

MINUTES OF THE CHURCHILL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

155 N. Taylor St., Fallon, NV 89406

August 22, 2023

1. Call to Order:

Chair Eric Blakey called the regular workshop of the Churchill County Planning Commission to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Commission Chambers, County Administrative Complex, 155 N Taylor Street, Fallon, Nevada.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Eric Blakey, Chair; Jeff Goings, Member

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Mark Hyde, Vice Chair; Zack Bunyard, Member; Deanna Diehl, Member; Scott Nelson, Member; and Paul Picotte, Member.

STAFF PRESENT:

Chris Spross, Public Works Director

Dean Patterson, Senior Planner

Alexa Robinson, Office Specialist

2. Public Comment:

There were none.

3. Verification of the Posting of the Agenda:

Chair Blakey verified with Alexa Robinson that the agenda had been posted in accordance with NRS 241 and the Churchill County Code.

4. Consideration and possible action re: Approval of Agenda as submitted or revised:

Chair Blakey asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Member Goings moved to approve the agenda as revised. The motion was approved.

5. Discussion Item

- A. Consideration and possible action re: Updates from representatives regarding accomplishments, proposed activities, events, and major projects.

Laura Ijames, Economic Director for Fallon Tribal Economic Development Center, said they are planning to start a store on the 35 acre parcel by Fox Peak in Churchill County in addition to potential development of the Fox Peak in Fernley. She also reported that they are going to start looking into paving the roads for the expansion and will be meeting with their Board to begin the process of figuring out the architecture for the development.

Eric Blakey, Commission Chair, asked if they know what the plans will be for the development of the land at Fox Peak. Ms. Ijames replied that it is going to be retail in nature. They will be leasing multiple store locations to those who apply, and their lease options will go up to 99 years for those who wish to have that option. Mr. Blakey followed up with the

question of whether there were an existing anchor store for the expansion. Ms. Ijames replied that Fox Peak and Fox Peak Cinema will be the anchor for the development. Mr. Blakey also inquired as to how much land will be expanded in Fernley. Ms. Ijames responded that they have 1.32 acres by the Fox Peak Fernley location. She said that they also have a little over 7 acres in Mound House, and they are looking at the possibility of building another Fox Peak. She wanted to let the county know of the development so that they could work together on the expansion as needed.

Ms. Ijames mentioned that there is a road off of Ada Street that both the City of Fallon and Churchill County were talking about working with her office when they start to pave it. She said she will reach out to both agencies before her office begins the paving process, so they can work together. There had been mention in the past of sharing the costs of paving that road as it would be beneficial to reducing the traffic since it goes behind the cinema and connects to Sherman Street. They are looking into grants to see what other resources they have to fund the road project.

Jeff Goings, Commission Member, asked if there was a timeline yet determined for the expansion at Fox Peak. Ms. Ijames replied that they are still in the planning process, but she wanted to let the projects be known to the community to facilitate communication and collaboration with the County and the members of the community.

Dean Patterson, Churchill County Senior Planner, mentioned that four or five years ago there was residential development planned for behind the cinema, and he wondered if that is still something that will go forward. Ms. Ijames stated that it is something they are still intending to pursue. They have the architecture laid out for that development project as well. She added that another idea proposed was on one side of the cinema the possibility of building a clinic, and the other side would consist of residential buildings and a possible structure for medical offices. Other proposed ideas were a park in front of the cinema and, if they could have everything on their wish list, they would also have retail and food outlets with outside seating. She is also looking to work with the City and County to plan some food truck/farmer's market/family night types of events within a timeline of the next month or two.

C.L. Quillen, Churchill County Library Director, reported that the library has plans in place for expansion in the future. She's looking to get a better idea of what the community wants to see from the library before making any solid plans for the expansion, though she recognizes that they do need more room. She expressed that they have popular programs that could use some room to grow to accommodate the number of attendees.

She said that they will continue to offer their various services such as story time, their computer help, 3D printing, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) programs. They recently started an elementary book club. They have added stop motion animation to the virtual reality experience they offer to their teen library accounts. They have a legal kiosk for the public to use that guides people through forums and other things they may need for their legal concerns. There is also a Zoom call feature on the kiosk.

Ms. Quillen stated that the library has started its own newsletter. They have also just published a new database for crafting needs. The library also received a six thousand dollar (\$6,000) grant from the American Library Association in conjunction with AT&T to provide some additional literacy programs. They have already begun one program with the Fallon

Paiute Shoshone Tribe, and they have another one scheduled. She said that they are continuing to expand their programs at both the senior center and within the library. She hopes to add some adult programming and a library of things. A library of things is a program that allows the public to check out other items, besides books, that are maybe useful every once in a while, but not often enough to purchase to own such as telescopes or binoculars.

Ms. Quillen reiterated that they do wish to expand the library. She mentioned that they do own the lot between the library and the library annex where she would like to place a meeting room space to accommodate larger programs.

Chair Blakey asked about the participation level at the library to which Ms. Quillen replied that there is enough traffic in the library to warrant the expansion. She explained that for their summer reading program they had about six hundred people participate. They also find that their STEAM programs on Fridays are always packed. The after school hours are especially busy with children utilizing the various functions of the library.

Member Goings asked for further details about the library of things program. Ms. Quillen explained that programs like it have existed for between five and ten years in libraries around the country and offer a variety of things from cameras to power tools. The libraries with which she is familiar that offered this type of program found it to be very successful.

Director Spross asked if for valuable items being checked out such as cameras and laptops would a deposit be required, or whether it is tracked on the library card and uses the honor system. Ms. Quillen said that the items are checked out with the library card without a deposit. They intend to start small and won't be offering highly valuable items of that nature just yet. Currently, they offer a pass to the state parks and would like to offer items such as binoculars for the person to take with them if desired.

Michele Rambo, City of Fernley Planning Director, stated that they have both industrial and residential development happening. They have just begun working on an area plan on the north side of town, north of the freeway. She added that they are also going to be starting another plan for an area on the south side of town for future development.

Chair Blakey asked if the City of Fernley has determined if Truckee Carson Irrigation District (TCID) lining their canal is going to be detrimental to the ground water supply. He also inquired how soon she expects to begin development of the road intersecting the Fox Peak area from the interstate. Ms. Rambo replied that as far as the canal is concerned, they have found some issues with the wells and City Manager Mark Amaday has been in contact with the mayor to work out solutions. She stated that they are possibly looking at grant opportunities to help with digging deeper wells. They are also looking into working with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to improve results. She is unaware of the road development by Fox Peak.

Member Goings enquired about the types of wells affected by the need to dig deeper. He wondered if they are individual wells or community wells, and if they are individual wells, are they going to be pulled into the community water system. Ms. Rambo confirmed that it is individual wells that are the concern, and they do not have the infrastructure to connect most of those affected to the city water supply. She does hope that will be a possibility sometime in the future. Member Goings also questioned if she knew how many

people are going to be impacted by the canal lining. Ms. Rambo responded they are still in the process of getting those numbers, and they are starting a public service awareness program to allow the public to inform their office if their well has been impacted. With the institution of this program, their department, along with Mark Amaday, hope to gather that information for future use.

Dean Patterson brought up all the projects they are seeing requiring permits on the Churchill County side of the county line and wondered if Fernley is also seeing the same level of permitting activity on their side. Ms. Rambo replied that they have had a few conversations about projects in the area, but nothing definite. One group in particular may want to partner with the City of Fernley on some grant funding; however, she does not expect any development from it for at least a year.

Director Spross looks forward to having a contact for future communication with Ms. Rambo as the new Planning Director.

Chair Blakey inquired if Fernley's residential permits are still coming in, and Ms. Rambo confirmed that they are still in high demand. She added that many of their older subdivisions, which had not had any development on them in a while, are starting to see renewed interest and activity.

Derild Parsons, Superintendent for Churchill County School District, started by explaining that school started the week before, and on Monday of the current week their preschool and kindergarten classes had started as well. Their main concern at the moment is their transportation system. The school is trying to take advantage of new technology systems to keep parents informed so that students aren't waiting on county roads for long periods of time for transportation. Using a GPS app called Stopfinder, parents are able to get updates on the location of their child's school bus in real time. There is a shortage of school bus drivers, so the schools have to maximize capacity on each bus, which can be difficult. In addition to configuring the max capacity for each bus, they also want the safest bus routes and to improve school access, especially for drop-offs and pick-ups.

This year they were able to get a new track in at the high school to replace the old one that is durable enough to handle events for years to come. They are actively seeking any Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA) events available to them to bring more events to the students, to the community, and to utilize their updated facilities. As superintendent, Mr. Parsons intends to update the school district's strategic plan to set their goals for the future. He plans to include input from members of the public and the parents over the next several months to help prioritize future plans for the district.

Mr. Parsons mentioned that the school district is short staffed and one of the difficulties they have is getting qualified individuals into the area and finding places for them to live. Many of their staff lives in Fernley, including newly hired people who were unable to find suitable housing. He expressed appreciation for the work being done to ease the housing crisis.

Chair Blakey asked if Mr. Parsons is seeing the school district growing and if enrollment is increasing or declining. Mr. Parsons replied that enrollment is relatively the same at the moment, but it takes a few weeks into the school year to know what the enrollment numbers are. They have found that after Labor Day they often see an uptick in registration from kids who have come from other districts or just moved to the area, so they

may see an increase after that date. He added that they are trying to plan for the potential influx of student enrollment that would result from the potential new developments bringing more housing into the area. Chair Blakey inquired if the existing campuses have room for the potential growth, and Mr. Parsons says that yes, they do have the room as some of the schools are only used part of the year and they have a lot of empty classrooms at northside.

Member Goings returned to the transportation issues and would like to know how far away the students are, who are being bussed into the schools. Mr. Parsons stated that their current policy is that high school kids within city limits walk to school and middle school kids are able to bus if they are a half-mile from the school. This amounts to about six to eight stops within the city limits. For elementary kids, if they are a quarter-mile from the school, then they can be bussed. This means a significant number of elementary students in the city get bussed into school. The school district does have two additional drivers compared to the year before, but they are still bussing at capacity. Compared to other school districts, Churchill County school district has a smaller walking radius because when walking to the grade-level schools, E.C. Best and Numa, the students have to cross a state road making the walk more hazardous. They had a meeting the day before where they discussed ways to make that walking path safer and reduce the number of kids needing to be bussed who live close to the schools. The middle schools and high schools also need to be looked at as there are certain areas of residential that still have to cross the highway to walk to their schools.

Mr. Goings pointed out that he has noticed in other school districts it appears they contract their school bussing, and he wondered if the Churchill County School District ever considered that option. Mr. Parsons replied that the superintendent before him had looked into the option, and it had not been a preferable choice at the time. He added that the priority is to get the kids to school, so nothing is off the table. Mr. Goings added that he understands the difficulty of finding enough employees and is curious if shifting the burden of finding the employees to a third party may be an advantage to the contracting option. Mr. Parsons reiterated that they are looking at every option to get the kids to school.

Director Spross inquired as to whether attendance has dropped because of the transportation problem. Mr. Parsons stated that as far as this year it is too soon in the school year to tell, but they have looked at it previously and knows that in certain situations it has been an issue. Last year, they had a waiting list for transportation but this year they have maxed out capacity on their buses to avoid that situation. They are hesitant to enlarge the walking zone around the schools because it would create another set of issues with more difficult solutions. They have problems when it comes to athletic events as well, getting enough drivers to bus to those events. They have looked into contracting out drivers for events, but finding the funding for it has been an issue as well. Mr. Spross followed up with a question about turning all of the grade schools into kindergarten through fifth grade to make it simpler for transportation. Mr. Parsons said that they have considered that option in their strategic plan. He knows that in the past the schools were kindergarten through sixth grade before they switched to grade level schools, but either way, issues do arise for transportation. They will have to weigh the options to see which obstacles have the better solutions. Some of the problem is how the schools are positioned within the city and meeting state requirements.

Member Goings asked if we could bring West End back and add more classrooms

there to break up the area. Mr. Parsons is unsure whether the building could feasibly and financially be brought back as an operational school. He speculated that much would have to be done and removed to house students again, but he does recognize that it is a valuable plot of land in a good area of town.

Dean Patterson shared that Churchill County has had some large projects proposed for planned unit developments in the last couple of years. He commented that when those begin to progress, he will call on Mr. Parsons to see if the school has input about any issues that may come up. He gave the example of a previous discussion he had with the prior superintendent about school transportation and how bus pick-ups would work in a large apartment complex. He mentioned that Churchill County is also updating their master plan in the next year and proposed that the school be involved in the case of new school sites or things of that nature. Mr. Parsons agreed that he would be very interested in being involved as he will need access to that information to plan for potential significant growth.

Chair Blakey questioned if it would be possible to hire bus drivers to just do the sporting events and not for school drop-offs. Mr. Parsons agreed that it is an option and they have been actively trying to recruit amongst coaches and parents of student athletes. He said that they are offering to pay for their training and set up their testing to get them licensed just for trips.

Chris Spross, Churchill County Planning Director, had updates for some of the building projects they are working on. He stated that last week they received the fifty percent design drawings for the courthouse, and they are in the process of reviewing them, and they have gone out to the stakeholders. There will be a meeting on the upcoming Thursday to discuss the plans. They have also received the fifty percent design drawings for the tentative improvements on the CC Communications building. The building will be used to house the District Attorney's office and create a justice complex in that area. Director Spross expects to also have fifty percent design drawings for the new Churchill Animal Protection Society (CAPS) building by the end of August, and they will send those out to stakeholders for review and comment.

The Drumm building is intended to be converted to the new Churchill Area Regional Transportation (CART) complex, but they are still in the process of getting funding for the project with the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). At the moment, CART is temporarily parking their vehicles at the Rafter 3C event center and are operating out of the multipurpose building.

The County recently purchased a couple of buildings on Maine Street and the Central Nevada Health District, along with probably Social Services, will be relocating there after some improvements are made to the structures.

Director Spross reported that the RV dump station is progressing, and all the underground work has been completed except for the holding tank. The holding tank is due to arrive at the end of the week. Once that it is in the concrete, it will be able to be completed, and then the asphalt can go down. He also stated that the green sand media replacement for the Sand Creek water treatment plant has been finalized and was finished a couple of weeks ago. It has reduced our Arsenic level down to a level below five; half of what it used to be.

The wastewater reclamation facility on Moody Lane needs to have the Zenon

membranes replaced. They have surpassed their effective lifespan, but they had been running the plant at thirty three percent capacity. The filter strands are starting to degrade, and the replacement membranes are due to arrive shortly after the Labor Day weekend. The installation is scheduled for the eleventh and twelfth of September.

Director Spross reported that the preliminary engineering report for the secondary water treatment plant at the golf course is scheduled to be completed in October. He said that they are on the priority list for the state revolving fund, and they have applied with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to receive some funding for the facility. Once the preliminary engineering report is completed and they have begun spending money, then they will be able to apply for additional funding opportunities more determinedly.

Member Goings asked if the RV dump station holding tank works similarly to a septic system. Director Spross replied that it is a septic holding tank, and from there drains into the manhole that carries it down to the lift station over at the Fairgrounds. Member Goings then inquired how long it takes to replace the green sand media. Director Spross responded that it took about a month and a half to complete the replacement, which involved removing the old media and all of the layered aggregates, then go in and touch up any areas that have started to rust, followed by a seven day epoxy curing time before water can go back in. There were three tanks they had to do, and they replaced some other things at the same time. They had to schedule a lot of the work to be done on the weekend to work around their Utility Operator's schedule. For the first vessel, they had the vendor who designed the wastewater treatment plant and supplied the green sand media come down to walk them through the process, and then they replaced the other two vessels themselves. He expressed appreciation for the people who did the work as it was back breaking labor.

Member Goings asked about the timeline for the replacement of the membranes at the wastewater treatment plant. Director Spross stated that it should take about two days to complete that work. All they have to do is pull out the old cassettes, hose everything down, do an inspection, and drop in the new cassettes. They are aware that they are going to have to replace an air line because it has a leak. Director Spross confirmed that there will not be any impact on the community. They are going to pump to the overflow pond for a day and a half and then everything will be back in operation.

Member Blakey asked if there is a timeline for all of the building construction mentioned earlier. Director Spross replied that some of the buildings that are grant funded have an expiration date for those funds of 2026, so they have to have the buildings completed before then. Some of the other buildings are intertwined with other projects. For example, before they can build the new courthouse, they have to demolish the old sheriff's office or the old bank building. The sheriff is still using a few of the offices at that location, so before they can start the demolition process, they will have to relocate those offices to a new temporary location. Director Spross said that he anticipates going out to bid on the new courthouse probably around spring of next year. Because of the intricacies of the building, he would estimate roughly twelve to eighteen months of construction. He also believes that the improvements on the CC Communications building will go out to bid around early spring of next year. As far as the CAPS building is concerned, it is a pre-engineered building that they already have. Once the design is finished, they will go out to bid on that, and he would estimate about five to six months for construction. He stated that labor shortages in the contractor field may have impacts on the timelines.

Dean Patterson, Churchill County Senior Planner, reported that next year the county is talking about updating the master plan. The last master plan update was a comprehensive update, so there shouldn't be as much to update this time. However, there are some areas in the masterplan that need addressing, such as the Hazen area, as well as the "checkerboard" project that will result from the Navy range expansion. He knows that we will need to fix some of the problems concerning the transfer of development rights. They will also be addressing some of the zoning issues that don't match the reality of what is occurring in certain areas.

Mr. Patterson stated they also anticipate some Churchill County code amendments that will go along with the implementation of the adjustments to the master plan.

Chair Blakey asked who will be attending the meetings for updating the master plan. Mr. Patterson replied that a workshop will be held, similar to the current workshop taking place; however, the frequency would increase to closer to once a month. When they identify the stakeholders, the county will reach out to them to inform them of the meetings, in addition to the advertisements in the newspaper and other forms of publishing the meeting dates and times. Mr. Patterson confirmed that the public is invited to all of the meetings.

Chair Blakey also inquired about the Navy's new housing development and if anyone knows how soon that development might start. Mr. Patterson responded that he believes the development is in the works, but he is unsure if it is at the point of beginning construction. He reported that the new homes will be placed north of the existing Navy housing section. Chair Blakey wondered if there was another area where they might be interested in expanding, but the Planning Department has not been informed of the details of the Navy's housing expansion plans.

Ms. Ijames asked when the last time the master plan was updated. Director Spross replied that it was last updated in 2020 and that the master plan gets revisited every five years. He explained that they begin in 2024 and update one chapter of the plan each month to have it completed by 2025. The Planning Department confirmed that there are hard copies of the current master plan available in their office.

6. Public Comment

Chair Blakey asked for any other public comments, and there were none.

7. Adjournment:

Chair Blakey thanked everyone for coming to participate. There were no further comments or questions, so he adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Approved: _____

Eric Blakey, Chair

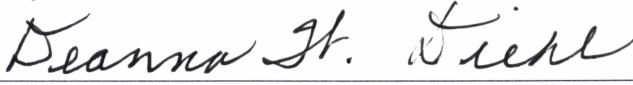
Approved: _____

Scott Nelson, Vice Chair

Approved:


Zack Bunyard, Commissioner

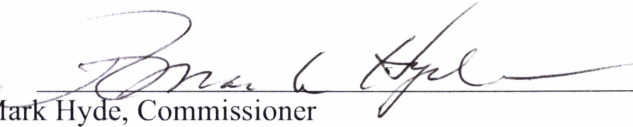
Approved:


Deanna Diehl, Commissioner

Approved:


Jeff Goings, Commissioner

Approved:


R. Mark Hyde, Commissioner

Approved:


Paul Picotte, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Alexa Robinson, Office Specialist