

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSIONS
December 5, 2006

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Stebbins presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Dona Stebbins, Bill Beecher, Sandy Hinz and John Rosenbaum. Commissioner Diane Jovick-Kuntz was excused. Also present were the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Attorney, Directors of Community Development, Planning, Public Works, Park and Recreation, Fiscal Services, Library, Park and Recreation, Police Chief, Fire Chief, the City Clerk and the Assistant to the City Clerk.

1. NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM.

Planning Director Ben Rangel and City Forester Jon Thompson reported to the City Commission that staff has researched the possibility of beginning a Natural Areas Program in Great Falls. A Natural Area is an area of land, water, or both that retains or has reestablished its natural character; an area that existed prior to early development, though it need not be completely natural and undisturbed; and an area that supports, harbors or otherwise contains plants, animals, native ecological systems, or rare or unique geological, hydrological, natural historical, scenic or other similar features of scientific, educational or recreational value benefiting the public.

The reasons to create a Natural Areas Program include:

- Important for native plant and animal life
- Protect the scenery
- Educational, cultural, and recreational uses
- Enrich quality of life
- Safeguard our natural heritage for future generations
- Create community awareness of local assets
- Market community assets and resources
- Have an established program to which other properties can be added as opportunities arise

Criteria used to identify Natural Areas include areas that have retained, have the potential to retain, or the ability to be restored to the best examples of our native landscapes, ecosystems, natural communities, or scenic qualities; areas with features that have unique, pristine, aesthetic or scenic qualities, and opportunities; areas that contain features of scientific, scenic, or natural history value; and areas that may also have populations of endangered or threatened species.

They added that potential partners in developing a Natural Areas program include Recreational Trails, Inc., Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, PPL Montana, Northwestern Energy, Atlantic Richfield Corporation, Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation, Great Falls Bicycle Club, Cascade County, Private Property Owners, School District 1 and volunteers.

(12/05/06)

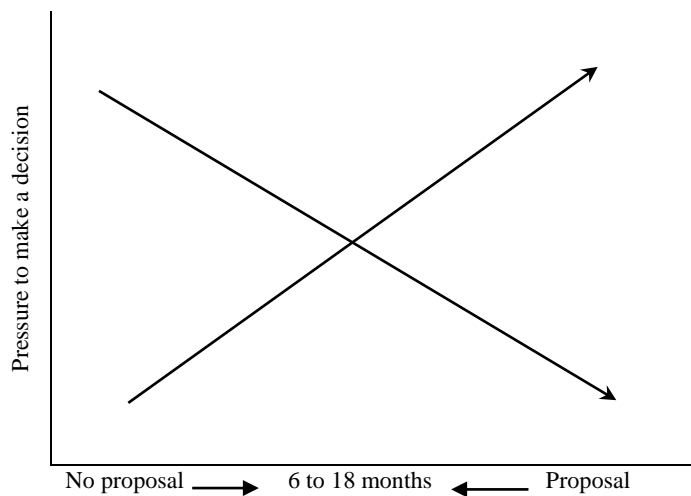
Mr. Rangel explained that if the Commission wanted staff to continue working on the development of a Natural Areas Program, the next steps would include developing an overall Natural Areas Master Plan which would include coordinating the plan with the Missouri River Urban Corridor Plan; the Missouri River Urban Corridor Inventory and Assessment; Giant Springs State Park Management Plan; Lewis and Clark Heritage Greenway Management Plan; the Wadsworth Park Master Plan and the West Bank Park Master Plan. Finally a method to manage and plan for public use unique to each property would need to be developed.

After a brief discussion, the Commission requested staff to proceed with this program.

2. EAST END DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES.

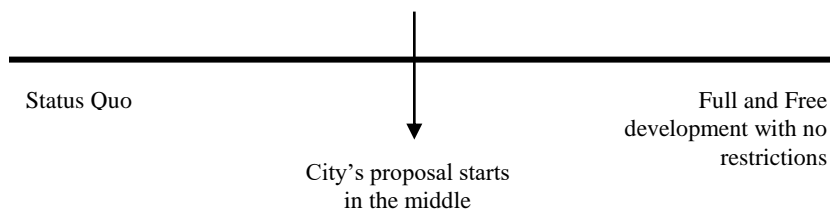
City Manager John Lawton introduced this item by explaining why City staff developed the proposed guidelines. He said that what was proposed was how to deal with the development at the end of the MAFB runway. He was told that the City should not develop these guidelines. However, he does not think it was feasible to do nothing. It was necessary in order to develop a good decision making process.

He explained this visually with the following chart.



- Once a proposal was submitted the City must respond within the statutory timeline.
- Options decrease once the timeline moved forward.
- This was a simple business technique to facilitate a decision.
- The City was trying to put into place an opportunity to make the best decision with the least pressure.

Mr. Lawton also demonstrated visually that the City's Development Guidelines start in the middle of the options that were available regarding the East End Development.



(12/05/06)

Planning Director Ben Rangel then reviewed Resolution 9628 and how Staff developed the guidelines. One point he emphasized was that the Planning staff used the hard work of other community groups and incorporated the core of the requirements approved by the Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors into the proposed Guidelines.

The proposed guidelines were enumerated as follows:

1. Only land uses consistent with the former "Clear Zone" will be permitted within the Zone, such as landscaping, storm water retention/detention facilities, agriculture.
2. Phased residential development will be permitted in accordance with the following timeframe: Phase 1, no sooner than June 1, 2007; Phase 2, no sooner than June 1, 2009; Phase 3, no sooner than June 1, 2010; If no mission is secured by June 1, 2011, no further timeframe or area limitations apply.
3. All subdivision plats in the area shall include a statement to notify prospective purchasers that the subdivision is in the vicinity of a military air force facility and even though the subdivision is not within a designated accident or noise zone, it may be subjected to noise and vibration from operating aircraft.
4. In the event a flying mission is secured, "Clear Zone" and/or "Accident Potential Zones" may need to be reestablished and/or expanded. If so, further development within the area will be limited to the land uses permitted in such zones. Also, further development as outlined and approved in #2 above will terminate. However, approved phases will be allowed to be completed. Lastly, best efforts will be made to compensate property owners for any investments made for the approved phases which can not be recouped due to the inability to develop subsequent phases.
5. Other than development provided for in Items 1, 2 & 4, above, the City will refrain from permitting development which is inconsistent with the land uses allowed in the former "Clear Zone" and "Accident Potential Zones I & II.

In closing Mr. Rangel explained that the City Commission was asked to set a public hearing for December 19, 2006 on the proposed guidelines at their regular meeting which was to be held immediately following the Work Session.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stebbins adjourned the work session of December 5, 2006, at 6:48 p.m.

(12/05/06)