

Citizens News

What's Inside

A Message from the Board
Page 3

Neighborhood Plans and Moving Mountains
Page 4

Leadership Needed, Apply Now
Page 5

Is the County Planning Board Listening?
Page 7

County Commissioner Candidates Talk About Planning
Pages 8-11

Legislative and PSC Candidates
Pages 12-18

Who Does Government Listen to?

The Planning Board Rewrites the County Growth Policy-Again And Large Scale Developments Continue to Line up for Approval

By Mayre Flowers

The bizarre thought occurred to me recently that I could hold the *Guinness Book of World Records* for attending more county or city planning board meetings and local government hearings than any other resident of the valley! While I haven't spent much time considering the implications of this new found fame, sitting in these meetings, often night after night, has given me plenty of time to reflect on the question the title of this article poses – Who does government listen to?

To answer this question let's look at three recent case examples:

1) The county's approval of the **Glacier Mall** that has gone all the way to the Montana Supreme Court in a three-year search by local residents for an answer to this question in an attempt to better hold local government accountable (see page 6) ;

2) The **City of Kalispell's recent growth policy amendment for (once again) the Glacier Mall and some 8000 acres north of Kalispell**, which is also the subject of a referendum—

a grass roots democratic tool that gives the public a direct voice in decision making by empowering those who feel government isn't listening to take their case to the voters directly through the ballot process (see page 6) ; and

3) **The County Planning Board's current process of rewriting the draft**

County Growth Policy following public hearings and in particularly their effort to significantly curtail the ability of neighborhoods to establish neighborhood plans; a long cherished and highly successful tool for giving locals a direct voice is planning by building grass roots consensus on a neighborhood scale (see page 7).

Each of these case examples is a cautionary reminder that in a democracy "the buck" stops with the people. If we don't turn out to vote and ask tough questions of those running for office, we won't know who they will really listen to once elected. If we don't insist that our concerns be heard and carefully considered by our local

continued on page 6

Summer Highlights from a Planning Perspective

By Mayre Flowers

This summer, **Kalispell** moved to amend its growth policy by embracing and almost doubling the original size of the proposed site for the Glacier Mall. This action was taken despite over 300 comments in opposition. In doing this the city added at that site some 600 acres of new commercial and mixed uses. They also called for some 8000 acres of higher density housing north of West Reserve Street. All this was done by the city council, after the close of the public hearing, and just before the final vote. They did this by essentially rewriting the proposed growth policy amendment through a series of new council-led amendments. These amendments followed almost point by point requested changes called for in a letter from the mall developer's attorney. The proposed amendment by the City Planning Board had originally called for a much smaller commercial expansion and for it to not to occur along the highway, but rather as an internal town-centered and walkable mixed use area. Kalispell also voted to explore the development of a Transfer Development Rights program, which is a positive opportunity for city-county cooperation to direct growth away from sensitive areas in the county to appropriate areas around the city.

Whitefish held numerous neighborhood meetings to begin to shape its new growth policy. The committee set up to help draft this new growth policy is comprised of local residents from around the city—not just the planning board or planning staff. This committee seems to be listening to concerns of residents who say that they want Whitefish to simply stay Whitefish by keeping neighborhoods in tack and keeping the downtown the core of the community vibrant. Providing for workforce housing remains a challenge,

continued on page 5



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Mission Statement

“To inform and empower citizens in cooperative community development that respects and encourages stewardship of the Flathead Valley’s natural beauty and resource.”

Our Principles

Stewardship - It is our responsibility together to care for the land, air, water, and character of the Flathead Valley for ourselves and future generations.

Open Government - Fair and ethical decision making requires respect for process, transparency, inclusiveness, and well-informed participants.

Community - We must find ways to balance and bridge our differences in order to maintain the unique quality of life in the Flathead Valley.

Citizenship - It is our right and our responsibility to become informed and to participate in the decisions that affect our lives and our community.

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Enchanted and Committed

Message from Gwen Sutherland, CBF Office Administrator

*In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid a livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.*

From the “Lady of the Lake” by Sir Walter Scott

As we create neighborhoods, we may choose to consider the legacy that will be left to our children’s children. Just as the lady in Sir Walter Scott’s poem was enchanted, so is our Flathead Lake Valley. From those who have lived here for generations, to the many who have just arrived, the “Lady of the Lake” astounds them all. I speak to people each day who have just arrived here in awe of the unspoiled grandeur and beauty of the Flathead Valley. The delight on their faces is that of a child who has just discovered a beautiful secret. In time, these newcomers find a way to carve a corner of this “lady” for themselves. They become a new thread in the fabric of a neighborhood. What legacy will they leave?

Neighborhoods are built by a diverse group of families who share a vision for their land, their dreams, and the future. They strive to establish high standards and create a reasonable system that protects all entities involved. They make choices and concessions while listening to each other in an attempt to reach consensus. Throughout this process, a neighborhood plan begins to take shape. Public input is received and woven into best practices for land use and growth particular to the uniqueness of the neighborhood. The offerings are measured in the time that each neighbor invests in discussion, compromise and research toward the community’s goals and ideas.

In returning to the Flathead area, I realized the time to make my offering had come. No longer could I be satisfied

to simply watch the many moods of my stunning lake. I was ready to engage, first in Bigfork, as a part of the Bigfork Steering Committee revising the Bigfork Neighborhood Plan and then as a member of the Flathead Neighborhood Network, comprised of representatives from some fifteen current or emerging neighborhood plan areas in the county. I wanted to be an integral part of planning and building community around a vision of that community’s distinctive ecological, economic and aesthetic potential.

Through coordination and collaboration, the Flathead Neighborhood Network utilizes the talent and energy of its participants to demand quality development that supports the assets of each community. Now as the new office administrator for Citizens for a Better Flathead (CBF), I am immersed full time in providing support to many of these neighborhoods as they seek resources, information and organizational support to actively participate in planning for the future of this incredible place.

My time with the Flathead Neighborhood Network as well as with Citizens for a Better Flathead has been short, yet it has been imbued with people who care deeply about the land, their lives, and the generations who will follow. Will our Lady of the Lake be Lady Luck or will it be sustained by group of individuals who have the tenacity to work for and defend conscientious planning? Before our eyes, a county is being built neighborhood by neighborhood. What legacy will we leave?

If you aren’t yet involved in planning efforts in your area, give CBF’s office a call and we can help you connect with those working in areas or on issues of concern to you and our future. Together we have a priceless opportunity to nurture and continue the legacy of the “Lady of the Lake.”

Gwen Sutherland is a resident of Bigfork and the new office administrator for Citizens for a Better Flathead.

Renewing Community: Answering the Call

Message from Nikki Karpavich, CBF Program Assistant

There is a quote in the office that I just came across the other day. It’s a quote that I wonder how many people have faith in, or could have faith in. It reads: “If the people lead, eventually the leaders will follow.” When you read this, don’t just let your eyes wander past the typed words. Soak in the meaning and reflect upon it. After all, democracy is depending upon it.

So what does Citizens for a Better Flathead stand for? Our mission states that we exist “to inform and empower citizens in cooperative community development that respects and encourages stewardship of the Flathead Valley’s natural beauty and resources.” We at Citizens—staff, members, and supporters—all share a common bond. We call the Flathead home in one form or another. We care about community,

about the health of our environment, the quality of our neighborhoods, of the rural character and working-lands heritage that are the context for our neighborhoods, and the impacts growth has upon all of this. We, the staff at CBF, want to hear your opinion.

You may have received a message from me recently on your answering machine. In fact, most of you have. I have implored you to revisit your membership renewal packets we have mailed out, and to give for the upcoming year. Without you, we could not exist. I have also had the pleasure of speaking to a few of you at home (and I apologize if I called while you were in the moment of doing something). Nonetheless, I had the opportunity to spend a few minutes asking our contributors their

continued on page 3

A Message From the Board

By Ed Myers, Co-Chair, Citizens for a Better Flathead

It's been a busy blur of a Summer and early Fall for the staff at Citizens. Our top priority has been tracking the process by which the county is updating its draft Flathead County Growth Policy. In this regard we have been working to keep the members of Citizens up-to-date and to provide meaningful feedback to the County Planning Board and the county planning staff. A special thank you to the 200 plus residents who took time to complete the lengthy online survey we provided this summer to inform you about the County Growth Policy and to allow you to forward your comments to the county on specific issues. In all, some 300 people submitted written comments on the draft and many more turned out for hearings. Great work! Please stay involved!

All of this work on the County Growth Policy has been with a backdrop of old and new neighborhood issues that materialize daily and often with little time to catch one's breath and come up to speed on what is being proposed next.

Despite the many new and challenging opportunities facing Citizens and all of us, there continues to be a theme of some discourse, full of old labels and misinformation in the media and at hearings. The board and staff have struggled with the best approach to this negativity and have chosen to be informative as opposed to rehashing old issues. We continue to believe that old labels and scare tactics serve no one well, whether it is directed at Citizens or elected officials.

I would like to make a couple of points during this election season and the period of development of the

new County Growth Policy. Citizens has strongly advocated the use of neighborhood plans as being central to this planning document, not as the end point, but critical in the consideration of any planned development. It forces developers and others in a neighborhood area to work with the neighborhood plan in the beginning of the process and not as an afterthought. This offers more predictability for all involved and more opportunities for consensus. The current process, however, seems to be one that does not consult with or among the parties until issues come to the Planning Board. Perhaps the Planning Board and County Commissioners might even require this consultation before any item is even on an agenda.

The second thought is really stating the obvious, but no one wants to acknowledge it, for fear they might have to address the issue. It is the impact of the growth to the infrastructure of the Flathead and our inability to handle what's occurred already. Roads are a primary issue and neither the county nor the state is talking about real solutions to the dismal condition of the roads. Impact fees, if put in place, are only part of the solution, but we encourage the county to move forward with putting



these in place. What is most disconcerting is that it appears no one is thinking ahead in terms of needs or potential revenue. It makes no sense to most people that there is no collaborative planning between the cities, county and state.

There are many other infrastructure costs within the county and cities that have occurred and will continue as we grow. The solutions can only come from collaboration and problem-solving that thus far has been missing in most areas.

The final point I would like to offer is the process by which we

work together. My view is that growth is going to occur; the question becomes one of how we work to collaborate and put diverse views and agendas together to benefit everyone. That requires not advocacy, but the ability to find the middle ground and creative approaches and solutions.

