

Lewis County Planning Commission

Public Meeting

In-Person & Virtual Meeting via Zoom

May 14, 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; Bob Russell, District 2

Staff Present: Mindy Brooks, Senior Long Range Planner; Megan Sathre, Office Assistant Senior; Lee Napier, Director of Community Development; Barbara Russell, Prosecuting Attorney; Jennifer Libby-Jones, 911 Director

Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Notes – April 23, 2024
- Staff Report: Private Road Naming
- Written Testimony

1. Zoom Guidelines

The clerk dispensed with the Zoom Guidelines.

2. Call to Order

A. Determination of a Quorum

7 Commissioners were present; there was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Spogen noted an error in the agenda for the next planning commission meeting date. Megan added that the incorrect date was also listed for the approval of meeting minutes. The Commissioners noted these items should be fixed before approval. Commissioner Spogen made the motion to approve the agenda as amended; second by Commissioner Russell. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the meeting notes from April 23, 2024. Commissioner Russell 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. Public Hearing – Private Road Naming

Chair Corbin asked the following questions to begin the public hearing.

Is there anyone in the audience who believes that the public was not notified of the hearing in a timely manner? *There were no responses.*

Do any of the Commissioner have a disclosure to make? *There were no responses.*

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

Commissioner Skutley asked who covers the cost of readdressing. Mindy responded that the property owner is responsible for the costs. Skutley clarified that if one new developer subdivides a property at the end of the road/driveway it causes everyone else on that road to come into compliance with private road standards and change their address. Mindy confirmed that was correct.

Commissioner Spogen asked what the procedure is to change the road name. Mindy responded that the person pursuing the development and it results in a change of the road name, they will need to gather 50% agreement among the property owners on the new name. If there is not agreement, the county will select a name for the road. There was discussion about needing a procedure to share with the customers to ensure everyone understands the process and when the county will step in.

Commissioner Corbin expressed that this is a great opportunity to fix something that has needed to be fixed for a long time. He noted that the inconvenience of changing an address seems to be problematic, but it is not going to be forced on everyone at one time. It will be occurring on a case-by-case basis as land divisions are applied for. Corbin agrees it is important from a life safety perspective to make it as easy as possible for 911 workers to find the correct locations.

Commissioner Spogen asked Jennifer Libby-Jones, 911 Director, to expand on the written testimony she provided, by explaining in more depth the problems that are being caused by the

dashed addressing and the severity of those problems. Jennifer responded that the main issues with the addressing is that it is delaying service at dispatch as well as delaying service as the responder struggles to find the location. The frequency of the issue is difficult to quantify. Spogen asked what 911 does if the responder cannot find the location. Jennifer responded that the emergency services call back to dispatch, who then has to call back to the member of the public and ask for a landmark or other identifying features. Spogen asked if Jennifer believes this is a large enough problem that all addresses should be retroactively fixed, or if the proposed code amendments to prevent any future addressing issues will be sufficient. Jennifer responded that she does not believe the problem is severe enough to require all addresses be fixed retroactively. Introducing change gradually is usually better received by the public and Jennifer is in favor of the approach staff is suggesting.

Mindy reiterated that the only thing that is being proposed to be fixed retroactively is when an extension of a road occurs and that road was a dashed road name. Mindy let the Commissioners know that they can make the motion however they see fit, but at this time staff are suggesting stopping future addressing issues and fix addressing when road extensions occur. If the Commissioners would like to pursue the option of having all addresses fixed retroactively, Mindy suggested they recommend the approval of the current amendments being proposed and add to the transmittal letter their request for all addresses to be fixed. The commissioners discussed the pros and cons of trying to fix all the addresses at one time verses taking the approach staff has recommended. Skutley noted that it would be beneficial to the emergency services, but it would be a burden on Community Development.

Commissioner Russell asked how critical areas are addressed during land divisions and road development. Mindy responded that during a simple segregation, the developer is required to show where the easement is, which will become the private road when development of the parcels occurs, and the easement can then be reviewed to make sure it is not impacting critical areas. Lee added that it has always been a requirement that newly created lots must have an easement and that Karen Witherspoon, the Senior Planner, issues conditions of development that prevents development in critical areas when reviewing the land division.

Commissioner Russell expressed the value in trying to fix the addressing problems. However, Russell would like it to be a suggestion, rather than a requirement, for the 3rd or 4th person on the road and only require the change where it makes sense and/or when there are many people on that road. Mindy responded that the code needs to be non-discretionary. It needs to either require that an extension result in renaming the road or we don't. Mindy reiterated that if there is currently a dashed road with property at the end of the road that someone wants to develop into more lots, the road will need to be extended. If a person buys that last lot at the end of the road, but does not subdivide the property, they will not be required to rename the road.

Testimony

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

Mindy Brooks, Lee Napier, and Jennifer Libby-Jones requested that their opening remarks and comments be added to the testimony.

Deliberation

Commissioner Russell made a motion to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners approve the amendments related to Private Road Naming as presented in the March 29th staff report, seconded by Commissioner Spogen. The motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Skutley asked why the amendments being voted on were not displayed. Mindy responded that the amendments were sent out with the staff report to the Commissioners in advance of the workshop and the hearing. The amendments were posted online for the public to review and there was a notice in the paper telling the public how they could access the information. Mindy noted that if the Commissioners would like a hard copy provided at the meetings to let staff know in advance and they would be happy to provide them.

Commissioner Spogen expressed concern about delays to the developer because of resistance from the neighbors on choosing a road name. Spogen suggested that there be a timeline in writing that states when the land developer can go to the county to name the road if the neighbors don't agree so that the developer is not held up in the process. Russell added that agreeing on a road name is going to be the least of the neighbor's issues.

Commissioner Skutley asked if members of the public could request changes to the amendments being presented. Mindy responded that if the public has issues, they could testify to the Planning Commission, and the public will have another opportunity to testify at the Board of County Commissioners hearing before a final decision is made.

Lee noted that the code amendments being proposed are already required for other land divisions. Simple Segregations are the only type of land division that currently does not have private road and addressing standards.

Transmittal Letter

The Commissioners noted they would like the following items addressed in the transmittal letter.

Commissioner Corbin wants to suggest that the Board of County Commissioners consider waving the address application fee to incentivize more people to correct their addresses for a set amount of time.

Commissioner Spogen would like to suggest that there is a county policy developed for assisting developers with getting a road name chosen in a timely manner.

Mindy stated that she will put together a draft for review. Commissioner Corbin requested that if possible, the letter of transmittal be ready to sign by the 27th of May before he goes out of

town. Mindy responded that she would try her best, but there is no rush needed so if the Commissioners need more time to review, the letter can be signed after Frank returns.

7. Good of the Order:

A. Staff

Mindy let the Commissioner know that Community Development hosts a Process Improvement Team twice a month that is open to the public. We have been discussing and will continue to discuss private road naming, so any Commissioners or the public are welcome to attend.

Mindy asked the Planning Commissioners if 8 days in advance provides a sufficient amount of time to review the materials before a meeting. The Commissioners agreed that it is.

Mindy shared that there is a retirement party for Lee on Wednesday, May 29th at 11:30am in the BOCC Hearing Room. Everyone is welcome to attend.

B. Planning Commissioners

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

8. Calendar

The next meeting of the Planning Commission will occur on May 28, 2024, and the agenda item is a workshop on the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update.

Commissioner Corbin will be absent on May 28th and June 11th.

9. Adjourn

Commissioner Spogen made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.