# NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING ADDENDUM TO THE STILLWATER COUNTY GROWTH POLICY

2010

## OVERVIEW

In early 2009 the Stillwater County Planning and Economic Development Departments began developing a strategy for conducting Neighborhood Meetings around the County. This strategy was developed through internal meetings, County Planning Board meetings, and working sessions with the County Commissioners. Potential discussion topics were developed, and it was decided to hold a meeting in seven of the eight Elementary School District in the County (Columbus was excluded because the topics being investigated are covered in more detail in the 2005 Columbus Area Growth Policy). These meeting were held from late September until early November 2009 in Absarokee, Fishtail, Molt, Nye, Park City, Rapelje, and Reed Point. The purpose of these meetings was to gather as much information as possible from residents in each of these areas, with the intention of adding the pertinent information to the County Growth Policy and the Capital Improvement Plan. Throughout the process the public was kept informed of the progress through news articles in the Stillwater County News.

These meetings are a beginning point. If the residents of any area want to do a more in-depth investigation into the opinions of their community the Planning and Economic Development staff will assist. Also, if more localized research is desired, staff may investigate and assist in that research as well. If any organization or group would like the Planning and Economic Development staff to expand this investigation for future appending to the Growth Policy and Capital Improvement Plan, it first should schedule a meeting with the staff to discuss expectations, strategies, and conditions for County assistance with the project.

The following is a summary of the advertising that was done and the data that was collected from these meetings.

## WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENT

The following was placed on the Stillwater County website (www.stillwater.mt.gov) in March 2009, and stayed on the website until the meetings were completed.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – *MARCH 27, 2009*

The Stillwater County Planning and Economic Development Departments will be conducting community meetings in individual communities throughout Stillwater County to assess the need and desire for the development of Neighborhood Plans, optional additions to the County Growth Policy. These meetings will be held throughout the summer and fall in Absarokee, Fishtail, Molt, Nye, Park City, Rapelje, and Reed Point. These meetings are designed to gather input from local residents on issues such as infrastructure, local economy, water quality, emergency services, and land use.

Any questions can be directed to Forrest Mandeville or Melissa Kramer at 322-8050.

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STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS EDITORIAL

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 1, 2009

What do you want your community to look like in 5 years, 10 years, or 50 years into the future? What important actions need to take place to make YOUR community an even better place to live, and a place future generations want to return to make a living and raise a family?

These are the questions that we would like to address in our upcoming meetings in each community across the County," Brainstorming the Future of YOUR Community." These meetings, held jointly by the County Planning Department and the Economic Development Department, are listening sessions for us to learn the desires and concerns from residents of each individual community. The areas of interest we are focusing on have been developed from past surveys and meetings conducted by our departments that have highlighted important topics in each community such as development, infrastructure, economic development, recreation, emergency services, education, and more.

The ideas and issues addressed will be compiled and prioritized. Some communities may have the desire to take this process further and develop policies to address specific concerns in greater detail. If that case arises, we will plan meetings in the future to assure that phase of the process takes place. Other communities may find the brainstorming process is just an eye opener for concerns and puts priority projects or even brand new ideas on the table for discussion and future action.

At times, the County is called upon by State and Federal Agencies for priority projects within the County that may tie closely to funding opportunities that emerge. Identifying projects through a public input process, such as this, is an integral part of successfully positioning projects for funding opportunities that arise.

Why now or who is hosting these sessions, you might ask? We are both native residents of Stillwater County, escaped to further our education and found the desire to return right to where we began to start our careers. Working out of the Stillwater County Planning Office, we seek to gather these answers from you, as community members, to assist us in being more effective and efficient in our jobs.

Forrest, as the Stillwater County Planner I, works with the County Planning Board, City-County Planning Board, and Airport Board. His department is responsible for coordinating between developers, surveyors, State and County agencies, and the general public in the subdivision review process. He also assists in writing and amending long-range planning documents such as the County Growth Policy, the Town of Columbus Growth Policy, the County Park Plan, and the Subdivision Regulations.

Melissa, as the Economic Development Coordinator, assists local businesses and organizations through business education, technical assistance, grantwriting, etc. She also administers some County infrastructure grant programs. These projects require knowledge of issues facing each community and understanding the needs and interests. These programs are successful only if they parallel and are tailored to the needs of each individual community.

Input through this Community Brainstorming Process will assist in program development and research of potential funding sources.

Who should attend these meetings? Any resident of a community, young or old, that has ideas or concerns about the community is encouraged to attend. Residents that want to actively be engaged in shaping or even maintaining the quality of life in their community are invited. Everyone‘s input is important to us and the future of your community.

When are these meetings taking place? Fishtail: October 5 @ 7:30 pm at Fishtail Community Center, Molt: October 6 @ 7 pm at Molt Fire Hall, Park City: October 13 @ 7:30 pm at the Park City School, Nye: October 19 @ 7:30 pm at the Nye Fire Hall, Reed Point: October 20 @ 7:30 pm at the Reed Point School, and Rapelje: October 21 @ 7:30 pm at the Stockman Café.

We look forward to seeing you at a meeting in your community. If you have any question in advance of the meeting please feel free to contact either one of us at the Stillwater County Planning Office, located at 809 E 4th Ave. N., Suite C, in Columbus, by phone at 322-8050, or email mkramer@stillwater.mt.gov or fmandeville@stillwater.mt.gov.

Melissa Kramer, Economic Development Coordinator

Forrest Mandeville, Stillwater County Planner I.

STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS ARTICLE REGARDING ABSAROKEE MEETING

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 1, 2009

## *Small crowd makes big plans at Absarokee Town Hall meeting*

By Jennifer Ries
SCN Editor

Though attendance wasn't quite what organizers had hoped for, the discussion generated at the Absarokee Town Hall meeting on Sept. 23 at the Cobblestone Schoolhouse spoke to the bright future community members want to craft for their town.

The purpose of the meeting, spear-headed by Melissa Kramer, Economic Development Coordinator, and Forrest Mandeville, Planner 1, with Stillwater County, was to identify infrastructure and development priorities, and lay out goals for the next five, 10, and 20 years. “We want you to think long term,” said Mandeville. “Be imaginative, be creative. There are no wrong answers here.”

Law Enforcement
Tom Degele noted that crime and population has increased, yet the Sherrif's Department has the

same number of officers as when he was a kid. “I'm amazed we get by as well as we do,” said Degele.

Attendees said they would like to see improved response time, a deputy living in the area, and suggested starting a citizens' patrol to fill in the gaps.

“I think we all think law enforcement can be enhanced, but I'm not sure of the best way to do it,” said Jerry Gardner.

