

October 19, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Planning Department

City Annex Building

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioners Brent Dixon, Margaret Wimborne, Joanne Denney, Gene Hicks, Arnold Cantu, Lindsey Romankiw, George Morrison.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Natalie Black

ALSO PRESENT: Planning Director Brad Cramer, Assistant Planning Director Kerry Beutler, and planners Caitlin Long, Brian Stephens and Anas Almassrahy, and interested citizens.

CALL TO ORDER: Brent Dixon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Hearing (s):

1. RZON 21-017:

Dixon opened the public hearing.

Applicant: City of Idaho Falls is the Applicant.

Brad Cramer presented the staff report, a part of the record, and summarized as follows:

Cramer thanked all that were involved in this extensive project, including the County. Cramer indicated that they had a lot of community involvement and the surveys they put out had lots of responses. Cramer indicated that he would cover highlights. Cramer stated that every jurisdiction is required by law to adopt a Comprehensive Plan and it is required to be a collaborative process with citizen meetings, hearings, surveys and seek other public agencies and their advice. Cramer stated that they are required to address and consider 17 elements and they do not have a separate section in the Plan to talk about each thing, but they did consult and research and address all 17 elements within the Plan. Cramer state that they do consulting with other good planning efforts around the community and region, including housing reports, healthy community assessment, connecting our community plan, BMPO, Parks and Recreation, and others, including interviewing of all departments in the City to understand what growth meant to them. Cramer then went out and talked to people within the community, including County and Ammon. Cramer stated that they hired Agnew Beck out of Boise, that is an engagement firm and they helped the City design a good engagement process that was successful. Cramer stated that they held an open house in person and virtual (Webex and Facebook Live), Focus Group interviews, including educational groups, public utilities. Cramer stated that they attempted to host one with the agricultural community but didn't have any one attend, although they did reach out to some people in that industry. They held 5 neighborhood meetings in person and virtual and tried to talk to people about where they live. The first survey received 700 responses which is more than double the responses needed to establish statistical validity. The website was broadcast widely and had a lot of hits. Lots of press releases and media interviews. Bud Craner was instrumental in getting the word out. Facebook's geographic targeting tool was used for neighborhood meetings. The second survey received nearly 400 responses. Cramer stated that there are emails that were received within he packets, and 7 more were received today and they were past the deadline, but he will cover what was contained in those emails, as they are important issues. Cramer stated that with community engagement they are looking for themes that are important to the community and those talked about: Community healthy; Housing;

Transportation and Connectivity; Employment and Economic Development; Community Development. Cramer showed the illustration on how the City grew through the decades and the amount of land use. The Graphic illustrates that the consumption of land the last 10 years has lessened, and the population has grown, so planning is working, and infill efforts are working. Cramer presented the map showing the 5 geographic areas that they split the City into. This Plan is action focused rather than just policy statements. Each section has a table for each area, then there is a theme listed, issues within that theme in that area, goals/objectives, actions to take to meet objectives, time frame, and cost to obtain the objective. They tried to assign some priority so when they report back to the City Council and the community, they can explain how they are doing on meeting objectives, and they want to incorporate how they are doing on the Plan and meeting objectives in the Annual Report to hold them accountable to the Community. Cramer presented the change to how the Future Land Use Map is done where they have moved away from the traditional approach (low/high density) and have moved to transects. Transects will demonstrate that rather than having it state that only “this” type of housing will be in this area, the transects will give a description of what might be an area, which might be more intense, greater mix of land uses, more built infrastructure. Cramer explained that the previous Plan called out land uses and densities and that has created expectations that aren’t always realistic and has been way to specific for a general plan. The new Plan steps outside the land use and looks at everything that is happening in an area, including land use, road patterns, connectivity, connectivity levels. This approach does not do away with low density and single-family homes, but it just describes that there might be more than single family homes where you see yellow on a map. Cramer showed the current 2013 Land Use Plan Map against the proposed Plan. Cramer stated that he received emails concerning the northwest portions of the map and were concerned that the City was encroaching into Ag land in the Osgood area. Cramer feels that they have clarified some things with responses to the emails and the concerns that the City was trying to annex the land shown, and the City is not and legally cannot annex land that is outside of the Area of City Impact unless an owner requests annexation and there are no loopholes, and the City cannot move the line on their own there has to be County approval to move that line. Cramer explained that the proposed Plan actually has a huge redaction from the current 2013 map because they recognize the ag land is important and the City doesn’t want to grow faster than they can provide service for. Cramer agrees that they need to be cautious in growing into agriculture land. Cramer stated that they show the areas on the proposed Plan Map because if market forces lead to someone wanting to sell their land and develop in the City, the City cannot annex land that is not shown in the current comprehensive plan. There was a challenge to balance the need to have a slowed growth pattern with market forces that drive development. The hope, by shrinking the Plan, is to send the message that City of Idaho Falls is open to growth, but they will be smart and cautious about where growth occurs. Cramer presented a proposed language change that was not in the draft. The language addresses how housing would be approved. Cramer stated that the problem with housing being requested in Industrial Parks has come up and there hasn’t been a policy to address how to manage that. This language will help them to not put housing where housing would be incompatible. Cramer proposed that the language be added to the housing section of the City-Wide Chapter. Cramer stated that this Plan cannot be static, it has to be worked on annually and engage with the community on an ongoing basis, and major updates every 3-5 years. Cramer requested when a motion is made that should the Commission recommend approval, that the Commission include in the motion a list of

