

TOWN OF ENNIS COMMISSION MEETING
February 13, 2020
7:00 P.M.
ENNIS TOWN HALL

Open: Mayor Leavitt opened the Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge to the Flag

Commission Present: Bancroft, Hardy, Ranson, Roberts, Schroeder

Minutes of the January Meeting: The minutes of the January 2020 meeting were reviewed.

Bancroft made a motion to approve the minutes. Schroeder seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: All Commissioners voted yes. Motion approved.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items: Brittany and Chris Hirsch informed the Council they are new business owners in Ennis and will soon be opening an archery company.

County Survey Results – Cindy Gockel: Cindy introduced Angela Karanas, Chair of the County Housing Advisory Board. Angela presented to the Council the results of the online housing survey specific to Madison County. Her presentation included reading the mission statement of the housing board and the need for housing for people who live and work in the community. Her report included: there were 313 responses, 12% of the target area and responses included business owners, the difference between low-income and affordable housing, and that inadequate housing limits the growth of services. As a board, its role is to raise awareness, educate research solutions and adopt solutions with county approval. This includes using best practices from other comparable communities and encouraging private and public partnerships.

Hardy shared a newspaper article from Bellevue, ID about using containers for worker housing. Roberts stated that the Council is on the precipice of zoning updates, that the zoning survey indicated that housing was the number one concern for Ennis residents. Gockel talked about what's happening in Bozeman related to ADU's (Accessory Dwelling Units). Roberts talked about looking at business licenses for short term rentals in Ennis to make sure sub-standard housing is held accountable.

Phase 5 North 40 Subdivision – Josh Vujovich: Roberts made a motion to approve the Phase 5 North 40 Subdivision. Bancroft seconded the motion.
Discussion: Roberts thanked Vujovich for doing a great job and doing it right. Vujovich stated he was excited to have a good product of offer. Roberts summarized for the Council the preliminary plat process and that all conditions have been met.
Roll Call Vote. All Commissioners voted yes. Motion approved.

Headwaters RC&D – Joe Willauer: Willauer explained the Headwaters organization and gave a detailed overview of its various functions. Headwaters

represents the largest region in Montana, from Madison County to Ovando and its primary function is to support the economic development of local businesses. This includes technical assistance, a loan program for gap financing, helping to make informed decisions as a business owner and first time home-buyer training. Headwaters updates can be found on social media. It can also help with a town's Growth Policy or community profile.

Roberts stated the Ennis Growth Policy is ready to be updated; the last one was completed in 2014. She indicated that a Master Plan update is coming soon, with a possible consideration for a city park. There is value in seeing what other communities are doing. Willauer said Headwaters offers social media training and would be willing to help get a handle on Ennis small business needs. Bancroft asked about the Brownfields Program in Montana. Willauer said it addresses contaminated properties and offers an environmental assessment of those properties. The full process can take 3-4 months. Willauer also serves as the Mayor of Twin Bridges, stating that his town is looking at a form of Resort Tax, focusing on tourism businesses that include guiding services, restaurants and lodging.

All Headwaters services are offered at low cost or for free, a great value for the town of Ennis.

Department Reports:

Library: Karen Ketchu was present and gave an overview of the written report submitted. The appointment of Judie Frey to the Ennis Library Board needs to be made by the Council and will be put on next month's agenda (March).

Ambulance: Patty Austin submitted a written report. Roberts requested the Council receive a total for number of runs as well as a budgetary financial statement from Ginger Guinn. A written report of the training schedule for ambulance volunteers was given to the Commissioners.

Police: John Moore was present and submitted a written report to the Commission for review. Roberts requested the Council receive a report for total number of citations.

Public Works: No report. Kelly Elser has been out ill. Leavitt states that the department is still interviewing potential candidates for the public works position, that it needs to be the right fit, and that advertising has been done in town.

Zoning: There was no Zoning report. Roberts requested the Council receive a total of the number of building permits issued.

Clerk: There was no Clerk report. Ginger Guinn has been out ill.

Mayor's Report: Leavitt stated the audit results will be on next month's agenda (March). He suggested the Council hold a Work Session to take a look at business licenses and begin a conversation about VRBO's. Council members decided to schedule the Work Session for Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 6pm at Town Hall. Roberts suggested business owners be invited to participate.

Commission Comments: Roberts spoke about meeting with John Willauer/HRC&D and the Big Sky Trust Foundation to help write the Master Plan for Ennis, getting assistance in writing grants and the need to identify projects so that there's help in locating funding sources.

Roberts requested that the following items be put on next month's agenda (March): Apartment Rent, Rural Water and In-House Training Dates.

Roberts announced that Nicole Bailey's name is to be submitted to the Council for the Ennis Tree Board; this needs to be on next month's agenda (March). The Tree Board is working on the Arbor Day celebration and Tree City status.

Schroeder asked about sidewalk and crosswalk safety. Roberts said a walk audit needs to be done, more information needs to be gathered and more data acquired with the goal of doing a demo walk. She suggested the Council have a conversation with MDOT about truck traffic and how it may affect downtown Ennis.

Claims: Bancroft made a motion to accept and pay claims. Hardy seconded the motion. Call Vote: All Commissioners voted yes. Motion passed.

Adjourn: Bancroft made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Schroeder seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: All Commissioners voted yes. Motion passed.

The meeting as adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Blake Leavitt, Mayor

Ginger Guinn, Clerk/Treasurer