Emergency Services
Participants agreed that the Absarokee/Fishtail/Nye area is staffed with qualified, well-trained volunteer fire and EMS services.

“Unless you pay someone to do it, that's the only way it could get any better,” said Gardner. In the future, participants called for more volunteers and want more funding for training.

Public Health
An active population is a health population, and in that vein attendees brain-stormed ideas to get Absarokee moving. Suggestions included a gym/fitness facility, more exercise classes, and a walking/bike trail along the river. Attendees also discussed improved access to preventative care for seniors and children.

Recreation
Plans have been proposed for a skatepark.

“I think its a good deal myself,” said Degele. “The kids need something in this town.”

Other participants agreed and discussed possible locations. “The kids are really jazzed about it. I think we need to try,” said Colleen Eldringhoff.

Infrastructure
Paramount to developing infrastructure is the completion of Highway 78, slated for Fall 2010, expanding sewage treatment, and more sewer hook-ups.

Development
Attendees would like to see more sidewalks for safety, trails along the river, and more sewer hook-ups off main street to encourage residential growth.

Economic Development
Easily, the topic that drew the most thoughtful discussion was that closest to hearts and pocketbooks of Absarokee residents – increasing job opportunities. Attendees voiced concerns that the community was too dependent on a single industry – mining – making it vulnerable to the whims of the metals market. Also concerning was the exodus of young people from the county following high school and college as there are no jobs to which to return.

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Attendees felt that making Absarokee a scenic tourist destination might be a solution, discussed marketing the community to target populations, developing lodging and a visitors center, and the need for locals to support local businesses.

Water Quality
The assembled group agreed Absarokee has great drinking water, but the community needs to get a handle on out of compliance sewer systems along the river that may contaminate surface water.

STAFF REPORT FROM ABSAROKEE MEETING

Absarokee Neighborhood Plan meeting – Wednesday, September 23, 2009, 7:30, Cobblestone School

**Emergency Services:** According to those in attendance, Absarokee is fortunate to have great emergency services run by well-qualified individuals. However, it was noted that a lack of volunteers and funding are always issues.

**Recreation:** Residents in attendance noted that a new skate park would get kids off the street, though this idea is fairly controversial. Specifically, the issue of where to put a new skate park faces differing opinions. Some feel putting the skate park along Woodard Ave. (Highway 78) would be desirable since skaters like to be seen and parents want to watch over their kids. However, kids would undoubtedly skate down the street to get to this location, making the safeness of this location debatable. Also, a skate park would have to be challenging, so that skaters to not become bored to quickly, and well-built, so that it is not destroyed and thrown into Rosebud Creek like the last skate park in Hawkins Park.

The development of a trail system was discussed that would cross Rosebud Creek at Hawkins Park and travel north along the west bank of the Creek before meeting Highway 420. Residents in attendance would also like a sidewalk/bike path going out of town to the west, where the ball fields are located.

Also noted was that the tennis courts at Hawkins Park are being refurbished and that the log building at the Park should be restored and used more.

**Development:** Attendees noted that a lack of available sewer hookups pushes people out of Absarokee and into more rural areas, where wells, septic systems, etc, are needed for residential development. A desire was also noted for more trails along the river, and the practice of requiring trail dedications for subdivisions along the river was condoned by those in attendance. Also, more sidewalks are desired to move the large numbers of pedestrian traffic the Absarokee sees on some occasions, as well as providing safer school routes for kids.

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**Health:** Residents in attendance noted that Absarokee has a clinic, but needs a pharmacy, a small gym, and more health classes. It was also noted that the foot clinic had stopped operations, possibly due to sanitation concerns, but that the service was needed. There was some debate as to whether or not Absarokee could support a pharmacy. Attendees also expressed the need for increased child health services.

**Infrastructure:** The current state of the sewer system was immediately brought up and discussed at length by those in attendance. Concern was expressed over a lack of hookups hurting business expansion, but it was noted that there are still available hookups on Woodard Ave. (Highway 78). The Sewer District is in the process of upgrading the existing system, but a study conducted in 2004 concluded that a five million dollar expansion would only add capacity for about 60 additional hookups. The District is following the recommendations of that study.

Attendees would like to see Highway 78 finished as soon as possible. It was reported that this projected is apparently on schedule for 2010.

Residents in attendance thought the County should be involved in upgrading Circle T Road because it provides access to the ball fields. Also discussed was the need for additional sidewalks in Absarokee.

**Water Quality:** Those in attendance thought there was great local water quality. However, there were concerns about surface water and river water due to non-compliant upstream disposal systems.

**Economic Development:** Attendees expressed a desire to attract more tourism to Absarokee. However, a major disadvantage for the area is a lack of hotel rooms in Absarokee, especially when there are several hotels in larger cities like Red Lodge and Billings. It is also a challenge to get day-tourists from places like Billings to stay in Absarokee instead of driving home. Some thoughts to increase tourism included the formation of a summer stock theater and/or an information kiosk that could help different activities coordinate.

A need for more local support for business as well as more sidewalk projects was also expressed by those in attendance.

**Law Enforcement:** Those in attendance would like to see a quicker response time from the Sherriff Department. There was also noted an inconsistency with deputies living in the southern part of the County, and that when there is a deputy living in the south, there is not necessarily an increase in patrols because they go to Columbus when they're on duty. Suggested solutions to this issue were an increase in deputies and/or the formation of a neighborhood watch or citizens of patrol.

STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS ARTICLE REGARDING MOLT MEETING

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 8, 2009

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## *Roads, water, law enforcement top Molt concerns*

By Jennifer Ries
SCN Editor

It was variations on a theme at the Molt "Brainstorming the Future of Your Community" meeting Tuesday night at the Molt Fire hall. Again and again, three issues came to the forefront when Molt residents discussed the state of their community – roads, water quality and law enforcement.

Second in a series, the meeting was held jointly by the County Planning Department and the Economic Development Department as a listening session to learn the desires and concerns from residents in Stillwater County communities. The purpose of the meetings is to develop a priority list of economic, infrastructure, recreation, educational, and emergency services needs. As funding opportunities emerge, identified projects might be successfully positioned to capture those funds.

The meeting was well attended with 16 participants plus County Commissioner Maureen Davey.

Said Forrest Mandeville, Planner 1 at the Stillwater County Planning Office, "We don't want yes or no answers. There are no wrong answers. We want something that will move us somewhere."

So participants dug into what moved them most.

***Infrastructure***

Attendees asserted that the roads were so poor that it interfered with their ability to get children to school. This week's storm was a perfect example of the problem – moisture coupled with gumbo clay makes the roads impassable. Residents want gravel throughout the area.
Another top infrastructure concern is the development of a community water system as Molt is plagued with odorous and poor flavored water, as well as ground water contamination. As more homes go up in the Buffalo Trail canyon from Laurel, attendees thought that could play into the development of a water system. If the Molt system could service Buffalo Trail, that might spread the cost around and bring support to the project.

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Residents also want cell phone reception and have what they believe to be good locations for towers.

***Economic Development***
Participants discussed the changing face of employment in their community, saying that 20 years ago most people were in agriculture and the whole family worked on the farm. Now it is necessary for a spouse to take an off-the-farm job just to make ends meet. That means commuting – and increased traffic and wear that demands better roads so people can get to work safely. Better roads might make it easier for new people to move in and commute.

There was also interest in developing natural resources in the Molt area including wind fields and natural gas, and making Molt attractive to manufacturing or fabrication businesses.

***Fire/EMS/Law Enforcement***
Response time for EMS and law enforcement got some grumbles from the assembled crowd. Road condition and the remoteness of the area were cited as factors. Molt has only two volunteer EMTs – they feel they need more people and more training – and have to rely on Laurel EMS or American Medical Service for ambulance service. EMS and volunteer fire fighters present noted that dispatch calls were being routed through Yellowstone County, creating a delay in getting notice to local services that there was an incident.

Law enforcement response was described as taking one and half to three hours to get to Molt, if at all, which prompted the comment that the situation had devolved to "law enforcement by phone." The perception among those present was that county law enforcement is not familiar with the area (roads, landmarks, property boundaries, etc.) and lacks interest in culturing a relationship with the community.

***Wildlife***
Participants were sensitive to maintaining and protecting private property rights, noting their livestock had not been attacked by wolves – yet.

***Education***
Molt only has an elementary school, which this year serves two children. Attendees advised an all-or-nothing approach: either put the money into constructing a building and developing a quality educational program to facilitate increased enrollment, or close the school.
High school students must attend class in Rapelje, Laurel or Park City. With that in mind, residents would like to see the school district boundaries redrawn to make petitioning to get into a high school easier, as well as applying their tax dollars to the school district their child or children attend. Parents present said road conditions limited bus routes.

The next meeting will be held in Park City at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 13 at the Fire Hall.

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STAFF REPORT FROM MOLT MEETING

Molt Neighborhood Plan meeting – Tuesday, October 6, 2009, 7:00, Molt Community Center

**Wildlife:** The residents in attendance noted a need to protect private property rights. It was noted that wildlife issue can affect people's livelihood, and the rights of those people should be protected.

**Water Quality:** It was noted by those in attendance that the ground water in Molt is polluted. It was mentioned that a community water system may help with this issue, but with Molt's small population, it might not be feasible to have one. It might help defray the cost of a community water system if it crossed the County line to take in residents of Yellowstone County.

**Infrastructure:** The main infrastructure issue noted by attendees was a need for graveled roads, especially Cadillac Hill Road, Valley Creek Road, Leuthold Road, and Combs Flat Road. Also mentioned was that roads in town don't lead anywhere and many were never built. Installing stop sign was mentioned as useless since many are stolen or shot-up within about a week.

A water system was also mentioned as a desired infrastructure improvement project.

**Education:** Residents in attendance expressed a desire for school district boundaries to change, as the Molt School needs to get bigger, smaller, or go away. Enrollment at the school is currently two students, and fluctuates between as many as six students and as few as one. It was also noted that educational quality needs to improve if the school is going to continue to exist.

Roads were mentioned as an important education issue, as the poor quality of area roads make it difficult, especially in bad weather, to get to school. Better roads would make it easier for students to travel to school.

**Development:** Attendees noted the pressures of continued development east of Molt as Laurel moves north and Billings moves west. Attendees do not wish to have more development in the Molt area, but understand market realities driving the development. Ideas about diverting part of the Yellowstone River to Big Lake to supply water for Billings were mentioned, as well as several possible reservoirs in the area.

It was noted that more development means more effort needs to be put into fire suppression, and the Molt Fire Department currently services large areas of Yellowstone County.

**Law Enforcement and Emergency Services:** Those in attendance stated that law enforcement was virtually non-existent in Molt. Several specific issues were raised, such as the lack of deputies in Molt, the long response time for deputies to come to molt from Columbus, deputies focusing more on civil matters than criminal matters, and deputies not knowing their way around the Molt area. It was mentioned that better roads may help alleviate these issues.

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The Laurel ambulance provides EMT training, but more funding is always needed. Fire services were deemed adequate.

**Economic Development:** Several ideas were brought up by those in attendance for promoting economic development in the Molt area. Among these ideas were a senior center; updating the Community Center with a kitchen, bathroom, heat, and insulation; more EMS and Sherriff services; better roads (it was noted the proposed Billings Outer Belt Loop will more traffic near Molt); a bike path to Billings; wind farms; natural gas development; and better cell phone coverage.

STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS ARTICLE REGARDING PARK CITY MEETING

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 15, 2009

## *Park City residents call for better roads and drainage, more law enforcement*

By Jennifer Ries
SCN Editor

Short on attendees, but long on good ideas, Park City residents gathered Tuesday night at the school to discuss what they would like to see their community look like five,10 and 20 years from now.

Following the same format as previous meetings in Absarokee and Molt, Forrest Mandeville, Planner 1 for the county, and Melissa Kramer, Economic Development Coordinator, led attendees through a series of discussion points to suss out community needs as part of the "Brainstorming the Future of Your Community" listening sessions.

"We're here to listen to you and hear what you want to see happen in your community," said Mandeville at the opening.

**Infrastructure**
Molt was concerned about their lack of water; Park City has too much. "Drainage, it's been a problem for years," said Edna Stepper, noting that puddles gather so large as to limit access to the post office and school entrances. Attendees agreed that what they needed was a storm drain system. Previous efforts to have french drains installed were nixed due to concerns about ground water contamination.

**Development**
Jon Bourassa, a part-time resident of Park City, said there is plenty of development in his town but the roads don't support the growth.
"Let's put some of the bucks back into the areas bringing in the taxes. Taxable value goes up

when you put pavement down," he said. Better roads would also aid emergency services response, said participants.

**Recreation**
If meeting attendees get their way, Park City could be a recreation gem with attractants for locals and travelers alike.

Top of the list was a bike trail along Highway 10, a project that may qualify for CTEP funding. Bourassa mentioned repeatedly that he'd like to see a pedestrian bridge across I90 so that residents can safely access the park on the north side of the town. Also listed were park improvements, expanded park grounds and possibly a skate park, developing a golf course north of town, getting the old cemetery listed on the historic register, and making the area more sportsman and RV-er friendly.

**Water Quality**
Like other unincorporated towns in Stillwater County, Park City has a Water and Sewer District, but no centralized water system. Residents rely on wells, a practice that cannot support the ongoing residential development of a bed-room community pinched between two counties.

Leo Stepper noted that the well water quality is good, but a centralized system would serve the burgeoning community better, the new school would need it, and it would increase property values.

Stepper said the time may be coming for Park City residents to weigh the advantages against the potential costs of incorporating the town.

**Fire/EMS/Law Enforcement**
Different town, same story – attendees tell tales of poor response time from law enforcement, if at all, the need for a deputy to live in Park City, and growing drug problems.

"I think a lot of people figure we're at the wrong end of the county," said Edna Stepper, echoing sentiments heard at previous meetings.
Leo Stepper noted said the problem may lay not with the quality of the county's law enforcement officers, but the quantity. "They (the Sheriff's Department) are understaffed for one thing. That's a county-wide problem. But how you're going to get more funding is the hard thing," said Stepper, adding that compensation related to workload is probably not attractive to young officers.

Edna Stepper voiced concerns that because Park City is just outside Yellowstone County, yet on the fringes of Stillwater County law enforcement, it has become a safe-haven for drug trafficking.

Attendees said the volunteer ambulance service is good and the volunteer fire department well equiped, but in need of more volunteers.

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**Education**
Bourassa said that while he doesn't have children in the school system himself, what he has heard is that the quality of education is good and that he observed good family support for kids before and after school. He noted that building condition and crowding seem to be the educational fronts that need work, which would be addressed by a new school.

The next meetings will be:

Oct. 19 – Nye, Nye Fire Hall, 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 20 – Reed Point, Reed Point School, 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 21 – Rapelje, Stockman Cafe, 7:30 p.m.
Fishtail's rescheduled meeting TBA.

STAFF REPORT FROM PARK CITY MEETING

Park City Neighborhood Plan meeting – Tuesday, October 13, 2009, 7:30, Park City School Cafeteria

**Education:** Attendees reported a satisfactory quality of education considering a high student to teacher ratio. There is optimism in the community about the future of the school, as the District has purchased land and has plans to build a new school. However, as things stand now there is a lack of things for kids to do. For example, the school needs more playground area, as the current area is encroached upon by temporary building needed for classrooms.

**Emergency Services/Law Enforcement:** The amount of law enforcement in the areas was reported to be low by those in attendance. A main reason given for this was the long response time due to understaffing in the Sherriff's Office. This is a County-wide problem. It was also reported that there is an ongoing drug problem in Park City, but nothing seems to have been done about it.

Residents in attendance reported that the Fire Department has a lot of equipment, but needs more volunteers. The Ambulance seems to be doing well, as they are building a new ambulance barn.

**Water Quality:** Attendees noted that Park City has a Water and Sewer District, but this District does not supply centralized water. The community almost had central water in the 1980s, and it is felt that this service is becoming more necessary as the area sees more growth. However, residents have and still are able to get good water from wells, which are fairly inexpensive to drill due to high ground water levels in the area. It was mentioned that the community may have to start seriously weighing the advantages and disadvantages of incorporation, as a way to help with not only this issue, but others as well.

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**Economic Development:** Those in attendance reported that not much was going on with regard to economic development in Park City.

**Land Use:** It was a concern of those in attendance to keep farm land in agriculture, as current market trends have seen large amounts of agricultural land used for housing.

There is a desire to see more parkland in the area, specifically on the south side of the Interstate. It was noted that parkland can be for more than just kids if it is family oriented. A possible future location of a park would be at the site of the existing football field if the school builds a new field at the site of the new school. It was also mentioned that a Golf course north of town would be desirable.

**Development:** Attendees expressed a desire to see increased tax revenues, generated by development, used to asphalt roads in the area, such as Schreiner Road. Better roads would also help with fire suppression activities.

**Recreation:** Those in attendance mentioned several desires for recreational activities in the area, such as a bike trail along Highway 10, updates and better access (possibly a pedestrian bridge over I-90?) to the existing park north of town, putting the old cemetery northeast of town on the historic register, and for Sportsman's Park to stop allowing four-wheelers.

**Infrastructure:** Residents in attendance noted that drainage has been a problem for years, especially storm drainage at the school and at the intersection of Clark St. and 1st Ave. Some of the biggest problems in trying to solve this issue has been that the County owns the streets and dealing with liability issues concerning groundwater.

It was also mentioned that a bike path along Highway 10 would be desirable, but expensive, project, and that a pedestrian bridge over I-90 would help access the park north of town.

STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS ARTICLE REGARDING NYE MEETING

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 22, 2009

## *Nye neighborhood planning meeting nets water, wildlife concerns*

By Jennifer Ries
SCN Editor

A small but vocal crowd of six gathered at the Nye Fire Hall on Monday night to "Brainstorming the Future of Your Community." Marking the half-way point in a series of neighborhood planning sessions, the meeting was held jointly by the County Planning Department and the Economic Development Department to learn the needs and concerns from residents in Stillwater County communities. The purpose of the meetings is to develop a priority list of economic, infrastructure, recreation, educational, and emergency services needs. As funding opportunities emerge, identified projects might be successfully positioned to capture those funds. Topics for discussion emerged from the county growth policy surveys issued Summer 2008.

Said Forrest Mandeville, Planner 1 at the Stillwater County Planning Office, “We've isolated input issues from each community (through the surveys). That's what we've brought you today. We want to get as much conversation going as we can.”

Development
Noel Keogh voiced his concern that economic need is driving development of the area. While the county's subdivision regulations now require new developments to have a Home Owners Association (HOA), covenants, and a weed management plan filed with the county, older developments do not. Attendees would like to see Special Improvement Districts developed in older subdivisions to manage weeds, residential encroachment on open spaces, and road improvements.

Recreation
There is no denying Nye is nestled in breath-taking country. The problem is – as attendees see it – too many people want to enjoy the splendor.

“Boat floating the Stillwater River is becoming increasingly popular and access is becoming an issue,” said Keogh, offering examples of boaters crossing private land and impact to heavily traffic river banks. Attendees discussed the need to limit public access to maintain a quality experience.

Lana Sangmeister also suggested biking and walking paths to facilitate safe foot-traffic in town.

Wildlife
Wildlife management was top of mind for Nye residents, but what to do and who was responsible was up for debate.
“That's pretty hard because the FWP holds the reins on (issuing tags),” said Doug Robinette. “Hunting is our biggest issue on wildlife.”
Keogh respectfully disagreed saying that while FWP issues tags, it's private landowners who determine whether land is open to hunting.
Both agreed that wildlife was a major draw for recreationalists and a valuable natural resource that needed better management.