changes that they would like to see made, including if they are comfortable with the housing language, including that language.

Wimborne asked where in the Plan the language on housing would be. Cramer stated that the language would go in Chapter 4 Imagine IF.

Support/Opposition:

Nathan Hansen, 2503 W 49th North, Idaho Falls, Idaho. Hansen appreciates the maps and showing the change and the concern for the farm ground. Hansen stated that in the past they haven't felt that the City has reached out and included the agriculture community. Hansen stated that it sounds like the City tried, but they just got out of 6 weeks of harvest, and it has been a bad year. Hansen stated that if they had heard about the meeting there would be a lot of people there. Hansen wants to feel included, know what is going on and have a say and input as it is important and a little change on a map is huge to the agriculture community if it involves a ditch or a main line, or a pivot.

Hershell Marsik, 258 Walnut, Idaho Falls, Idaho. Marsik has read the Plan and thanked all that did work on the Plan. Marsik would like to see staff get the committees and groups arranged that was indicated in the Plan and follow through with the Plan.

Jake Hall, 520 W 15th Street, Idaho Falls, Idaho. Hall thought the plan was great. Hall feels that prioritizing walkability is important and in fill as they try to build a sustainable community. Hall stated that they are focusing on walkable areas, and if the zones include parking minimums, especially in zones that they want to be walkable, he feels it is a conflict of interest and there needs to be a broad discussion about whether they should build huge parking lots for everything. Hall stated that they need to ensure that when they focus on the roads, they make sure that sidewalks and keeping them open is a priority. Hall stated that he moves around on his board and when a road gets redone the sidewalks get left in bad shape. Hall stated that there are a lot of places where sidewalks are lifted and it's a big ADA issue, along with general safety. Hall stated that when road construction is happening the signs get put on the sidewalk and there is no consideration in keeping the sidewalks open. Hall asked about what the City's intentions are when the Police Station is built and what they will do with the open parking in Downtown. Hall suggested redeveloping the northern part of town where it is mostly parking lots and trying to reintegrate the aspect of Downtown. Hall again expressed his appreciation.

Ashley Osberg, 2446 N 26th W, Idaho Falls, Idaho. Osberg stated that the City's meeting with agriculture was a failure. Osberg stated that if every other zone in town knew about the meetings and attended, and you didn't agricultural presence, it is because it was not advertised. Osberg stated that the email she read today stated that 2 people were told about the meeting. Osberg stated that you cannot claim that 2 people were told about a meeting and you "informed" people about it. Osberg wants to know when the meeting was, and how people were informed. Osberg wants to know how they informed people that were in the City and why they didn't receive the same notification. Osberg stated that if they are doing something that effects people you need to inform them, and if you don't inform them, then you don't have their consent to make changes.

