Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Listening Session Notes

**May 4, 2021 6pm**

Attendees: Marisa Keith (Southwest Ada County Alliance), Jeanie Thomas (Hidden Springs)

**What is and isn’t working well with the existing Zoning Ordinance?**

Marisa said she has received good customer service from Ada County planning staff in the past.

Jeanie said it was very difficult to find information within the current ordinance, and that searching for records through the Ada County website was also hard.

Marisa also said the current ordinance format was not user-friendly, as it is difficult and time-consuming to find information in it, it doesn’t flow well, and is very text-heavy.

Marisa said she would like the County to make improvements to its neighborhood meeting standards and public hearing testimony procedures. She would like neighborhood meetings to be held indoors in ADA accessible locations within close proximity to the subject property. She noted that in the past these meetings have sometimes been held outside on dirt lots in inclement weather, or inside in locations very far from site of the proposed development.

Marisa also said she would like the County to relax its ADU requirements in order to allow non-relatives of property owners to live in them.

**Are there any specific design standards that the County needs to tune up?**

Jeanie said that residents in Hidden Springs have begun parking along alleys in the space between their backyard fences and the paved surface of the alley in spaces that had previously been landscaped. She said she hadn’t been able to find anything in the current ordinance specifically prohibiting this, but that it made backing out more difficult for residents on the opposite side of the alley. She would like the new ordinance to address this.

Jeanie also said there wasn’t adequate parking for the commercial area in Hidden Springs. She said that as more homes have been built in the area, more people are utilizing it, which is causing overflow parking to extend further into the neighborhood. She would like the new ordinance to consider additional parking for commercial areas within planned communities.

Marisa said she would like the new ordinance to have better fencing and landscaping requirements for commercial developments adjacent to residential properties. She referenced a recent application for a drive-through restaurant in Ada County which she said the current ordinance did not provide adequate screening for, as it didn’t adequately protect from car headlights shining into neighboring properties and allowed very small trees to be planted to meet landscaping requirements.

Marisa also said she would like the County to work towards preserving more canal pathways for public use.

**Are there any uses that are a concern, or that the Zoning Ordinance should do a better job of accommodating?**

Jeanie said she would like the County to regulate short-term rentals to ensure health and safety standards were being met.

**Are there any standards, topics or innovations missing from the current Zoning Ordinance?**

Marisa said she would like the County to require more detached sidewalk with landscape buffers and street trees, particularly within the Areas of City Impact.

**Are zoning application processes meeting the needs of staff and the development community?**

Jeanie and Marisa both felt the County’s current noticing process was working well, though Marisa thought the County should consider extending its radius distance to notify residents further away.

Marisa said she would like the County’s public hearing testimony procedures to be updated, as there is sometimes confusion about how much time to give neighborhood associations to testify. She felt neighborhood associations should be given more than the standard three minute time limit for testimony.

**What should the primary outcome of the Zoning Ordinance update be?**

Jeanie and Marisa both said they would like the new ordinance to be more user-friendly.