Economic Development
Attendees see their wagon hitched to Absarokee, following its economic starts and stalls. Like at the Absarokee meeting, attendees were concerned that so much of their population and economic future is tied to the Stillwater Mine. Attendees worried that growth, unmanaged or too quick, might damage the quality of life and sense of community they hold dear.

Water Quality
“The quality of the water in our area is a key attractant and one of our greatest resources,” said Keogh, a sentiment echoed by other attendees. He said he felt the Stillwater Mining Co. and agricultural producers had done a good job of protecting the watershed; his concern lays with development, especially older homes, along the river.

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Fishing cabins dot the banks of the Stillwater River, many utilizing cinderblock septic tanks for sewage disposal, tanks that do not meet modern standards or new county subdivision regulations. Attendees were concerned about seep and river and ground water contamination. This issue is a growing one as these cabins once were vacation homes, but attendees said they've noticed that more and more of these homes are becoming full-time residences.

EMS/Fire/Law Enforcement
Nye utilizes Absarokee's ambulance service, but does have several volunteer EMTs in the area as well as EMTs from the mine who respond to serious incidents.

Attendees agreed they had a good volunteer fire crew, but would like to see a more proactive effort to thwart wildfires before they start.
"We need a serious fuels reduction program. The Derby Fire was a starter kit," pointed out Keogh, who went on to say that his great fear was a wildfire starting at Red Lodge and sweeping over the mountain though abundant fuels. Robinette agreed saying that while many folks are aware of the FireWise fuels reduction program, not enough are using it.

When law enforcement was brought up, it got a bit of a laugh, with one attendee remarking, "What law enforcement?" The group assembled said they don't see much of a law enforcement presence in their area, but that they're doing fine and things seem peaceful.

Education
Attendees said that inconsistent support of their local elementary school has led to fluctuating enrollment. This year the Nye School has two students and has been operating under isolation status for several years.

Penny Keogh chalked up some of the low enrollment to demographics of the area. "It's either retirement homes or us old ag people," she remarked with a laugh.

Noel Keogh agreed, saying, "The reality is that there aren't many kids up here."

STAFF REPORT FROM NYE MEETING

Nye Neighborhood Plan meeting – Monday, October 19, 2009, 7:30, Nye Fire Hall

**Emergency Services/Law Enforcement:** Those in attendance reported that Nye receives its ambulance service out of Absarokee. There are several training EMTs on the Nye Fire Department, and they also get support from EMTs at the mine if needed.

Attendees would like to see a fuels reduction plan and a major fire suppression plan implemented, which would possibly make use of biomass.

It was mentioned that the area does not see a lot of law enforcement, but those in attendance felt there was not a big need for an increase in law enforcement either.

**Water Quality:** Residents in attendance agreed that water is the most important resource and attraction in the Nye area, and noted that both the mine and agricultural operations have done a good job protecting the water quality. However, several old septic systems are either leaking, serving larger houses than originally intended, or were poorly designed to begin with. It was mentioned that a community sewer system in Beehive may be necessary.

**Economic Development:** Concern was expressed by attendees over the decline of Absarokee businesses, as residents of Nye feel tied to the economy of Absarokee. It was mentioned that people need to support local businesses, even as it becomes easier to travel to Billings to shop. The relationship of the number of people in the area to the mine, which brings tax money into the area, was also noted.

Other issues which were brought up was the importance of preserving and supporting the Nye Post Office, and hope of having a nice welcome sign.

**Recreation:** Those in attendance noted the need to balance public access issues to both allow public access to the Stillwater River and to protect the experience of a remote area. Attendees also mentioned they would like to see walking or biking trails along roads in the area.

**Wildlife:** Attendees noted that the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is the controlling authority on many wildlife issues. However, it was mentioned that private property owners control access to their property, and by extension control the wildlife on their property.

**Education:** Residents in attendance discussed the inconsistent support the local schools receives from the community, and noted that many kids choose to travel to attend school in Fishtail or Absarokee. A consolidation of County school administration was mentioned as a potential way to better coordinate and support county-wide education issues.

**Infrastructure:** Attendees mentioned several things they would like to see happen to roads in the area. They would like to see better maintenance of Limestone Road, as it is essential in cattle transportation; to see Stillwater River Road paved; to see Highway 78 finished; better engineering and drainage along roads; “no litter” signs posted along public roads; and walk and bike trails along the roads. It was also mentioned that there should be an effort to increase awareness of the County Capital Improvement Plan.

**Development:** Those in attendance noted that the Nye area has an abundance of public land and parks, and does not need more. They would like to see better balance between open space and development, and do not want to see more people moving into the area. Area fire issues were also discussed.

It was also mentioned that it would be desirable to see special improvement districts governing older subdivisions that do not have homeowners associations and/or were developed under less restrictive laws than currently exist and therefore have issue with road maintenance, weeds, fire protection, etc.

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STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS ARTICLE REGARDING REED POINT MEETING

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 29, 2009

## *Reed Point looks to capitalize on tourist traffic, recreation*

By Jennifer Ries
SCN Editor

In the third to last in a series neighborhood planning meetings, “Brainstorming the Future of Your Community” moved to Reed Point where a small group gathered on Oct. 21 at the high school.

The meeting was held jointly by the County Planning Department and the Economic Development Department to develop a priority list of economic, infrastructure, recreation, educational, and emergency services needs.

Melissa Kramer, Economic Development Coordinator, explained that when the stimulus funding was approved, the state and federal governments came to her office and asked where could they put money. She was at a loss.

“We didn't have a list and we definitely didn't have anything shovel ready,” she explained. These meetings, addressing topics that emerged from the county growth policy surveys issued Summer 2008, are geared to gather community input so that as funding opportunities emerge, identified projects might be successfully positioned to capture those funds.

So though Reed Point had a small turn-out, they rolled up their sleeves and got to work planning their community's future.

Infrastructure
“I know it's not unique to Reed Point, but the raising streets are contributing to drainage problems,” said Jerry Friend, former county commissioner. Attendees commented that the surrounding county roads were good and encouraged the Road and Bridge Department to stay on top of maintenance. Sweet Grass County roads, where Reed Point runs several bus routes, leaves something to be desired said attendees.

Water and Sewer
The sewer system has reached capacity, said Friend, which limits business and residential development. There is land available to expand the sewer treatment facility, but it is a matter of funding and equipment.

Recreation
Attendees suggested, if the elementary school is moved up to the high school location, the old

elementary school could be used as a community center. Residents would also like to see the old railroad depot converted to a museum/gift shop/visitors center. A motocross track is being developed on West Springtime Rd.

Economic Development
Attendees see the tourist traffic on I90 as an economic opportunity they need to better capture. The area host two large events each summer – the Sheep Drive and the Boat Float – but residents are looking for ways to capture more tourist dollars beyond folks stopping for gas.

Attendees noted the need for a hotel, a restaurant (possibly modeled after the community owned and operated Stockman Cafe in Rapelje), expanded library hours, gift shops, a museum, and a marketing plan that puts Reed Point top of mind for travelers on I90.

EMS/Fire/Law enforcement
Reed Point has a fire hall and equipment, but "like any volunteer organization, we're always short of people," said Friend. He'd like to see more training, a better water supply, and more equipment.

"They (the fire department) have done a good job utilizing the equipment the have and going out on big fires to bring money back to the department," commented Friend.

The community also need more volunteer EMTs, having only two, and relies on the ambulance from Big Timber.

Regarding law enforcement, attendees would like to see a more consistent response.

"Sometimes there's enough, sometimes there's isn't, and sometimes there's too much," explained Friend.

Education
The Reed Point school has under 100 students K-12, with enrollment fluctuating between 80-95 students.

"I'm pretty happy," said Wendy Lusk. "I've got two kids in the grade school." She said she was pleased with the quality, but could see the need for more electives as students move into high school.

STAFF REPORT FROM REED POINT MEETING

Reed Point Neighborhood Plan meeting – Tuesday, October 20, 2009, 7:30, Reed Point School

**Recreation:** Those in attendance mentioned current projects to improve area recreational options such as the Community Club Park, which is in the process of upgrading the old depot building into a museum using a CTEP grant, and the newly opened motocross park outside of town. It was also mentioned that a youth center would be a welcomed addition to the community.

**Infrastructure:** The main issue brought up by attendees was the poor drainage on the streets in town, probably caused by the build-up of the streets, which are now several feet higher than they were originally. Residents in attendance were otherwise happy with the condition and maintenance of roads in the area.

**Development:** Those in attendance stated they wanted the community to grow the right way, with better access into subdivisions, better connectivity between subdivisions, and central water systems in new subdivisions. The establishment of a youth center was also mentioned as a way to help the community develop.

**Water Quality:** Attendees stated that water quality is variable in the area, and depends on the quality of the well. A central water system in town may be a beneficial development, and would possibly also lower insurance rates due to the benefit it would bring to fire suppression activities. It was also mentioned that Reed Point's existing sewer system is near capacity, and that there have been some pump problems.

**Economic Development:** Residents in attendance new businesses in the area are bringing people in. However a souvenir shop, museum, and restaurant are needed. It was also noted that there is a lot of interesting history in the Rood Point area. The Reed Point Community Club depot project is expected to somewhat meet the demand for a souvenir shop and museum. Once there are things in place to bring people into town, it was mentioned that advertising, such as quality signage in good locations, is needed to pull people off the interstate. It was a desire of the group in attendance to have more activities in Reed Point than the boat float and the sheep drive.

The importance of the library was also mentioned, as was the fact the volunteer-run library does a good job providing its service to the community.

**Wildlife:** Those in attendance noted that at times it seems like there is way too much wildlife. Hunter access was also mentioned as an issue, with attendees noting that access is currently good, but need to be protected.

**Law Enforcement/Emergency Services:** Attendees noted that the volunteer Reed Point Fire Department needs more volunteers. There are two EMTs on the Fire Department. The Department is not structure trained. Also, the Fire Department, which just built an expansion onto the fire hall, can always use more equipment.

Law enforcement in the area was deemed to be adequate by those in attendance.

**Education:** Residents in attendance were happy with the quality of the Grade School, and mentioned future plans to add on to the High School in order to move Grade School activities there (which then would lead to the question of how to use the Grade School building). Attendees would, however, like to see broader classes, with more variety, and more

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extracurricular clubs available, though they realize that these issues are challenging for small schools.

STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS ARTICLE REGARDING RAPELJE MEETING

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 29, 2009

## *Rapelje neighborhood planning meeting nets good crowd*

By Jennifer Ries
SCN Editor

About 15 people turned up at the Stockman Cafe in Rapelje on Oct. 21 to take part in "Brainstorming the Future of Your Community." The meeting was held jointly by the County Planning Department and the Economic Development Department to learn the needs and concerns from residents in Stillwater County communities. The purpose of the meetings is to develop a priority list of economic, infrastructure, recreation, educational, and emergency services needs. As funding opportunities emerge, identified projects might be successfully positioned to capture those funds. Topics for discussion emerged from the county growth policy surveys issued Summer 2008.
At 7:30 p.m. discussion began, guided by Melissa Kramer from the Economic Development Department and Forrest Mandeville, Planner 1 at the Stillwater County Planning Office, and attendees weren't shy about voicing what they'd like to see happen in their town.

Infrastructure
Don Herzog would like to see more maintenance on arterial roads. "Here to Ryegate, here to Molt – these roads get a surprising amount of use," said Herzog.

Attendees also noted the need for a community sewer and water system. A new water system is in the works – Great West Engineering has just been awarded the contract to do the preliminary engineering report to evaluate a new water system – a much needed improvement as the existing water system is at maximum capacity and has elevated nitrate levels.

Recreation
"Well, fishing isn't real big around here," quipped Mike Barth. While the arid plains of northern Stillwater County don't offer much in water recreation, it does host vast herds of antelope and whitetail deer. But how to manage that natural resource was up for debate.

"When you talk about recreation you have to ask, what do you have that other people want?" said Herzog. The problem, as he sees it, is that everyone – FWP, retail stores, local services – is making money off hunting except the landowners on whose property the wildlife graze.

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Herzog suggests charging an access fee for hunting to generate recreation revenue. “Not everyone agrees with what I'm saying, but the opportunity is there,” stated Herzog.

Rapelje also has strong support of high school sports and the 24 Hours of Rapelje, an endurance bike race each June.

EMS/Fire/Law Enforcement
Like attendees at the Molt meeting, Rapelje residents voiced concerns that law enforcement officers and emergency responders are not familiar with the area.

Larry Gee commended the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department for helping Rapelje's fire department win a grant for new radios and a repeater on Lindemulder hill, but noted the repeater only transmits fire calls. Gee would like to work with the sheriff's department to get transmission of EMS calls as well.

Attendees said they need a new fire hall, an operating budget for the department, and more volunteer EMTs.

Education
“I'll say one thing about our school system: We don't have to apologize for anything,” commented Herzog. “These kids are getting a good education.”

Attendees agreed and noted they'd like to see higher enrollment.

In closing, Kramer thanked the crowd for their participating in the planning process.

“This is a working document. These are thing we want to work on,” said Melissa Kramer, Stillwater County Economic Development Coordinator, assuring attendees the departments were taking residents' concerns to heart.

STAFF REPORT FROM RAPELJE MEETING

Rapelje Neighborhood Plan meeting – Wednesday, October 21, 2009, 7:30, Stockman Café

**Recreation:** Attendees reported that the main recreational activities in the area are related to school sports and school activities. Other recreational activities in the area include the annual bike race and hunting. One issue which several in attendance wanted to further explore was how to add value to what the community has. For example, there was once an antelope hunting district, wherein people had to pay a small amount to hunt in the area. A way to build profit for the area would be to explore ways to form a similar district again.

**Infrastructure:** Those in attendance noted that a sewer system is needed for the community. Also, roads need to be better maintained, especially bus routes and arterials. Residents would also like to see the road to Molt paved, and better maintenance of streets in town, especially Dallman St. E. The community water system was also mentioned as needing upgrades.

**Law Enforcement/Emergency Services:** Residents in attendance felt that County Law Enforcement needs better training in local geography. The new repeater on Lindemulder Hill is beneficial, but only transmits fire calls, and would be better if it were to be expanded to allow for Law Enforcement and ambulance use also. Having a local contact appointed to give directions to Law Enforcement Officers was also suggested.

Regarding the Rapelje Fire Department, attendees reported that they are upgrading their radios, but need a new fire building and money for operations. More CPR training is also desired.

**Economic Development:** Residents in attendance noted that more land deals would bring in more families, but it was also pointed out that that would be dependent upon individual initiative and pre-existing market conditions. Other activities that could foster economic development in the area were transportation improvements, wind development, and cell phone towers.

**Development:** Attendees were of the opinion that future development of Rapelje is tied to the water system, which is at capacity. It was reported that the school needs to have 3 million gallons of water in reserve, which is not practical at this time. Suggested solutions for this issue were to have a dry hydrant/cistern for the town, or to have a water tower. However, it was noted that historically a water tower would be too great of an expense for the usage it would receive.

**Education:** Those in attendance reported that the school provided a high level of quality and good educational services. However, there are not many students enrolled and attendees would like to see enrollment increase.

**Water Quality:** The water quality of the community is tied to the water system, which is currently in the process of being improved. An engineer has been hired to research solutions to the water quality issues, and when those solutions are identified, funding will hopefully be available to allow the solutions to be carried out.

STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS ARTICLE REGARDING FISHTAIL MEETING

PUBLISHED: NOVEMBER 12, 2009

## *Development, land use concerns draw citizens to Fishtail meeting*

By Jennifer Ries
SCN Editor

In the last of a series of neighborhood planning sessions entitled "Brainstorming the Future of Your Community," Fishtail residents gathered at Hanna Hall on Thursday, Nov. 5. The meeting was held jointly by the County Planning Department and the Economic Development Department to learn the needs and concerns from residents in Stillwater County communities. The purpose of the meetings is to develop a priority list of economic, infrastructure, recreation, educational, and emergency services needs. As funding opportunities emerge, identified projects might be successfully positioned to capture those funds. Topics for discussion emerged from the county growth policy surveys issued Summer 2008.

Forrest Mandeville, Planner 1 at the Stillwater County Planning Office, and Melissa Kramer, Stillwater County Economic Development Coordinator, were present, as were less than a dozen community members.

Land Use

Considerable discussion was given to a citizens' initiated zoning district to restrict development and preserve the pristine resources that draw people to the valley. The process has been attempted twice before, but each time has lost momentum before any restrictions could be put in place. A top concern was preserving agricultural land.

"This is an amazing area and I think there is interest in preserving that," said Fishtail resident and business owner Carol Bass.

Development

Residents would like to see better control of signage, including limiting size, location, and standardization. According to Mandeville, County Planning put signage regulations in place six month ago, but existing signage has seven years from the implementation date to become compliant.

Attendees also noted the need for pedestrian crossing signs, cross walks, a blinking light on the east end of town to slow traffic, and limiting light pollution. Some of these things may be accomplished with CTEP funding Fishtail has received for the community park. Work on that project will begin this spring.

As the area develops, attendees noted the need for better fire protection, keeping a careful eye on the balance of residential to commercial properties, and subdivision planning.

Recreation

Fishtail School's playground is designated as a park, but attendees contend that the playground equipment is out-dated and unsafe. School board member Jeanne Gardner commented that since playground equipment now comes in kits, revitalizing the playground may be a shovel-ready project that could be completed in phases as funding becomes available.

The fishing access nearby has become a sore spot with residents due to overuse and abuse. Because the campground is free, there is no enforcements of stay limits or a campground host. Consequently, meeting attendees reported campers parked for extended stays, vandalism, and

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abandoned animals. Residents have contacted Fish, Wildlife and Parks about limiting access and greater enforcement but were told the FWP received requests to expand the site.

"Without enforcement, I wouldn't think about any kind of expansion," said Jim Edwards.

Water Quality
Those residents in the flood plain have experience inconsistent water quality – some have good well, some don't. Attendees discussed the need for a water and sewer system to provide good water for existing residents and foster both residential and commercial growth. Attendees also voiced concerns about unregulated man-made ponds.

Fire/EMS/Law Enforcement
Fishtail relies on the Absarokee ambulance service and volunteer fire department. Attendees agreed that, overall, the service they have received has been top-notched. Access to additional water was a concern. Fishtail has no hydrants, dry or otherwise, and instead water is pulled from the river as needed. During winter, a frozen over river could mean the loss of a building. Attendees would also like to have a remote fire engine in town.

Regarding law enforcement, meeting attendees would like to see a deputy live in their town. They wanted better enforcement of speed limits, lower speed limits on West Rosebud Road, and a faster response time.

Education
Attendees noted a high percentage of area children are home schooled, prompting questions of why, what are the regulations governing home schooling, and musings that long bus routes might deter people from enrolling their children in Fishtail School, which presently has five students.

STAFF REPORT FROM FISHTAIL MEETING

Fishtail Neighborhood Plan meeting – Thursday, November 5, 2009, 7:00, Fishtail Community Center

**Land Use:** Residents in attendance stated that some kind of citizen initiative is needed to point out good land use models elsewhere. It was a general consensus that leaving the land in agriculture was ideal, but development is increasing. One possible tool that was mentioned was a citizen initiated zoning district for the area. However, it was not unanimous that this would be a good thing, and it was pointed out that similar efforts have stalled twice before.

**Development:** A main concern of those in attendance was making sure developments had adequate fire protection. Another concern was maintaining a good balance between residential and commercial development. One possible tool that was mentioned to guide

development was the use of cluster pattern subdivisions, with small lots and a lot of open space.

**Recreation:** Attendees noted a lack of safe bike riding areas and bike trails. Also, the playground equipment at the school is unsafe and needs to be replaced. Fishtail does have an existing park.