Citizens will continue its important role of working to empower others and ensure that everyone's point of view gets through to elected officials. We will ask for collaboration, input and planning that considers the rights of citizens and the overall needs of the Valley. It's a process that needs your involvement and participation whenever possible.

Renewing Community from page 2

thoughts on pertinent issues in the Valley. Here is the feedback I received.

Growth was the biggest issue concerning many of you. Many of you were fed up with the expansive growth that did not adequately address the health of our environment, the input of affected neighbors, or the added costs of providing infrastructure that does not justly compensate surrounding areas.

Neighborhoods and the strength that comes from them is another high priority. There is strength in numbers, and unity in community. As neighbors and as a community, you said, we need to continue speaking our values, and promote networking and community involvement. Many of you thanked us for being there to help you network with others in your neighborhood, for keeping you up to date on opportunities for input

and for providing support on issues of concern.

One comment stood out in particular. This member was reflecting upon war, and the traits associated with it. War is where hate and criticism dominate. Compassion and understanding no longer exist. In a sense, we are at war here in the Flathead. Differences of opinion are treated with disrespect and personal attacks. Building community is the result of compromise, consensus and respect—all antidotes to war.

These conversations have given me a renewed sense of community here at Citizens for a Better Flathead. People do care about what is happening in the Valley, and many of these people are supporters of this organization. I regret that I talked to so many answering machines, but don't hesitate to pick up the phone and give us a call back. We truly do appreciate your feedback and

ideas. Please take time to renew your support for our work of building and sustaining community together.

In closing, I would like to impart a couple of quotes. Enjoy and stay in touch.

"Our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings."

-John F. Kennedy, speech at The American University, Washington, D.C., June 10, 1963

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one."

-John Lennon

Neighborhood Plans.... and Moving Mountains

By Gwen Sutherland

"Your neighbor's vision is as true for him as your own vision is true for you."

--Miguel deUnamuo

"Let the oleanders grow, I can't see the mountain any more," my mother proclaimed when a shopping mall was built blocking her view of Camelback Mountain. Yet when the houses began to creep up the mountainside, she and her neighbors rallied to save the mountain. And to this day the mountain sits surrounded by the city, a stunning natural monument to the legacy of neighbors with a common vision.

Here in the Flathead, we live in a valley of many such mountains and the opportunity to leave our legacy awaits us. As always there will be challenges that emerge along the way. Building neighborhoods and retaining special places takes time, energy, letting go and holding fast and allowing the new wisdom to blend with tradition.

Like Camelback Mountain, none of the 17 current neighborhood plans within Flathead County came into existence without a Herculean effort on the part of the residents. These neighborhood plans were and continue to be a community vision, born of a collective definition of values that the community chose to protect.

The stories of these neighborhood plans are inspiring. On June 8, 2006, at a Flathead Neighborhood Network workshop in Kalispell, representatives from four of the Flathead's neighborhood plan areas shared their personal experiences in creating their neighborhood plans. What follows are excerpts from their personal recollection at this workshop. A common thread in these stories of process and product are the identification of common values and the tenacity of a group of stakeholders who may have begun their journey as strangers but ended up as neighborhood heroes.

LaBrant/Lindsey

Philip Crissman from the LaBrant/Lindsey neighborhood bordering Bigfork and Creston feels that the neighborhood planning process is "the purest form of democracy in action." The LaBrant/Lindsey plan, begun in 1996, took two years to come to fruition and encompasses 4000 acres of mainly remote, forested land and 200 property owners. Faced with rapid growth issues, concerned residents met at public meetings over the course of two years. At each meeting there were area experts discussing pertinent questions. Everyone's comments were validated and posted via newsletters. Eventually a steering committee was formed which led to a survey of property owners. With land use and protection of property values as the most significant value emerging, an amazing 92% of the property owners responded. As Philip said, "From there, we had our

marching orders."

At that time, there was some support available from the county. An 8-page draft plan was created and sent to each resident with a ballot. The response was overwhelming with an 89% approval for the plan. From there, it went to the County Commissioners who needed zoning to go along with the plan. This required "work and patience to stay with it until consensus was reached." Without a neighborhood plan, Philip feels that there would be a huge sign on our county that reads, "Come and get it, no one will stop you!"



Somers

Conversely, **Katherine Maxwell** from Somers candidly reported a long struggle with the formation of their plan. "It was pretty frustrating for us. We had one year of well-attended, contentious meetings. There were people from outside of town who attended and were against planning." Planning was equated with zoning which was equated with people being told what to do.

Eventually, however, with the help of a land use consultant, a plan was devised that included the original Somers town site and extended to Highway 82. The plan was passed by a small majority, and presented to the Planning Board who sent it to the County Commissioners for a vote. On Christmas Eve of 1996, much to the disappointment of those who had stayed the course to create this plan, two county commissioners voted to not accept the plan. Gone in one brief moment was the product of countless hours of work by residents and some \$31,000 in county funded planning consultants. Residents of Somers felt that "the democratic process had been ignored." It took seven years to develop the will to try again. This time, the geographic area for the plan was limited to the Somers town site only.

Reinvigorated, the Somers planning group

incorporated as a non-profit and divided into writing groups. Using the Helena Flats Plan as an example and a basic template from the planning office, they resurrected parts of their old 1996 document and hired a planner to assist with land use designations. The Somers plan is now well on its way toward completion, and has provided the knowledge to help the community address recent development proposals that they felt would have negative impacts on a small community like Somers. Once the new growth policy has been adopted, they hope to once again submit their plan for commissioner approval.

West Valley

The West Valley has had planning and zoning since 1976; originally created to stop a mobile home park, but it took a recent spark to bring people together again. That spark was a proposal for a convenience store in 1995. Using the West Valley School District as its new boundaries, the residents began to meet once again to put in place a new plan. Lots of people with different points of view attended. "Compromise was the key," commented **Kim Davis**. "It was difficult to keep the community involved for 18 months. We met every month and eventually every week."

The West Valley Neighborhood Plan addressed open space, clean air, water, and even soil quality. Agricultural uses were promoted and the location and design of any future neighborhood convenience store was defined in detail. A professional planner was contracted to improve the writing of the document. Kim feels the buy in comes from the people who live in a place. "That's why most people get involved." West Valley residents have begun once again to revisit their plan. In February of 2005, in response to the Kalispell annexation process which is biting off much of the former agricultural lands for residential development in the West Valley geographical area, they agreed it was time to revise the plan.

Bigfork

Bigfork's approach to neighborhood planning was "homegrown," according to **Doug Averill**. This 90-square mile area was, and still is experiencing escalating growth and development since the early 90s. Anticipating lots of resistance from the older residents, a small committee of property owners solicited the advice of "10 old timers--one per 10 square miles. We asked them to talk to their neighbors and come back and let us know what they found out." What Averill and his group learned was that the very people who were most opposed to creating a neighborhood plan quickly became the best supporters.

To determine the needs and values of the Bigfork area, the original group continued the planning process with a survey that was sent to 2600 property owners,

continued on page 5

Neighborhood Plans from page 4

resulting in a substantial positive return and only one letter of opposition. Doug Averill claims that no one knows better than those who live in a place. "This process got people talking who wouldn't normally talk to each other." Bigfork did proceed with a plan



that was adopted in 1993 and specified many land use and zoning criteria. "A neighborhood plan can be more specific than a County Growth Policy. We even addressed issues like bike paths, building design, lighting and industrial,

commercial, and residential designations." As this newsletter reaches your eyes, Bigfork has updated their plan to be compliant with the new draft County Growth Policy and is currently in the process of public comment and revisions to its new 2006 Bigfork Neighborhood Plan.

Neighborhood plans are a lot about moving mountains and finding common ground. When my mom lost "her" mountain, she found solace in preserving it for the community—as a legacy and a memory. For those who are in the process or those who have not yet begun, these stories provide important guidance on preserving the best of neighborhoods for the future. All neighborhood plans share certain qualities of defining growth, establishing criteria for land uses and putting on paper, owner by owner, a shared vision for their neighborhood. Like mountains though, they are difficult—yes, worthwhile—definitely yes, and easy—certainly not. So enjoy the adventure.

Leadership Needed, Apply Now

.....Five Openings will be Available on the Flathead County Planning Board

By Gwen Sutherland

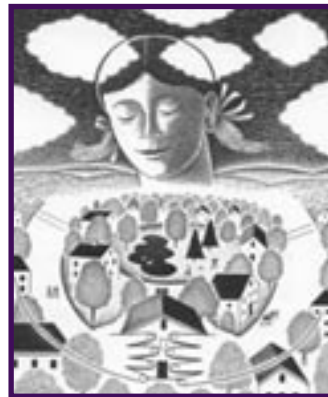
Apply now for an extraordinary opportunity to help guide growth! The qualified applicant will participate in reviewing county development applications, ensuring their consistency with current planning documents and providing recommendations to the County Commissioners. Planning Board members will also assist in revising policies. The board, for example, is currently in the midst of reviewing the draft County Growth Policy. In the near future, they will be doing the same with the subdivision regulations.

Five seats on the Flathead County Planning Board are open. Applications are due November 13th and positions will be filled by the end of this year. In representing the surrounding neighborhoods in the greater Flathead community, a Planning Board member should demonstrate thoughtful consideration to public comment, and ensure that decisions are based on clear findings of fact. Much can be learned in this process while fulfilling a civic responsibility to be a good steward of this remarkable place—the Flathead Valley. Wednesday evening meetings typically last from two to four hours and occur two to three times per month. The public is invited to attend and comment.

In order to apply for a County Planning Board position, one must be a resident of Flathead County and reside outside of the planning and zoning limits

of Kalispell, Whitefish, and Columbia Falls. The application should consist of a letter of interest listing general information, as well as relevant personal and professional qualifications. The applicant should also give information as to why he or she has interest in serving in this position. Include name, mailing address, and daytime telephone number. A resume is not necessary or required.

Four of the open positions have a two year term beginning January 1, 2007, through December 31, 2008. One position is a one year term for a representative of the Flathead Conservation District. It also begins in January of 2007, but expires in December of that year. Letters of interest may be mailed, faxed, or emailed to: Mary Sevier at the Flathead County Planning Office, 1035 First Avenue West, Kalispell, MT 59901. The fax number is (406) 751-8210. The web address is <http://www.co.flathead.mt.us/fcpz/agendas.html>. The deadline for applications is November 13, 2006. After receiving the applications, Ms. Sevier will forward them to the Flathead County Commissioners for review and appointment.



