

Lewis County Planning Commission

Public Meeting

In-Person & Virtual Meeting via Zoom

April 9, 2024 - Meeting Notes

Planning Commissioners Present: Lorie Spogen, District 1; Jason Alves, District 1; Gretchen Fritsch, District 3; Frank Corbin, District 3; Jeff Skutley, District 2; Roger Moore, At-Large

Planning Commissioners Excused: Bob Russell, District 2;

Staff Present: Mindy Brooks, Senior Long Range Planner; Megan Sathre, Office Assistant Senior; Lee Napier, Director of Community Development;

Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Notes – March 26, 2024
- Staff Presentation: Private Road Naming
- Staff Report: Private Road Naming
- Quarterly Report

1. Zoom Guidelines

The clerk dispensed with the Zoom Guidelines.

2. Call to Order

A. Determination of a Quorum

6 Commissioners were present; there was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Moore made the motion to approve the agenda; second by Commissioner Spogen. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the meeting notes from March 26, 2024. Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve the notes as presented, second by Commissioner Spogen. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment

There were no members of the public who wished to provide public comment.

6. Workshop – Private Road Naming

Mindy Brooks, Senior Long-Range Planner, gave a presentation on Private Road Naming (*see presentation for details*). Throughout the presentation the commissioners asked the following questions.

Commissioner Skutley asked what a dashed address is. Mindy responded that it is when a road doesn't have a name. The address is associated with another road, but it doesn't have a name for the road that the location is actually located on. Lee added that an example would be Jackson Hwy. 123-123. In some cases when running out of numbers or branches, the address can have more than one dash, such as Jackson Hwy. 123-123-123-123. This means the house is off Jackson Hwy. in some network of roads or spurs without any name with it.

Commissioner Corbin asked why there is a 10-letter limit on private road names. Mindy responded that she does not know when the 10-letter limit was implemented by the county, but staff want to continue this standard rather than proposing a change. Commissioner Spogen added that if a name is too long the letters may be too small to read on a standard size road sign.

Commissioner Moore shared an anecdote about his own property being a prime example of confusing addressing. He has a shared driveway with a primary house address, a dashed house address, and eventually an ADU address given that same address, dash A. Moore's house is in the county, but the two parcels behind his are in the UGA. Since there are a total of three lots, would Moore have to go through the private road standards if someone were to build a house on the third lot? Mindy responded that that county road standards apply to Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) in all cases. This private road naming code is about when lots are created, not about when houses are being built. We have a policy in place that if there are two houses on a driveway and then a third house is being built, the driveway will need to come up to private road standards, including naming. If the road is already meeting private road standards and needs to be extended, the whole road would need to be named.

Commissioner Skutley asked how the county categorizes primitive roads. Mindy responded that if the road must be upgraded to meet private road standards, then a name will be required. This could be the case for a timber road on private property when the parcel is subdivided and the owners want to use the timber road as their private road.

Commissioner Spogen asked for clarification on the wording about “when 3 or more lots are created through any land division.” Spogen noted that this is confusing because you can create three lots that are not all served by the same road. Mindy responded that this language is part of the staff summary, not the actual code. The draft code gives detailed requirements of when private road naming standards will be triggered.

Commissioner Corbin emphasized the importance of having properly named roads for safety purposes, as well as navigation and deliveries. Since this code change would not apply retroactively, Corbin would like to encourage people, possibly through incentive of waiving fees, to bring their current roads up to the naming standards. Lee responded that in her experience, there has not been political support to require changes to people’s existing addresses and the public is not in favor of this idea. Community Development is trying to correct future naming issues through code changes and waiving the fees to apply for private road names may be a good incentive but may not be widely embraced. Mindy added that this is something that can be added to the letter of transmittal to the BOCC if the commissioners would like to further encourage the county to take on a project to retroactively fix road names.

Commissioner Fritsch asked if developers can be required to name the private roads before selling off lots. Mindy responded that the proposed amendments to Private Road Naming will fix that issue.

Commissioner Spogen suggested revising some of the language on the private road naming form, specifically where it says, “based on the same system and formula presently used to assign addresses.” Spogen noted that this language was difficult to understand. Lee responded that this language is not necessary but indicates that private road naming is the same as public road naming, they are not being treated differently.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the Commissioners were ready to move to a Public Hearing, which will occur on May 14th.

7. Good of the Order:

A. Staff

Mindy provided a quarterly report showing the number of building permits issued in the past 5 years as well as a breakdown by percentage of what types of permits have been issued.

Commissioner Spogen asked if the new energy codes were causing any issues for Community Development. Lee responded that there wasn’t a lot of communication about how to implement them. It’s unknown at this point what we are up against, but there is a commitment from the building official and his team to do their best to work with customers to understand what the options are and try to work with them to figure out what the best credit is. Lee observed that there has not been as much angst with customers to get their permits in before the code change deadline.

Mindy shared that the Commissioners would have their first Planning Commission meeting in the new building in June.

B. Planning Commissioners

There were no items from the Planning Commission for good of the order.

8. Calendar

The next meeting of the Planning Commission will occur on April 23, 2024, and the agenda item is a workshop on the Comprehensive Plan Land Capacity Analysis.

There will be no meeting on July 9th.

9. Adjourn

Commissioner Skutley made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.