

July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Bonner County Planning Commission  
1500 Highway 2  
Sandpoint, ID 83864

Dear Bonner County Planning Commissioners,

We are writing to ask that you extend the timeline of the Bonner County Comprehensive Plan revision process, and adopt practices that are inclusive of stakeholder groups and the public, and that allow for meaningful input by these entities.

Per your meeting minutes from May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the timeline set forth indicates you will complete the revision process and deliver a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners on August 16<sup>th</sup>. This allows only three and a half months to complete the complex and laborious process you have embarked on, which appears inadequate to do the job well, and is truncated in comparison to other similar planning processes. Often, comprehensive plan revisions take between 12-18 months to complete.

Furthermore, your process currently is inadequate in its measures to engage with stakeholders and interested citizens. It appears the only specified agency that is targeted for a meeting is Idaho Fish and Game. The first opportunity for public input appears to be your public hearing scheduled for August 2<sup>nd</sup>, which is indicated to include input only on the Plan's Goals and Policies. The next public hearing is on August 16<sup>th</sup>, the very day you plan to submit your recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. It seems it will be impossible for you to incorporate input from that hearing into the recommendations you submit.

Though your meetings are open to the public, thus far the public has not had the opportunity to engage with you at those meetings. If your intent is to allow for public input at your public meetings on July 5<sup>th</sup> and July 19<sup>th</sup>, that needs to be clarified, and certainly the public needs to be notified.

In Grand County, UT, which is similar to Bonner County in that it is a sought-after recreational hub that includes the alluring town of Moab and an important water resource, the Colorado River, they are engaged in a robust public process for their comprehensive plan update (Study Scope and Schedule attached).

We request that you adjust your process to allow for significantly expanded public engagement, which would also require a longer timeline to get the job done right. Your refined process would ideally include:

1. Public education and outreach both through local news outlets and social media;
2. Email list notifications to include all stakeholders and interested parties with easy online sign-up;
3. Public questionnaire to assess layman desires for the future of Bonner County;
4. Stakeholder meetings;
5. Community planning charette;
6. Public workshops and allow public input;
7. Rollout open house, to clearly showcase changes that have been made and why, and allow final opportunity for input.

Grand County, along with many other such entities, contracted a professional planning firm to assist them with the process. You may benefit from doing the same.

We understand that your current process and/or timeline was by directive from the former Bonner County Planning Director. There may have been a misunderstanding regarding where authority lies in this situation.

Per Idaho Statute TITLE 67, CHAPTER 65, LOCAL LAND USE PLANNING, "If a governing board [County Commission] does not elect to exercise the powers conferred by this chapter, it shall establish by ordinance... a planning commission and a zoning commission or a planning and zoning commission acting in both capacities, **which may act with the full authority of the governing board**, excluding the authority to adopt ordinances or to finally approve land subdivisions."

This chapter clearly states that Bonner County Planning Commission has the authority to set their own process and timeline to revise the comprehensive plan.

We are eager to assist as much as possible in ensuring that the Comprehensive Plan update includes authentic, civil and robust public involvement. We would be happy to discuss how we can help in that effort, but at a bare minimum, we can certainly help publicize and spread the word about public involvement opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Drumheller



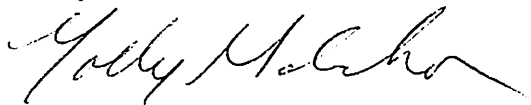
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