Please consider this extraordinary opportunity to guide positive growth in the Flathead Valley. Your knowledge is a powerful tool to help the Flathead balance the development that is and will occur while retaining the purity of the Valley's unique attributes.

Perspective continued from page 1

but one Whitefish appears ready to tackle with needed requirements to see that it is provided as the town grows. Plans for A Trail Runs Through It (a master plan for a recreational loop trail around Whitefish Lake, which will connect state conservation lands, USFS trails and the City of Whitefish bicycle trails) continued to move forward with broad community and collaborative city and state support.

Columbia Falls balked at one of the first major proposals it faced following its adoption of a new growth policy earlier in the year. The proposal, at the corner of US Highway 2 and State Highway 40, was so lacking in detail that it had rumors flying. Some suggested, but no one really knew, that the 60-acre commercial portion of the mixed use development was really an attempt slip in a super Wal-Mart or a new mall while folks were distracted by summer in the Flathead. In the end, the planning board told the developer they must have many more details before considering development for the special property that forms the gateway entrance of Columbia

Falls. And finally, neighbors working on the River Road Neighborhood Plan in Columbia Falls for the area just west of the Flathead River, lost momentum with the lack of planning office staff to assist in a plan they had hoped to have drafted by August. They are renewing their efforts this fall with the promise of planning staff help.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) asked for reconsideration of which part of the **Highway 93 Bypass** it should build first. We helped folks comment with a mailing and petitions in which well over 300 folks took part. MDOT listened to this strong showing of public concerns and that of the Kalispell City Council and County Commissioners. They recently announced the Kalispell Bypass will begin at the south.

Somers, Kila, and Marion all saw multiple subdivision applications that proposed to double to quadruple their rural populations. Residents of these neighborhoods turned out in record numbers to raise important issues about these proposals and a number were appropriately conditioned, sent back for additional study, or recommended for denial. The **East Valley residents**, also seeing an escalation of subdivision applications,

decided that it was time to begin discussions about just how they should grow. They launched an ambitious effort to survey their neighbors and begin a process towards creating a neighborhood plan for their area.

West Valley and Helena Flats neighborhoods continue to document and study issues as well as search for solutions to the appropriateness of gravel pits in their neighborhoods. Asking the county to enforce the conditions they place on developments has been a major concern.

And finally, **Bigfork** showed its tenacity for neighborhood planning by completing extensive research for a new draft of its neighborhood plan that was recently released and is now ready to go through a final community review process.

For each of these neighborhood issues and more, we helped neighbors get involved and identify issues and resources needed to effectively participate. It has been a blur of a busy summer and fall indeed. Yet, we are heartened to report that we are seeing more and more folks committing to get involved and have a voice in their neighborhoods. That's great news for our valley's future!

Listen to continued from page 1

government representatives, we become numb, frozen, and callous in the false belief that we will never be heard and that big money and special interests are the only ones who can crawl into the ear of government officials.

Apathy is by far a greater threat to our future than is big money.

The fact that “big money” talks is a sad reality in a time when the profits to be made by subdividing are many times greater than those to be had in the stock market or other business ventures, making the Flathead an invitation to short-term greed over long-term public good. It means that lawyers and well-paid consultants attend more public hearings and workshops than the public at large these days and that they are constantly tugging on the sleeve of local government, if not crawling into its ear to be heard.

In many ways, however, this scenario described above, is not new. Rather it is one that has repeated itself throughout our history and is now, and will be, a constant test of our willingness to exercise the power of the people in a democratic society. Apathy is by far a greater threat to our future than is big money. Thus it bears repeating that in a democracy “the buck” stops with you and me—making us each potential honorees in the democratic equivalent of the *Guinness Book of World Records!*

In this issue of the “Citizens News,” we bring you the opportunity to learn more about those running for local offices and implore you to take time to get informed and vote. We also share the following case examples of three important land use decisions and highlight the important ways you can and must be informed, involved, and heard to keep democracy alive and well in the Flathead.

The Glacier Mall—Did the County Listen?

Fortunately, public hearings before the planning board are more civil these days as planning board members who rudely ridiculed and mocked the public in the recent past have been replaced with representatives who now appropriately show the public respect and thank them for their comments. But does this mean the public is now being heard? Yes and no.

While the planning board may or may not be swayed by public testimony, the evidence of this should always be clearly visible in the findings of fact that the board adopts to justify their decision. For example, in the county’s decision to approve the Glacier Mall proposal north of Kalispell in 2003 almost 5000 people commented—far more than on any other land use issue

ever and a large number did so with detailed written comments. A majority of those commenting opposed the mall plan amendment for a variety of reasons. Still, even though a majority of those commenting opposed the mall, land use decisions are not and should not be based on how many folks turn out for a public hearing. Rather the courts have held that such decisions should be based on the issues raised and their compliance with the relevant planning documents and laws governing such decisions. So did county government listen?

The Supreme Court said no—the record failed to show if the commissioners had considered all issues raised by the public. The record or findings of fact consisted of a planning office staff report—written prior to the public hearing—and the developer’s application which the County Commissioners attached to their final decision. Neither of these documents contained consideration of new issues raised by the public, and no consideration was documented of new evidence that the public presented contradicting conclusions drawn in the staff report or the developer’s application. The Montana Supreme Court found that the record of decision or findings adopted by the county were so inadequate that the court could not evaluate if the county had met the constitutional requirement for meaningful public participation or compliance with the county’s growth policy as required by state law. They sent the case back to the district court.

In their decision the Supreme Court said, “The District Court must evaluate whether the Board [County Commissioners] satisfied this obligation by requiring the Board to demonstrate what issues, if any, were raised through the public comment process that were

not addressed by the Planning Office’s report. The Board must further demonstrate to the District Court that it evaluated such issues with the requirements of the Growth Policy.” This court hearing is now scheduled for November 6th. At the heart of the case is the question: Does public comment matter and just who does local government listen to when it makes land use decisions?

The Glacier Mall Version Two—Did the City Listen?

Kalispell is growing at an astounding rate these days. New commercial growth north of the city is still kicking up dust with new stores, theaters, hotels and office space under construction and more building pads

yet unclaimed for development to come. Residential growth is racing along as well. Yet even before the doors are open on these new stores and demand for more is given consideration, the Kalispell Planning Board began to review its current growth policy to assess what if any changes might be needed to guide and address additional growth.

Developers had been coming in for sometime, floating project ideas for virtual new city-size residential developments and once again, the Glacier Mall. To their credit the planning board wanted to be proactive in their planning. They held hearings and recommended to the city council that the city amend its growth policy to the north to allow for additional future growth and annexation north of West Reserve Drive to include a new town-centered nucleus of limited commercial (as opposed to highway-oriented strip commercial) surrounded by mixed uses of high density residential-office, surrounded by an outer ring of lower density housing.

They sent their recommendation on to the city council who heard from some residents who supported this plan, as well as significantly more—some three hundred residents—who urged the city to slow down and see if there was indeed need for this scale of commercial expansion. The public asked for studies and a better defined plan. Additional issues were raised about the costs of additional city staff needed to provide

services to this area and the impacts this and additional infrastructure costs would have for all city taxpayers. The need for standards to ensure quality development, parks, affordable housing, traffic mitigation, and buffers between existing and new uses and the potential for a

transfer development rights program were all raised.

The council thanked the public and closed the public hearing. They then, with some members of the council using a letter submitted by the developer’s attorney for the Glacier Mall project as a virtual script, began to radically change the proposed amendment the public had been asked to consider. In rapid fire order, they agreed to remove any requirement for town-centered development, opening the door to more strip commercial development on Highway 93 North. They boosted the allowable commercial from 25% of the town-centered 600 acre track to 75%. They removed the term-limited commercial noting that this area would be appropriate for any super-sized box store as would the long strip of land included

continued on page 7



Listen to continued from page 6

along US Highway 2 North and in an area along West Reserve that is near the new high school. As a token of goodwill to the public comment, the council added a goal to consider transfer development rights.

So was the public heard? Many felt not. Two Kalispell women felt strongly enough that they filed a referendum to repeal the city's decision and put it to a vote of the people. They have until late December to gather the signatures of 15% of the registered voters in the city's planning area that will be needed to be able to place this issue on the ballot later in the year. If they collect the required signatures, the amendment the city passed goes on the ballot. It's then up to the registered voters to decide if they felt their elected representatives listened and took proper action.

These two women and others who have now joined them call themselves Town Champions and their slogan is "Preserving the Spirit of Kalispell." Visit their web site for information at www.townchampions.com. These women also filed an initiative to place on the ballot—a new amendment that would replace the amendment the referendum repeals. This initiative includes the provisions they felt the city should have adopted originally to ensure the quality of growth needed to preserve the spirit of Kalispell and to limit the costs to taxpayers.

The point here is that the under the Montana Constitution the public can seek to have their voice heard two ways beyond the traditional public hearing process and beyond voting for those running for office. These two ways are by using the referendum process to repeal a decision of local government and by using the initiative process to move forward to a vote an idea that they believe will make their city, county, or state a better place.

In closing, however, it's important to note two things. One, it is a lot of work to gather signatures to put an issue on the ballot appropriately making this a tool for issues of significant importance. And secondly, it is

important to do your homework and carefully consider just what a proposed ballot measure really calls for and if you believe it is an important issue on which to vote. Increasingly, as we have seen this election season, out-of-state money is being used to hire out-of-state signature gatherers to get signatures for ballot measures written by out-of-state interests and co-opting the original intent of giving a direct voice to local citizens.

Rewriting the County Growth Policy—Is the County Planning Board Listening?

The recipe for writing a County Growth Policy is fairly standard. Ask the public what special values and characteristic of the county do they want the growth policy to secure for the future. Ideally, also, give the public some ideas and choices on just how this might be achieved and trade-offs they may be asked to consider. Take this feedback and draft a plan—in this case the county planning staff wrote the draft—and hold a second set of hearings to ask the public if you captured the public's vision correctly and if there is support for tools and implementation strategies identified to achieve this vision. Then by state law the County Planning Board—nine unpaid county residents appointed by the county commissioners to serve on the planning board—is asked to review the public comments and to make final revisions to the growth policy before sending it on to the County Commissioners for their final consideration. Under state law the commissioners may revise and adopt the growth policy, reject the growth policy, or put it to a vote of county residents.

