoning Overlays

2. Subdivision Regulations

- Change in Types of Subdivisions for Different Review Levels

Director Herrick recommended that the Commissioners listen to the Board of County Commissioners meeting on April 18, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. A previous water study and future possible water studies were discussed. The Board determined that water studies should be site specific; a county-wide study would be futile and expensive. It is the consensus of professionals that Valley County does have a lot of water. Existing public water systems could be monitored, and a model created. Director Herrick will ask for a new layer on the PZ GIS maps that displays public water systems and public municipal systems in Valley County.

Chairman Thompson adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.