Another issue was that of the existing fishing access. The Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has reportedly been looking at expanding the site, but no progress has been seen. The site is currently very crowded at certain time of the year. Attendees desired limiting use of the fishing access and instituting more controls over users, or expanding the site.

**Economic Development:** The County regulation on signage was a major topic for those in attendance, with attendees divided on the benefit of the regulations versus the need to attract people to local businesses. One possible solution that was offered was to do a type of tourism signage, where businesses would pay a set fee to have a uniform sign at a predetermined location.

Street safety was another important topic, as residents in attendance noted that there is a blinking sign on the west end of town, but not the east. Attendees want to find a way to protect both pedestrians and traffic, but are undecided on how best to do it, though there are several options, such as crosswalks and road-widening.

Other important issues that came up under economic development were the need for some form of lighting controls, and the development of a water and sewer district, which many felt is necessary for more growth in the town.

**Wildlife:** Attendees noted several issues with wildlife in the area, such as the presence of Coyotes and wolves. Chickens in town were mentioned as an issue, as was people feeding wild animals and attracting them into town. Another issue that was brought up was deer dying in creeks, causing contamination.

**Water Quality:** Residents in attendance reported good water from their wells, though some had high levels of iron. There was discussion over the number of ponds in the area, as far as their inspection and licensing, due to the fact that they can be dirty and provide good mosquito habitat. Another issue that came up was over-irrigation causing runoff.

The possibility of a public water system was also discussed.

**Law Enforcement/Emergency Services:** The main concerns brought up by those in attendance had to do with fire suppression. Specifically discussed were the lack of hydrants is the area, the distance of Fishtail from a fire department, and the lack of building codes. Traffic enforcement was another large topic, with attendees saying more foresight is needed in traffic matters (such as on the curve outside of town), and discussions about the speed limit on West Rosebud Road.

Other issues that came up were fixing the playground equipment at the school and trimming weeds around signs. However, overall residents said they had good services.

**Education:** Attendees expressed curiosity about the large percentage of homeschoolers in the area, and wondered if there was a certain reason for this, as homeschooling is one reason why

enrollment is down at the Fishtail school. The issue of school consolidation did arise, with residents unsure about the benefits and costs of not having a school in Fishtail.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR IN STILLWATER COUNTY NEWS

PUBLISHED: JANUARY 14, 2010

***Thanks for your input!***

We would like to thank everyone who attended the "Brainstorming the Future of Your Community" neighborhood meetings. We held these meetings in each community across the County last fall. Round table discussions at each meeting addressed topics such as development, infrastructure, economic development, wildlife, emergency services, and more. We gained valuable insight to specific areas of need and interest in each community. The input from each community meeting has been compiled and will soon be added to the Stillwater County Capital Improvements Plan and to the Stillwater County Growth Policy. These two documents, updated on a regular basis, are vital tools for the County when applying for grant funding to address various issues across the County.
If you would like a more detailed report of what came out of the discussion in your community, please feel free to contact us at 322-8050.
We would also like to express our thanks to Jennifer Ries of the Stillwater County News for assistance in raising awareness about the meetings and relaying the topics discussed back to the community. Jennifer's dedication to this effort is greatly appreciated.

Forrest Mandeville, Stillwater County Planner I
Melissa Kramer, Stillwater County Economic Development Coordinator

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following is a table showing which topics were discussed at each meeting and a basic list of issues that were discussed under each topic.

| | ABSAROKEE | FISHTAIL | MOLT | NYE | PARK CITY | RAPELJE | REED POINT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **DEVELOPMENT** | • Availability of sewer hookups<br>• Trails along Stillwater River<br>• Sidewalks | • Fire protection<br>• Balance of residential and commercial<br>• Cluster subdivision design | • Proximity to Billings and Laurel<br>• Water diversion projects<br>• Fire suppression | • Abundance of public lands<br>• Fire issues<br>• Governance of old subdivisions | • Roads | • Water system | • Subdivision access and connectivity<br>• Central water systems<br>• Youth center |
| **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** | • Attracting tourism<br>• Support for local businesses | • Signage<br>• Street safety<br>• Lighting<br>• Water and sewer district | • Senior Center<br>• EMS and Sherriff services<br>• Roads and bike paths<br>• Energy development<br>• Cell phone coverage | • Support for local businesses<br>• Preservation of post office<br>• Welcome sign | • Little activity | • More families<br>• Transportation<br>• Wind development<br>• Cell phone towers | • New business<br>• Advertising<br>• Library |
| **EDUCATION** | | • Homeschoolers<br>• Enrollment<br>• Consolidation | • Enrollment<br>• Roads | • Support for school<br>• Consolidation | • Future of the school<br>• Activities for kids | • High quality<br>• Enrollment | • Future of school<br>• Variety of classes and activities |
| **EMERGENCY SERVICES** | • Fortunate to have<br>• Volunteers, funding | • Fire suppression<br>• Fixing playground equipment<br>• Trimming weeds around signs | • Funding | • Fire suppression/fuels reduction | • Volunteers, buildings | • Fire department radios<br>• Training | • Volunteers, training, equipment |
| **HEALTH** | • Clinic, pharmacy, health classes<br>• Child health care services | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INFRASTRUCTURE** | • Sewer system<br>• Highway 78 construction<br>• Access to baseball fields, sidewalks | | • Roads<br>• Water system | • Roads<br>• Drainage along roads<br>• Walk and bike trails | • Drainage<br>• Bike Path<br>• Access to park north of town | • Sewer system<br>• Roads<br>• Water system | • Drainage |
| **LAW ENFORCEMENT** | • Response time<br>• Availability of deputies | • Traffic enforcement | • Response time<br>• Availability of deputies<br>• Roads | • Adequate | • Response time<br>• Availability of deputies | • Geographic training<br>• New repeater | • Adequate |
| **LAND USE** | | • Good models<br>• Citizen initiated zoning district | | | • Agricultural land<br>• Park land | | |
| **RECREATION** | • Skate park<br>• Trail system<br>• Tennis courts at Hawkins Park | • Bike trails<br>• Playground equipment at school<br>• Fishing access | | • Public access issues<br>• Trails along road | • Bike trail<br>• Access to park north of Town | • School activities<br>• Community activities<br>• Value-added activities | • Recent improvements in area recreational options |
| **WATER QUALITY** | • Good local water quality<br>• Up-stream non-compliant systems | • Wells<br>• Ponds<br>• Public water system | • Groundwater | • Old septic systems<br>• Community system for Beehive | • Centralized water | • Water system | • Central water system<br>• Sewer system near capacity |
| **WILDLIFE** | | • Feeding of wildlife | • Property rights | • Access to private property | | | • Sometimes too much wildlife<br>• Hunter access |