For the sake of space and the fact this article can't get much longer, let's focus here on the question:

Did the planning board listen to public on the issue of neighborhood plans? The draft growth policy, written by the planning staff, strongly supported neighborhood plans. Public comment on this aspect of the draft basically concluded that the planning staff had gotten this part of the policy right, though the public asked for a few revisions here and there, like locally elected advisory boards and adequate time and support for revising their plans after the adoption of the new

growth policy.

A majority of the planning board, however, made it clear from the start of their review process that they personally saw neighborhood plans as a process run amuck that needed to be controlled. Some board members complained that neighborhood plans were really just a form of "exclusionary zoning" that discouraged "affordable housing" in that neighborhood plans could exclude developments of small lots within

their plan areas. No evidence, however, was produced to show that rural areas were appropriate locations for small lot "affordable housing" projects given the

lack and cost of county services in these areas as well as transportation costs and the distance from employment center for those needing affordable housing and jobs. No evidence was sited to demonstrate that the almost rampant unrestricted development of small lots in unzoned areas of the county not covered by neighborhood plans were in any way currently producing housing meeting the affordable housing needs of the county either.

Large lots are common in the rural and agricultural or forested areas of the county, but it's no secret that increasing development pressures have

many developers looking for property to subdivide therefore making a quick profit. Most neighborhood plan areas do call for large lots as appropriate given their rural nature, distance from services, and other issues such as sensitive wildlife habitat areas, wildland fire interface hazard issues and the desire to retain the rural character of their neighborhoods and the capacity of its working lands.

A second issue a majority of the planning board members raised was their belief that neighborhood plans unfairly empower smaller lot owners, more numerous in voting power, to essentially dictate what the fewer owners of significantly larger tracks of lands included within a neighborhood plan could do with their land. To rein in this perceived abuse, the planning board has rewritten the growth policy section on neighborhood plans to require that 60% of the landowners represented and 50% of the acreage represented must sign a petition, certified by the clerk and recorder's office, agreeing to even sit down and talk about creating a neighborhood plan.

Assuming any neighborhood is able to make it past the first barrier of even talking, this 60% and 50% buy-in process must be repeated again at the end of the planning process before the plan can be considered for adoption by county government. And to close the door on the neighborhood planning potential even tighter, the planning board has also inserted a requirement that allows 40% of the landowners or landowners of 50% of the acreage to sign a petition that would declare the neighborhood plan proposed null and void at the end of the drafting process!



The irony here is that while the planning board paints the large land owners as the victim of the collective desires of the small landowners in the neighborhood planning process, it is with increasing frequency that large land owners are bringing forward massive subdivisions for which they have no requirements to seek "certified" petitions of support from their neighbors before they submit an application, and their neighbors have no 40% right of protest.

Citizens' Annual Candidate Survey

Citizens News sent a series of questions to the two candidates running for County Commissioner. These questions all focus on the candidates' positions on land use planning as a tool to address the rapid growth we are experiencing. Candidates were limited to 900 words total and were encouraged to include a photograph. All candidates were advised that the answers they submitted would be printed verbatim with

no edits or corrections by us. If comments exceeded the 900 word limit, they were told we reserved the right to shorten text. Only one candidate exceeded the 900 word limit.

We hope that the readers of Citizens News find this public service valuable in choosing our next County Commissioner.

Questions for County Commissioner Candidates

1. **Accountability:** Identify some of the ways that you will improve public participation in decisions of local government and ensure that public comment is not merely heard, but is meaningfully considered? How will you take the perception (or reality) of "backroom politics and deal making" out of the planning process?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
2. **Leadership:** What skills and qualities will you bring to the position of County Commissioner that you feel are superior to those of your opponent?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
3. **City-County Planning:** What will you do to improve the relationships between the county and three cities, and to encourage the county and cities to plan together for the infrastructure to service future growth most efficiently and to guide growth where it can be serviced most efficiently? Please specifically address your willingness to reestablish a joint planning jurisdiction with Kalispell. Kalispell has also offered to work with the county on establishing a joint Transfer of Development Rights program. Would you make this a priority to explore this potential during your term in office?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
4. **Neighborhood Plans:** Please describe the role that you feel neighborhood plans should play in the planning process in Flathead County. Please describe your level of support for neighborhood plans and any reservations you have about them.
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
5. **Growth Policy:** Please share with us some of your views on the draft County Growth Policy. What will be your top three priorities if elected to ensure that we have the a growth policy with planning guidelines and tools in place to address the rapid growth we are experiencing and the ever-increasing taxes we pay for services?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
6. Please indicate your support for the following policies to guide growth and control costs of service and related taxes:
 - **Water Quality:** Establish clear criteria to direct growth away from shallow aquifers, aquifer recharge areas, areas of limited ground water and flood plains.
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Growth Policy Amendments:** The draft growth policy establishes criteria for how and when the county growth policy can be amended. Do you support these criteria?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Wildlife:** Given that in addition to public lands, private lands in the county provide important winter range and other critical wildlife habitat, do you think the County Growth Policy should include policies to direct growth away from these areas, or limit the permitted density?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **TDR's:** Do you support the inclusion of a policy to allow for the establishment of a voluntary Transfer Development Rights (TDR) program in the County Growth Policy?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Open Space Bond:** Would you as commissioner support placing a ballot option for an open space or working lands bond to the voters of the county?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Affordable Housing:** As wages are linked to the ability to afford housing, do you support the minimum wage initiative that will be on the November ballot?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Initiative 154:** Do you support the intent of Initiative 154 which would allow property owners to insist on payment from the government if they believe a government action lowered their property values?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Commercial Growth:** Do you support requiring fiscal impact studies to establish potential needs for and the impacts of adding significant new commercial development as part of the application review process?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Traffic:** Do you support putting in place standards to insure that adequate roads and pedestrian facilities are in place concurrent with new development?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Impact Fees:** Do you support the adoption of county impact fees for roads, fire, and police?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Parks:** Do you support the adoption of county impact fees for increasing county parks and facilities?
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support
 - **Predictability:** The current draft defers many policy defers many, many policy decisions to some unknown time in the future by using words like "identify" and "develop." Given the rapid growth pressures the Flathead is facing do you support including more immediate and clear policy direction in the growth policy.
Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates



Mark Crowley (D)

1. Accountability.

Currently the public involvement process simply entails notifying adjacent landowners within 150 feet and running a legal notice in the paper. This current policy of listing little more than the legal description is not very helpful to most residents. I support making changes to local processes that would require the County Planning Office to publish a

clear map with the current legal notice that appears in the paper. This would allow people to scan the legal notices and recognize their neighborhood, or an area they care about, and see that something is happening there. Trying to get that information from a section-township-range description is next to impossible. Another simple policy would be to maintain a county-wide map at the planning office that would allow interested parties to see where activity is taking place. Put a pin on the map that would tell you what has been applied for and when it is being heard.

I have a strong record of working with and involving the public. People may not always like what I have to say, but none can say that I've been anything less than honest with them.

2. Leadership.

Leadership is about having the difficult conversations and sharing your vision with others. I have a vision for more personal and civic responsibility. I would like to challenge the people of the valley to bring to the Commission their best projects. Leaders enable others to do their best by listening to them and empowering them to be their best. Sometimes leaders have to ask tough questions of themselves and their organizations and point out where we can do better. I have a history of asking those tough questions. I consistently ask how we can improve proposals that come into the City for review. When regulations get in the way of improved design, I go to bat for the applicants. Often times, better ways of developing a site come out through these discussions.

I have a history of working for organizations I feel strongly about and have been entrusted with leadership roles in many of them. My opponent's leadership history is marked with a number of poor decisions. As chairman of the County Solid Waste Board, he oversaw the illegal expansion of the landfill. This was done in full knowledge of the pending requirements that were put in place to protect our groundwater. Ultimately, he risked our water quality to save some money. In the end, it cost the County hundreds of thousands of dollars and created a lot of unnecessary tension. That is not the kind of leadership we are in need of right now.

3. City-County Planning

While I support the ability of Whitefish and Columbia Falls to plan areas

adjacent to their city limits, I do have concerns about the county property owners who are subject to a council that they cannot elect. That being said, I think the Councils of those two cities have done a commendable job listening to the community. That is not always easy and seldom do all parties leave feeling entirely satisfied. It is important to keep open the lines of communication, especially when crucial decisions are being made.

In Kalispell, the same agreement that was used in the other two cities is not feasible. In Kalispell, the Evergreen Water and Sewer District affects the city's ability to grow in that direction. Kalispell is bounded by four volunteer fire districts: South Kalispell, Smith Valley, West Valley and Evergreen (in Whitefish and Columbia Falls the volunteer district entirely surrounds the city and the same crews and equipment respond).

My working relationship with all four local governments in the valley gives me a real head start over my opponent. I am more familiar with their circumstances and needs.

4. Neighborhood Plans.

I'm a fan of neighborhood plans. You can bet that if you don't plan your neighborhood, some out of state developer would be happy to. And you may not be happy with it. Owners, residents and investors alike need predictability, as well as flexibility and options. Neighborhood plans are not easy to establish or agree on. At the outset, owners may not know if they want to be included or not. But by investing the time and energy up front, greater stability can be enjoyed by the property owners and greater predictability can be enjoyed by the development community. This really protects everybody.

If neighborhood plans need to be accepted by a majority or supermajority of owners and ownership, that standard needs to apply to developer-driven plan amendments as well.

5. Growth Policy

Our growth policy needs to provide clearer direction. By using stronger language, we can provide greater predictability to the development community. The county continues to entertain proposals that have not yet addressed even the most basic requirements. These should be sorted out at the staff level and save the time of the planning board by forwarding complete proposals to them.

Some of my first priorities include a transportation plan, a capital improvements plan and re-establishing the planning relationship around Kalispell. The County should have participated with Kalispell and MDT as they prepare a transportation plan for the city and its immediate environs. The county needs to be pro-active and missed a great opportunity to leverage funds with other agencies. A capital improvements plan would help to establish needs in the near and long term. Again, this is going to give us greater opportunity to leverage funds and partner with others.

6. Please indicate your support for the following policies to guide growth and control costs of service and related taxes. (see table on page 11)

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates from page 9



Dale Lauman (R)

1. Accountability:

I have always stated I would have an open door policy and listen to all citizens of our County. I would stand by that commitment. Public comments and concerns are always important in the decision making process in our County. Public hearings and meetings must allow the citizens to express their views and concerns. I would always encourage the public to participate in discussions concerning our County.

Back room policies and deal making has no place in County Government. I would not participate or be a part of such activity. All County business must be conducted in public.

I have no special interest agenda or belong to any such organization. I study and make my decisions based on the law, regulations and common sense. I am dedicated to serving Flathead County and our taxpayers.

2. Leadership:

My values of Honesty, Credibility, Reliability and Work Ethic would be a great asset as a County Commissioner. These values have guided me throughout my life and always will.

I would bring extensive experience in the management of a large budget. I managed a budget for the United States Postal Service in excess of 35 million dollars. Our County has approved a 60 plus million dollar budget for the current year.

I have always managed an "open door policy" with employees and the public. The citizens of our County must always have access to the individuals who affect their lives. Public officials must listen and respond to the taxpayers.

I analyze and study all sides of an issue before making a right final decision. A County Commissioner must always accept the responsibility for their actions and never abuse the authority of the office.

I have demonstrated through education and experience a thorough understanding of the principles of Administration, Management, Budget and Organization.

3. City-County Planning:

I would encourage a better understanding and improved relations and cooperation between the Cities and County. We must develop better communication between the Cities and County to discuss our common problems and goals. Laws, Rules and Policies from both County and City have an effect on each other. City residents are also County residents and pay taxes to support both City and County Government. It only makes good sense that we work together for the benefit of all citizens of the County. Government agencies must serve the needs of our citizens.

I would like to explore and study the potential of establishing a joint transfer of Development Rights Program.

The re-establish of a joint planning jurisdiction with Kalispell would need to address the needs of both City and County for the benefit of all citizens.

4. Neighborhood Plans:

I support areas of the County that may organize and develop a Neighborhood Plan that is compatible to the area and approved by the people involved. This type of planning must involve the residents, and their input must be included in the plan. The Neighborhood Plan would provide residents of the area to have first review of proposed development. This process could resolve some of the property owners' conflicts.

County Commissioner's need to provide guidance as to how the Neighborhood Plans will be a part of the planning process and Growth Policy.

I would support the election of Board Members to Neighborhood Advisory Boards rather than appointed by the County Commissioner's. The only reservation I would have is involvement by the people affected. Are they in agreement of the plan? People must realize the potential impact this could have on their property.

5. Growth Policy.

The draft Growth Policy is just the beginning of the planning process for our future. We should adopt and proceed to complete the policy with public input. The policy must also contain detailed maps so people can understand the impact on their property. We must always protect private property rights. We must complete the policy as soon as possible for the benefit of our citizens.

The Planning Department and Planning Board will need the support of the County Commissioner's to continue work on the Growth Policy.

We must develop a basic understanding between the County Commissioner's, Planning Department and Planning Board to determine and set goals for the future growth of Flathead County.

6. Please indicate your support for the following policies to guide growth and control costs of service and related taxes. (see table on page 11)

HEY!

There are some pretty big elections happening November 7. Do you still need to register to vote? Have you moved since the last election? If so, here are some options. A voter may register at the Courthouse and either file an absentee ballot, or choose to vote on Election Day at the Courthouse. Or a voter may choose to register and vote at the Courthouse on Election Day. If voting absentee, you have until noon on the day before the election to get your information in. Polling hours are from 7a.m. to 8p.m. To download an absentee ballot, visit Flathead County's website at <http://www.co.flathead.mt.us/electn/index.html>, or phone the Elections Department at 758-5535. If you would like to look at a sample ballot, visit <http://www.co.flathead.mt.us/electn/sample%20ballot.pdf>. One last website to look at that will give you information on ballot initiatives and amendments: <http://sos.mt.gov/ELB/archives/2006/VIP/VIP2006.pdf>.

Answers from County Commissioner Candidates from page10

Question #6 was a multi-part question where the candidates were asked to rate the questions with the following numerical values:

Support 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Do Not Support

Here are the questions and how they responded:

6. Please indicate your support for the following policies to guide growth and control costs of service and related taxes:

	Mark Crowley	Dale Lauman
Water Quality: Establish clear criteria to direct growth away from shallow aquifers, aquifer recharge areas, areas of limited ground water and flood plains..	1	2
Growth Policy Amendments: The draft growth policy establishes criteria for how and when the County Growth Policy can be amended. Do you support these criteria?	3	3
Wildlife: Given that in addition to public lands, private lands in the county provide important winter range and other critical wildlife habitat, do you think the County Growth Policy should include policies to direct growth away from these areas, or limit the permitted density?.	2	2
TDR's: Do you support the inclusion of a policy to allow for the establishment of a voluntary Transfer Development Rights (TDR) program in the County Growth Policy?	1	2
Open Space Bond: Would you as Commissioner support placing a ballot option for an open space or working lands bond to the voters of the county?	1	2
Affordable Housing: As wages are linked to the ability to afford housing, do you support the minimum wage initiative that will be on the November ballot?	1	3
Initiative 154: Do you support the intent of Initiative 154 which would allow property owners to insist on payment from the government if they believe a government action lowered their property values?	5	2
Commercial Growth: Do you support requiring fiscal impact studies to establish potential needs for and the impacts of adding significant new commercial development as part of the application review process?	3	2
Traffic: Do you support putting in place standards to insure that adequate roads and pedestrian facilities are in place concurrent with new development?	3	1
Impact Fees: Do you support the adoption of county impact fees for roads, fire, and police?	1	2
Parks: Do you support the adoption of county impact fees for increasing county parks and facilities?	1	3
Predictability: The current draft defers many policy decisions to some unknown time in the future by using words like "identify" and "develop." Given the rapid growth pressures the Flathead is facing do you support including more immediate and clear policy direction in the growth policy?	2	1

Questions for State Senate and House Candidates

1. City-County Planning: Would you support legislation creating incentives for counties and cities to plan together for the infrastructure to service future growth most efficiently and to guide growth where it can be serviced most efficiently? Why or Why not?

2. Development Standards: Would you support a law that engages citizens from all walks of life with their communities and counties in a planning process to create predictable standards for development that will protect Montanans' property rights, property values, water quality, senior water rights, wildlife, agriculture, and the ability to service future growth efficiently? Do you feel this is a necessary step to make our current planning laws more effective and fair or do you feel our current laws are adequate?

3. Affordable Housing: Would you support legislation that would help ensure that all Montanans can afford to buy a home in their communities?

What ideas do you have on this topic? As wages are linked to the ability to afford housing, do you support the minimum wage initiative that will be on the November ballot?

4. Streamside Setbacks: Would you support legislation that would keep development from locating right next to our rivers and streams in order to protect people and property from the threat of floods? What ideas do you have on this topic?

5. Initiative 154: As we go to press, it is not known if Initiative 154 will be approved for voting on at the November elections. Initiative 154 would allow property owners to insist on payment from the government if they believe a government action lowered their property values. Would you support the intent of Initiative 154 now or in the future? Why or why not?

Answers from State Senate Candidates



Greg Barkus (R)
State Senate District 4

1. City-County Planning: I support planning and zoning in all Montana communities. Obviously different communities have different needs. That begs the question. "Should Flathead County Residents bear the costs of growth and planning in Bozeman and Ekalaka, and vice versa, should residents of Shelby or Billings support the costs and funding of Planning and Zoning in Flathead County? I believe the state

should play an indirect role in supporting the needs of cities counties in their development needs but direct planning needs to start locally. I don't know what kind of incentives you might be referring to and I would consider them if it bettered the over-all State.

2. Development Standards: For the most part, I feel that current laws are adequate in supporting Development Standards. Protection of Montanan's Property Rights, Values, Water, Wildlife and ways of life are extremely important and I understand that it works both ways. We must keep a person's property rights in mind as we make these important decisions. I believe planning is very important in this regard and support extensive planning in those areas requiring or potentially requiring it but it must be done with private property rights in mind and not with a "Stop Growth at all Costs" attitude.

3. Affordable Housing: I can't imagine any legislation that would "ensure all Montanans be able afford to buy a home in their communities" and if it appeared, I fear the fiscal impact would be too large to support. We need to support private development of affordable housing thru the use of tax incentives such as tax credits. Economics 101 says "Price, Supply and Demand" are interrelated and dependent upon each other. Wages are a "Price" of labor. If you raise the price of something, unless supply goes up, demand goes down and in this case, Unemployment. There are many "Help

Wanted" signs in the valley and raising the minimum wage might reduce that, but it will lower the overall employment structure. I oppose the increase in minimum wage.

4. Streamside Setbacks: I do not believe that any streamside setback is a protective measure against floods, it is meant to stifle development. I believe that environmental protections such as restrictions on septic systems, riparian destruction, fertilization and chemicals, and other forms of activities that affect the quality of the water are bigger issues that need to be monitored and regulated if necessary.

5. Initiative 154: The initiative will be voted upon, the decision as to whether or not the results will have any affect is up to the courts at this time. I usually do not support any initiatives and do not support this one. It is too open ended in that "any" government action could create a claim. I believe that we can all think of a case where a new government service may have devalued a property value in some way and at some level. I do not support the Kelo decision and believe that the Free Enterprise System has it's opportunities along with it's risks.



Gerry Reckin (D)
State Senate District 4

1. City-County Planning: Yes, I would support legislation creating incentives for unified growth plans. There is no advantage to re-inventing the wheel. A good example of the lack of coordination is the city of Kalispell has a committee studying impact fees and they are making recommendations to the city council. Whitefish is considering the same effort and the County commissioners have put on hold

their effort to form a committee to study the problem. Obviously, it would

continued on page 13

Answers from State Senate Candidates

Reckin continued from page 12

be constructive to work cooperatively to develop uniform standards for the Flathead Valley.

2. Development Standards: As the Flathead continues to grow it becomes increasingly essential that standards be set for all growth and expansion. Without adaptable standards the growth is haphazard and in the long run, more costly and damaging to all of the things we value in the Flathead. Most certainly citizens from all geographic and socio-economic backgrounds must be involved. It appears that current laws are fragmented and need to address the concerns of all citizens.

3. Affordable Housing: I support raising the minimum wage for our struggling Montana workers. The answer to helping Montanans' ability to buy a home is to provide good educational opportunities to get better jobs. We must support our small businesses with tax breaks and encouragement, so that they can pay better wages and provide health insurance to their employees as well as improve their buying power.

4. Streamside Setbacks: Based on sound research and excluding special interest groups, we must have legislation that protects the great assets we have in Montana, which includes our rivers, streams and lakes.

5. Initiative 154: I do not and will not support I-154. This initiative was presented by out-of-state special interests. Montanans must decide their own destiny without out-of-state influence. There are sections in the Declaration of Rights in the Montana Constitution that protect our citizens. Section 18. State subject to suit. The state, counties, cities, towns, and all other local governmental entities shall have no immunity from suit for injury to a person or property. Section 29 Eminent Domain. Private property shall not be taken or damaged for public use without just compensation to the full extent of the loss.

Verdell Jackson (R) State Senate District 5

Candidate chose not to respond.

Rick Smith (D) State Senate District 5

Candidate chose not to respond.

Answers from State Representative Candidates

Dee Brown (R) State Rep. District 3

Candidate chose not to respond.



Doug Cordier (D) State Rep. District 3

1. City-County Planning: It's very important for local governmental jurisdictions to work together on planning issues. In areas of rapid and extensive growth such as the Flathead Valley, a comprehensive planning process must be developed and enforced in order to assure a high quality of life for all residents.

2. Development Standards: Citizen input is crucial on local issues such as planning and development. It's also crucial for citizens and elected officials to constantly review current laws and policy to evaluate effectiveness and adequacy.

3. Affordable Housing: In areas of rapidly rising property and housing values, I do support efforts to provide affordable housing for working families. How have other successful affordable housing programs been

established? Our state needs to research good models and use their concepts to create a Montana model. Minimum wage: Given that the minimum wage has not increased in ten years, it's time to support our lowest wage earners to get them closer to a livable wage.

4. Streamside Setbacks: I do favor setbacks to protect rivers and streams and to reduce the threat of flood damage and danger. Our state would do well by hydrologists and professional planners working in consultation with elected officials to develop best practices standards based on flood plain, soils and water table data.

5. Initiative 154: Must not be passed. This initiative is an attempt to hamstring government and, in effect, void zoning laws, as well as draw the state into untold numbers of claims actions and lawsuits.

Tad Rosenberry (C) State Rep. District 3

Candidate chose not to respond.

Answers from State Representative Candidates

Erik Jerde (R) (no photo available)

State Rep. District 4

- 1. City-County Planning:** Could you be more specific?
- 2. Development Standards:** Could you be more specific?
- 3. Affordable Housing:** NO.
- 4. Streamside Setbacks:** NO. Laissez-Faire capitalism.
- 5. Initiative 154:** Yes. All property other than government facilities should be privately owned.



Mike Jopek (D) State Rep. District 4

1. City-County Planning: Montana is on the right tract. As a result of good fiscal policy Montana has a \$900 million budget surplus. It's a good time to lower Montana homeowners' property taxes.

Growth requires local homeowners to pay for infrastructure needs, like roads, sidewalks, trails, sewer and water. Whitefish is the fastest growing city in Montana and with this amount of

growth; homeowners notice their property tax going through the roof. We need to cap property tax growth on primary residents based upon income, age, and inflation.

During the 2005 Session, we enabled impact fees, which places the burden of paying for infrastructure needs on developers. This historic legislation also allows local government to defer these fees or accept land in lieu for housing which is affordable to workers.

Collaborative planning is the best approach. This was the same tact that we undertook to assure that the public lands around Whitefish are not sold for development. We have more work to do but my Republican opponent from Kalispell favors privatizing public lands. This is a huge mistake.

2. Development Standards: Predictability is a great step toward assuring that neighbors and developers can anticipate the need for approval. Development standards can price first time homeowners out of the market. City folks sometimes struggle to understand rural issues and vice versa. Roads, sidewalks and other infrastructure should occur at time of construction but homeowners should be able to build a home which they can afford.

3. Affordable Housing: We can increase the affordable inventory of smaller homes for workers and businesses by working with developers via the planning process. Local governments can use the 2005 Impact Fee Legislation to create a tool box of incentives to guide a steady stock of housing in workers price range.

I support increasing the minimum wage and voted so during the last session. The GOP killed this bill and none of the Flathead Republicans even allowed this debate to occur on the House Floor. What a shame

4. Streamside Setbacks: Flathead residents spent over \$43 million on flood insurance coverage since 1978. Floodplains are regulated because the water belongs to the people of Montana. This public interest necessitates good management. We should strive for policies that look to the no adverse impact approach. This way we can use a bit of common sense and allow for flexibility for different streams, rives, and lake.

5. Initiative 154: CI 154 is a sham. We need to tighter restrictions on government's use of eminent domain. Government should not take a home then give it to a multinational developer. This is wrong and we'll fix it, but we'll keep planning in the tool box of local government.

But CI 154 is about killing the ability of locals to plan. It mandates that communities like Whitefish pay multinational developers if they do not get their way through the process. CI 154 will raise Whitefish taxes. It hamstring Montana's ability to manage fish and game.

In 2005 we kindled a new spirit in Montana. In 2007 we'll keep Montana on the right road.

George Everett (R) State Rep. District 5

Candidate chose not to respond.

Linda Jaquette (D) State Rep. District 5

Candidate chose not to respond.

Bill Beck (R) State Rep. District 6

Candidate chose not to respond.

Rick Komenda (C) State Rep. District 6

Candidate chose not to respond.

Answers from State Representative Candidates



Scott Wheeler (D) State Rep. District 6

1. City-County Planning: Yes. Coordinated county-wide planning is definitely needed. Everything we do in Flathead County affects the entire region.

2. Development Standards: Yes to the first part. I would need to study the applicable laws before answering the second part.

3. Affordable Housing: Yes, as long as it is market-based and not a state funded program. There are, however, some tax incentives that I might support to encourage the building of low-income housing. Yes, I definitely support raising the minimum wage for this and other reasons.

4. Streamside Setbacks: Yes, but I would need to know how far the setback would be. It would need to be reasonable. We also need to provide local authorities the power to enforce current rules regarding lakes with stiffer penalties.

5. Initiative 154: No. Such a law would make it financially impossible for planning authorities to enforce zoning. The law would empower the owner of property to decide that the government action lowered the property value. Therefore, every action denied would automatically cost the local government money.

Dale McGarvey (D) (no photo available) State Rep. District 7

1. City-County Planning: Yes. It's important that the counties and cities plan together so that their respective plans are not at odds one with the other.

2. Development Standards: I would support a law that engages citizens in the planning process to create predictable standards; however, I would require adequate time to be put into the effort so that the standards, once developed, would work. I believe in "those wise restraints that make men free."

3. Affordable Housing: I do support a minimum wage initiative. I also support the use of state funds to be lent to homeowners secured by a first mortgage. Most of the state funds are now only receiving 2 to 3 percent return on their money. If these funds were invested in first mortgages the return would be substantially greater to the state but more importantly the money would be available at far less than the going rate of 8 to 9 percent.

4. Streamside Setbacks: I would support legislation to keep development from locating right next to our rivers and streams. I think that County Commissioners and Planning Authorities should be encouraged to develop

the up-land plateau and discourage development near water courses.

5. Initiative 154: I am totally opposed to I-154. If it were enacted it would bankrupt the efforts for adequate planning. The people that drafted this initiative don't know what they are doing because they wiped out the protections for the landowners for the damage to the remainder caused by the nature of the improvements proposed by the condemning authority. They evidently didn't like that language and lined it out of the bill.

Jon Sonju (R) (no photo available) State Rep. District 7

1. City-County Planning: I would support the concept. It is to everyone's advantage for all government to work together.

2. Development Standards: As a member of the Local Government Interim committee I can tell you Growth and Planning is never easy. Current Planning and Growth laws need to be addressed in every legislative session because our communities are always changing.

3. Affordable Housing: Affordable housing is always an issue in the Flathead. I would like to see tax incentives for contractors and subcontractors who volunteer their services to existing programs that promotes affordable housing. I support a dollar increase to the minimum wage although I do not support tying Montana's wage scale to a CPI based upon major cities across the United States. This may cause a burden to our small businesses in Montana. I will support a tip credit if this initiative does pass.

4. Streamside Setbacks: This is more a city and county local government issue. Legislation from State Government may effect different parts of Montana differently. It is my thought that development by streams and rivers can be addressed by on a case-by-case basis.

5. Initiative 154: I am in full support of private property rights.

Randy Kenyon (D) (no photo available) State Rep. District 8

1. City-County Planning: There is no question I would support legislation increasing planning cooperation between cities and counties. The inability of these political entities to determine their futures together has probably been the single biggest cause behind the chaotic development we have seen and will continue to see in the future if something is not done. Unfortunately, the local political will is simply has not been available, and any encouragement or incentive to cooperate would be a step in the right direction

2. Development Standards: I would support any additional means of increasing public involvement in planning processes. Although laws are already in place regarding public hearings and citizen input, these laws are

Answers from State Representative Candidates

Kenyon continued from page 15

not well defined as to the exact role they play in decision making. The courts are beginning to establish standards, but these reactionary efforts are proving cumbersome and time consuming. Any reduction in lawsuits pertaining to planning is well worth the efforts. The public process is far too valuable a tool to rely on ill defined rules that have become used somewhat cursory by elected officials.

3. Affordable Housing: The opportunity for working Montanans to own their own homes is part of our heritage. With wages as they are and ever increasing cost of homes, natural market forces are proving inadequate. I support the minimum wage initiative on the ballot, in addition to consideration of developer incentives, cooperative citizen based zoning and creative planning, and supporting legislation to this aim.

4. Streamside Setbacks: I would support legislation protecting streams, rivers and other riparian areas from development. Ideas? Zoning, property owner incentives, conservation easements, neighborhood plans, tighter engineering requirements, increased floodplain enforcement and greater oversight in the approval process are a couple of places to start. Our rivers and streams play far too great a role in our recreational heritage.

5. Initiative 154: 5. I am not supporting Initiative 154. This would be a de facto elimination of planning as we know it. It is a disaster waiting to happen.

Craig Witte (R) State Rep. District 8

Candidate chose not to respond.



Edd Blackler (D) State Rep. District 9

1. City-County Planning: I would support legislation created to provide incentives for cities and counties to develop plans together which would efficiently address the infrastructure needs and basic growth guidelines that future growth requires.

2. Development Standards: I agree that an effective planning process which will provide predictable standards for development, protect Montanan's property rights, property values, water quality, senior water rights, wildlife, agriculture, viewscapes, and one that serves future growth efficiently, is very vital. I sense that most Montanans concur. Generally, I think most communities would prefer to implement such a process at the local level. In many instances the current statutes are adequate, however in some cases, I believe there could be modifications that would enhance the procedures. I would support legislation that could be

helpful in terms of standardizing the planning process, but yet not impose unrealistic state level mandates that might inhibit local level procedures.

3. Affordable Housing: Affordable housing is a nebulous subject. The housing that each of us determine we can "afford" depends on a very wide range of conditions in which we may find ourselves. Obviously, one's disposable income has a huge influence on what a person decides to spend on housing. I think an increase in the minimum wage is very appropriate. Currently, in the Flathead Valley, there are not that many workers who are working for the minimum wage. I think that any minimum wage law that is devised must have some provision for a "training" wage that recognizes a segment of the work force that does not represent the "sole" family income provider.

4. Streamside Setbacks: I think the water that is found in our streams, rivers, and lakes needs to be respected. I would support legislation that provides the necessary respect for our various water sources, and speaks to the possibility of flooding and water contamination.

5. Initiative 154: I do not support the intent of Initiative 154. The intent is not what it appears, but rather a very poorly camouflaged effort to do away with land use planning. I could possibly support a measure designed to insure that a person's property could not be taken, under the guise of "eminent domain", to be used by another private enterprise, merely due to a projected future tax benefit for the general public.

Bill Jones (R) (no photo available) State Rep. District 9

1. City-County Planning: Before promising a vote I need to see the bill draft-legislation with fiscal statement attached. I agree efficient infrastructure and planing for the future are worthy goals. Legislative details are important, followed by the concerns of proponents, opponents, and informational witnesses. Citizens need to be involved, costs nee to be considered, questions answered and then the yes/no vote made. Unintended consequences are often greater than the legislative intent. We must consider the Montana Constitution and the legal opinions on the proposed legislation. Health, safety, environment, fairness and public access are issues when dealing wit the dilemma of private versus community rights. I will vote my conscience first, constituents and then caucus in that order.

2. Development Standards: See answer to question 1 plus a concern of definition of all walks of life and how these people are picked.

3. Affordable Housing: The reason I serve is to improve our quality of life and create opportunity to get ahead. I am very concerned about the rapid rise in real estate values. Patricia and I have five children, all who work in the public sector, three are educators, one dietitian-social worker and a dentist. Only two have been able to make a down payment on a traditional home with yard. Stopping development and construction will force prices higher.

continued on page 17

Answers from State Representative Candidates

Jones continued from page 16

Requiring building permits may be needed but will add an estimated \$3000 to the cost of a home. Requiring curbing, sidewalks, street lights and paving adds to the cost. Our young couples have trouble competing with wealthy buyers, speculators and would be landlords but care must be used to avoid creating ghettos with poorly planned low income projects.

4. Streamside Setbacks: See answer to Question 1 plus we must provide more public access to lakes, rivers and streams. I carried HB260-Water Based Recreation Site Acquisition to purchase more public access.

5. Initiative 154: See Answer to question one plus we must consider the huge cost, the need of a new bureaucracy, to administer, and the resulting lawsuits. Voters are going to answer this one Nov 7th.



**Carla Augustad (D)
State Rep. District 10**

1. City-County Planning: Yes I would. It would be so much more cost effective than it is now as well as giving communities the opportunity to create better places to live and to visit.

2. Development Standards: Yes I would. I can't think of anybody who is happy with the

way growth is unfolding in their area; most people feel like they are expected to pick up the tab and tolerate whatever somebody else chose to do to their neighborhood regardless of the level of participation they are involved in.

3. Affordable Housing: I haven't seen or figured out any workable plans to make it possible for all Montanan's to own their own homes yet. It is a moot point until I do. I absolutely do support an increase in the minimum wage.

4. Streamside Setbacks: I do support Streamside Setbacks because the inevitable disaster will always be a when, not an if and the rest of us don't want to clean up the mess and/or live with the consequences of somebody else's irresponsibility.

5. Initiative 154: I do not support Initiative 154. Oregon has a similar law that has been very detrimental to any type of planning or regulation at all, which really appears to be the original intent of this law. Tell Howard Rich that he can't come here to dismantle the agreements that keep us a safe and functional society by voting no on I 154.

**Mark Blasdale (R)
State Rep. District 10**

Candidate chose not to respond.

Question for Public Service Commission #5

What are your top three priorities if elected to the Public Service Commission and how will they impact planning for growth and quality of life issues in the Flathead Valley?

Answers from Public Service Commission #5 Candidates



**Ken Toole (D)
Public Service Comm. 5**

Top Priorities- It is always difficult to choose among priorities. Below I focus on electrical power issues. I know there are important issues in natural gas and telecommunications but simply do not have the space here.

Use the power that we already produce efficiently- For years I represented conservation organizations in a collaborative process sponsored by the Montana Power Company to

advise company management on energy conservation and renewable power

development. I learned a lot but quit going to those meetings to focus on fighting deregulation. I knew that deregulation (which my opponent Mike Taylor co-sponsored) would decimate renewable energy and conservation programs. I spent over twenty years working with citizen groups to promote energy conservation in a number of areas. That commitment and expertise will be reflected in my work at the Public Service Commission.

Encourage development of small, clean renewable power- Over the years the big energy lobby has used its money and political clout to stymie renewable power. In 2000 I ran for the state senate was elected to represent the west side of Helena. From the beginning I served on the Energy Committee and sponsored numerous bills to promote clean renewable energy. My opponent voted against numerous bills to expand renewable energy in Montana. In the last session I was the Chairman of the Senate

continued on page 18

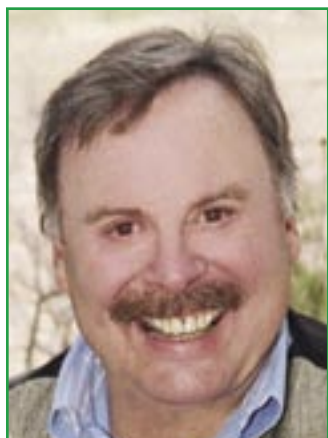
Answers from Public Service Commission #5 Candidates

Toole continued from page 17

Energy Committee, with political clout of the Governor's Office we finally passed a renewable energy bill. I served on the board of directors of several regional groups which promote conservation and renewable power. In 1997 I received the "Conservation Eagle Award" from the Northwest Energy Coalition.

Up-grade the grid- The grid system in Montana needs work. This is a priority for me because there are tremendous savings available to consumers by making sure utilities can manage loads and generators. There are many new technologies from real time meters to digital switching that can make our system much more efficient.

Conclusion- Serving on the PSC requires detailed knowledge of complex issues and large industry. With over twenty years as a consumer and citizen advocate working on those issues, I am qualified and on your side.



Mike Taylor (R) Public Service Comm. 5

Citizens of the Flathead deserve to have someone watching out for them. I will bring integrity, accountability and credibility to the Public Service Commission.

Our state's businesses and consumers win with competition. That is why on the third and final vote for deregulation, I voted against it. Stimulating economic growth, and looking out for the consumers best interest is what I have promoted, supported and voted for in the past. I will continue to do so as your PSC Commissioner.

Here is what I believe:

- 1.) Low cost utilities for all Montanans.
- 2.) Renewable energy, wind, bio-diesel, co-generations and ethanol, allowing all Montanans affordable rates.
- 3.) Increase our coal and gas production in Eastern Montana while still protecting our environment.
- 4.) I believe that government should not do what free enterprise does better.
- 5.) I believe that education about our natural resources should be stressed and we need to use the best technology to help reduce cost, such as heat pumps, light bulbs, switches that turn off when the room is empty to name just a few.

Here are some of my priorities if elected to the Public Service Commission:

- 1.) Protect the rights of small energy producers to sell their excess electricity back to utilities.
- 2.) Promote responsible use of our natural resources
- 3.) Study the possibility of re-regulating (changing the law) regarding some of our electrical generation.
- 4.) Promote more education through the Public Service Commission on the importance of conservation, and the use of the best technology to reduce energy cost and use.
- 5.) Promote the use of our renewable energy whenever it makes economic sense, or whenever people are willing to pay for green power.

I believe that the growth and quality of life issues in the Flathead will be served best by providing low cost, reliable energy that uses our natural resources responsibly, whether it be salvage timber or excess forest fuel for co-generation or wind, bio-diesel, ethanol, gas and oil.

Listen to continued from page 7

The irony here is that while the planning board paints the large land owners as the victim of the collective desires of the small landowners in the neighborhood planning process, it is with increasing frequency that large land owners are bringing forward massive subdivisions for which they have no requirements to seek "certified" petitions of support from their neighbors before they submit an application, and their neighbors have no 40% right of protest unless the land proposed for development is already zoned and requires a zone change—the case for less than 30% of the county. So in essence, by making the neighborhood planning process virtually impossible from the start, small land owners are shut out of the planning process where the door is flung even wider open for large track land owners to do what ever they please and often with little regard for the common good of the community.

The real beauty of the neighborhood planning process is that at its core is the need to find and build

a common vision between small and large land owners in developing a neighborhood plan. The story in this issue on page 4, tells the tale of four neighborhood planning processes—all of which started out on a very bumpy road before finding a path to consensus. Neighborhood planning is a process that has worked well in Flathead County for decades. It requires consensus and is the essence of direct grass roots democracy at work. It should not be hampered, but rather encouraged and supported with additional funding and staff time from the county.