Melanie Edwards, 2656 W 17th North, Idaho Falls, Idaho. Edwards understands the issue of the Water Tower is separate from the Plan but wanted to make a point related to the Plan.

Edwards stated it appears from statements made recently in forums that the Council is going to consider another site for the water tower if a feasible one can be obtained and implemented at a reasonable cost and in a reasonable amount of time. Edwards feels that this is when the greatest number of creative ideas will come forward to Council from the public. Edwards feels that it could impact the City Plan for land use as an alternative to placing it in the Park. Edwards stated that this is a long-term plan, and a water tower will have an impact on integrating the other aspects of the Plan including parks and walkability.

Jerry Selke, 2730 Pomen, Idaho Falls, Idaho. Selke commended the staff on the Plan. Selke is concerned with the lack of attention to low and moderate housing, and what the City's methodology is going to be on handling integrating low- and moderate-income housing in the future.

Dixon asked the Commissioners to comment while the public hearing is open.

Wimborne had a question on the agriculture. Wimborne asked where agriculture would fall, if it would be in parks and open spaces, or special use. Cramer stated that as far as transects go, ag would be considered open space, but there is also a transect that talks about future development, so it could fall in either one of those transects. Wimborne is happy with the end product of the Plan and feels it will make the job of the Planning and Zoning Commission easier, and it is a much better way of laying out ideas and action plans on how the City should grow.

Denney appreciates the work that went into the document. Denney believes this is a living document and won't be put on the shelf to gather dust but will continue to develop. Denney has concern about the agriculture community if the meeting was not successful. Denney questioned how they can include the ag community more.

Dixon's wife (retired schoolteacher) went through the document with her red pen and noted places where there was editing needed in the document. Dixon went through some of the edits that need to be done. Dixon feels the document is well laid out and gives a great vision. Dixon is still unsure why they chose the 5 areas because they aren't distinct, and he isn't sure of the purpose of the areas. Dixon found that the specific action plans for the areas actually dealt more with City Wide actions and not specific to that area. Dixon felt that Area 4 was very good and pretty specific, but Area 2 did not have anything that was specific, and everything was general, and if it is general it belongs in the general area. Dixon feels there is more work needed to identify specifics in those areas that have very few specifics. Dixon feels the maps in the zones are difficult to read. Dixon stated that in Area 3 the Map still incorrectly identifies Pancheri as Broadway. Dixon suggests that these things be addressed before going to City Council. Dixon stated that there are specific actions in the area of City-Wide Housing and Focus on in-fill Revise Parking Requirements for Housing Development in Walkable Areas. Dixon made a strong comment about why they should be doing this. Dixon asked if they have ever seen a City that has sufficient parking. Dixon stated that if they reduce the parking requirements to make it less expensive for developers, they will go the way of every major City and areas of the City that they have relaxed parking requirements there is not enough parking. Dixon stated that you cannot take something that is generic to the Country and apply it to this area. People in this area love their cars, they love their trucks, and compact car parking doesn't work well in Idaho Falls as everyone drives 4x4 crew cab and it is difficult to get into the compact car spots. Dixon noticed no action was taken on that comment and that frustrated him. Dixon feels that the staff is pushing an agenda and not listening to all the comments. Dixon felt there was too much Buss

Phrases throughout the documents. Dixon listed some phrases and the number of times they were referenced throughout the documents, including complete streets. Dixon indicated that there are some cross sections south of Panchari there are streets that allow parking and travel lanes, but they do not allow for other things that complete streets include, such as bike lanes, etc. Dixon referenced a letter in the packet where other people commented on that problem. Dixon referenced a comment about “painted bike gutters” used as bike paths. Dixon feels that there is a point where you need to separate those different modes of travel, and maybe they don’t belong on the same right of way. