**BIGFORK LAND USE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Draft Minutes Thursday January 30,2025**

**4:00 PM Bethany Lutheran Church – Downstairs Meeting Room**

Chairwoman Susan Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**Present:** Committee member attendees: Laura Perry, Angela DeFries, Susan Johnson, Shelley Anderson, Jerry Sorensen and Richad Michaud; absent was Chany Ockert; Public: Seven members; Flathead Planning and Zoning: Seth Jogan and Larissa Van Riet.

The agenda was approved (m/s, DeFries/Sorensen), vote unanimous.

Minutes of the December 19, 2024, meeting were approved (m/s, Anderson/Michaud), vote unanimous

**Administrator’s Report and Announcements:**

Sign-in sheet passed around. Approved minutes and documents are posted on the County website: flathead.mt.gov Click on Planning and Zoning/Meetings and Boards/Bigfork Land Use Advisory Committee.

Anderson stated that there are three open BLUAC positions for election. Applications for these positions must be received by the Election Department before 5 p.m. on February 10, 2025. Information on the open positions can be found on the Flathead County website. Click on Planning and Zoning Department.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Application:**

**FZC-24-19** A zone change request from George and Elaina Weyl, for property located within the Bigfork Zoning District. The proposal would change the zoning on a parcel located at 395 Ferndale Drive near Bigfork, Montana from *SAG-5 Suburban Agricultural* to *R-2.5 Rural Residential*. The total acreage involved in the request is approximately 6.34 acres.

**Staff Report:**

Planner Seth Jogan presented the report stating that agencies responded with no comments.

Q. Sorensen: The application states that the property is already split into two lots, is that the case? A. Jogan: That is what is on the application, but the property is only one lot. The applicant eventually wants to do a family transfer to create 2 lots after the zone change.

DeFries commented that there are three addresses recorded with Flathead GIS, one being the small lot carved out of the subject property. Anderson added that the lots and homes were created long before zoning was created in 1993. Van Riet added that the zone change is necessary for the applicant to do the family transfer and create 2 lots of 2.5+ acres.

Q. Perry: The staff report states that the request does not comply with the Neighborhood Plan. What is the effect of approving the zone change when it does not qualify, is it an exception? A. Jogan: This area is set aside for agricultural uses and the definition of R-2.5 is for a higher density non-agricultural use.

Anderson commented that there is no agricultural activity in this area. The area is heavily treed, lots smaller than 5-acres, and built up with residential housing prior to zoning.

Q. Sorensen: Before the last legislative session you could not do family transfers in subdivisions, but you can now if you comply with zoning? And does this pass

the Spot Zoning test? A. Van Reit: Yes, to both questions.

**Applicant Report:**

None

**Public Agency Comments:**

None

**Public Comments:**

John Pettigrew-P.O. Box 32, Bigfork-provided the committee with a letter from Ian McKay, Deputy Airport Director of the Flathead Municipal Airport Authority stating that the Airport Authority supports the potential encroachment of the proposed well’s isolation zone in the public airfield easement. (See letter on file with the county Planning and Zoning Department.)

Kathy Brown-393 Ferndale Drive, Bigfork-stated that she supports the application.

**Applicant Reply:**

None

**Staff Reply:**

None

**Committee Discussion:**

Anderson commented that there was no public objection to the application, and the application was supported by the Deputy Director of the Flathead Municipal Airport Authority.

**Findings of Fact:**

Sorensen moved and Anderson seconded the motion to adopt the 12 Findings of Facts (FOF) as presented. The committee had a brief discussion on FOF #1 as R-2.5 zoning does not comply with the text and map of the Bigfork Neighborhood Plan. (Note: R-2.5 zoning did not exist when the Neighborhood Plan was adopted in 2009.) Motion passed unanimously.

**Committee Discussion and Vote:**

Sorensen moved and DeFries seconded the motion to forward a recommendation to approve FZC-24-19 to the county Planning Board. Sorensen commented that although the application does not technically meet Goals and Policies of the Neighborhood Plan for residential development, it is in the character of the surrounding neighborhood development. Motion passed unanimously.

The Planning Board will hear the application on February 12, 2025, at 6 p.m. in the second-floor conference room of the South Campus Building, 40 11th Street West, Kalispell.

**Unfinished Business:**

Bigfork Neighborhood Plan

Sorensen and Perry presented to the committee and public in attendance a map of the Bigfork Zoning District that was generated by the county’s GIS Department. The map identifies all the approved zoning designations within the district. The map will be used to quantify the capacity for development in each zoned area. Julie Spencer of Bigfork Water and Sewer asked that a map be created with an overlay of the water and sewer district infrastructure for future planning. Sorensen stated that maps with all infrastructure will be created to aid in planning.

Anderson presented a rough outline updating the Demographics and Economics section of the Neighborhood Plan. Additional information is needed to complete the analysis and to identify trends which will be utilized to update other sections of the Neighborhood Plan, such as land use, housing, transportation, and social services.

**New Business:**

None

**Adjourn:**

Johnson moved and Sorensen seconded the motion to adjourn at 5:10 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shelley Anderson, Member and acting Recording Recretary