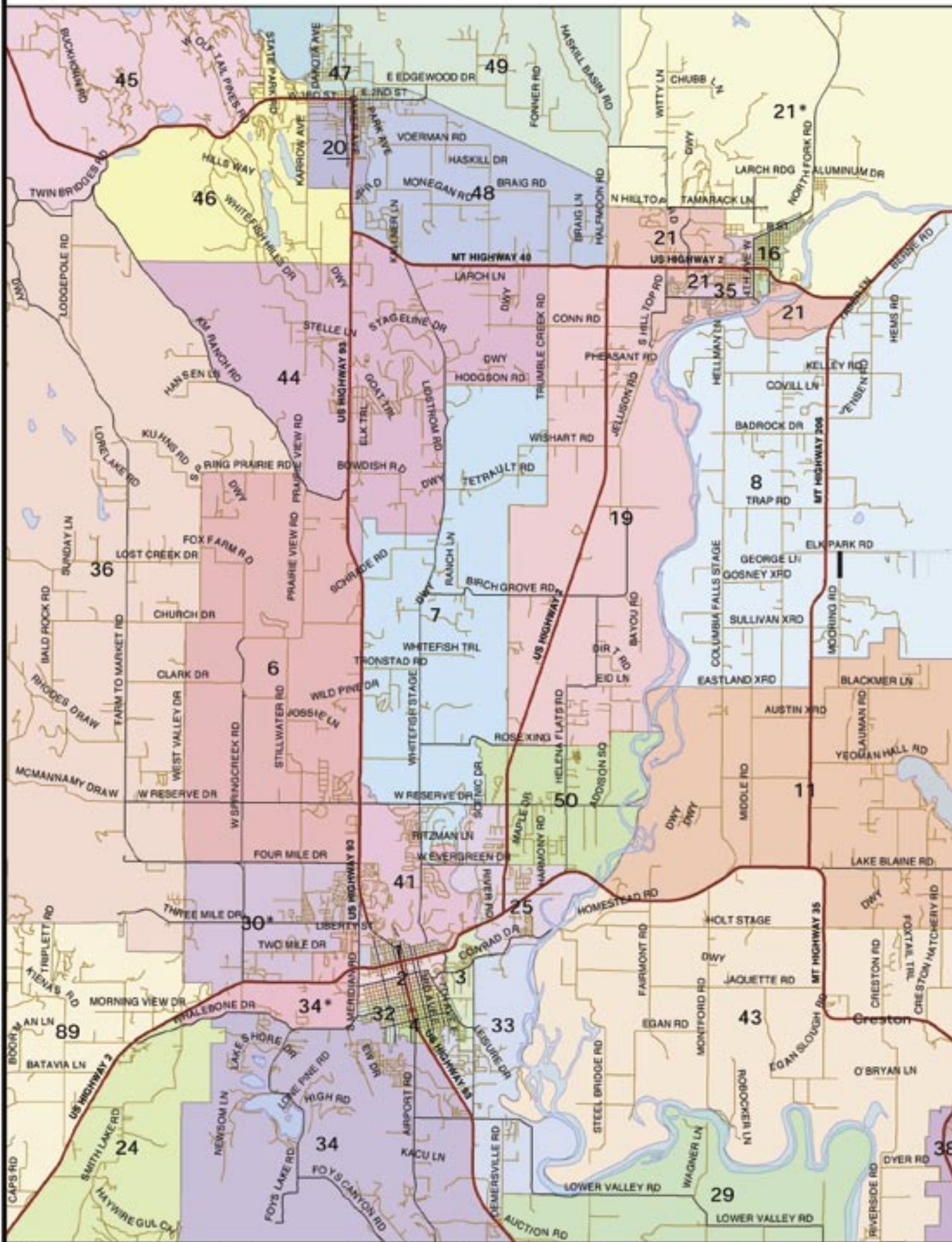
But to turn this ship around now and remove the unreasonable barriers that the County Planning Board is erecting in the path of neighborhood planning will require that those experienced in neighborhood planning and those looking forward to the challenge of creating new neighborhood plans tug on the sleeve and climb in the ear of local government to preserve this effective tool for planning in our county.

The planning board will be making more changes

to the growth policy over the next few weeks, many of equal significance to those being proposed for neighborhood plans. You can view the changes made to date now on line at the county planning web site at: <http://www.co.flathead.mt.us/fcpz/growthpolicy.html>. The planning board will forward their changes to the County Commissioners it appears some time in mid November. The commissioners will review these changes and seek additional public comment, likely in the form of written comments. So stay tuned to this process and get involved as if the very essence of democracy rests on your shoulders—for indeed it does.



FLATHEAD VALLEY PRECINCTS



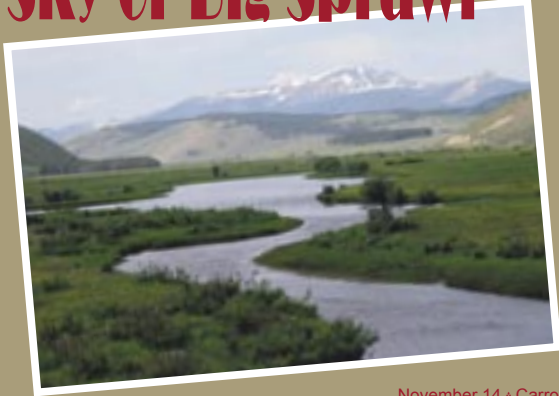
POLLING PLACE(S)

ABSENTEE AND LATE
REGISTRATION: COURTHOUSE
- 800 SOUTH MAIN, KALISPELL

PRECINCT

- 1 EXPO BUILDING
- 2 EXPO BUILDING
- 3 EXPO BUILDING
- 4 EXPO BUILDING
- 6 CO. FAIR KITCHEN
- 7 US ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER
- 8 DEER PARK SCHOOL
- 11 CAYUSE PRAIRIE SCHOOL
- 13 LAKESIDE SCHOOL GYM
- 14 MARTIN CITY QRU BUILDING
- 16 COUNCIL ROOM OF
- 17 W GLACIER SCHOOL
- 17* ESSEX QRU
- 19 NEW COVENANT FELLOWSHIP
- 20 WF ARMORY
- 21 CF HIGH SCHOOL FOYER
- 21* FIRE DPT RM, FIRE STAT. COL FALLS
- 24 KILA COUNTRY CHURCH or LAKESIDE SCHOOL GYM
- 25 EAST EVERGREEN SCHOOL
- 26 MARION FIRE & AUXILIARY
- 26* PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL
- 29 SOMERS SCHOOL GYM
- 30* CO. FAIR KITCHEN
- 32 EXPO BUILDING
- 33 CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH
- 34 CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH
- 34* CO FAIR KITCHEN
- 35 CF HIGH SCHOOL FOYER
- 36 WEST VALLEY SCHOOL
- 38 BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
- 39 OLNEY FIRE HALL
- 41 EXPO BUILDING
- 42 SWAN RIVER SCHOOL
- 43 FAIR-MONT-EGAN SCHOOL
- 44 FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
- 45 MOOSE HOME
- 46 FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
- 47 WF ARMORY
- 48 WF ARMORY
- 49 UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
- 50 EAST EVERGREEN SCHOOL
- 89 SMITH VALLEY SCHOOL GYM

Big Sky or Big Sprawl



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2025: Shaping the FUTURE of MONTANA

You're Invited to the BIG SKY or BIG SPRAWL Conference

Come Get a GLIMPSE of What MONTANA Could Look Like in 2025

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Montana 2025: How Do We Shape the Future of Montana?

Discuss the implications of those growth projections with a variety of experts, including **KEYNOTE SPEAKER, Chris Duerksen.**

Duerksen is the author of True West, a leading voice on development and land use in the West. Discussion will include reasons to go beyond all the various modern permutations of zoning and subdivision regulations-Euclidean, PUDs, performance systems and form-based/smart codes if a community is ready to tackle the tough sustainability issues facing the nation.

Early Registration (Before November 12): \$30
Student or Limited Budget Rates: \$20

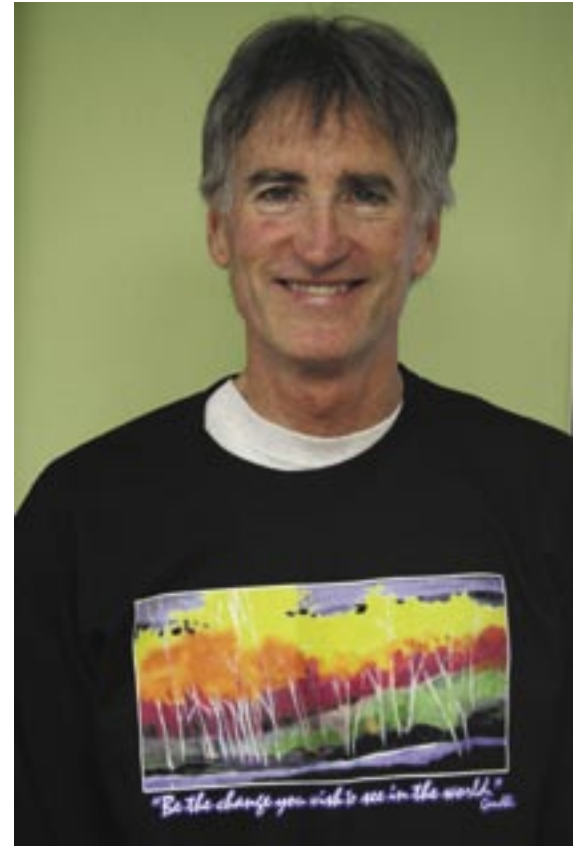
Standard Registration (After November 12): \$40
Student or Limited Budget Rates: \$25



Registration Information Available through Prompt Enterprises
Questions: Please Call 406.580.0967 or E-Mail megan@promptenterprises.com



*On the
first day of
Christmas
my true
love sent to
me...*



Hey, I know it's not Christmas yet, but some may think it is the start of the Holiday season. Although the last leaves have yet to fall, it's not too late to start thinking about what to give someone special. And surprise, surprise, Citizens is pulling out Christmas gifts out of our bag-o-tricks.

So how about an inspirational Gandhi quote: "Be the change you wish to see in the world" set against a beautiful watercolor by local artist Marshall Noice. Green and blue short-sleeve t-shirts are available now for \$19. We are taking orders for black or blue long-sleeve shirts now for \$25.

Happy Holidays!

Your membership dollars support our work to preserve the economic, cultural, and ecological health of the Flathead Valley. Call 756-8993 for more information.

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- \$250 Friend of the Flathead
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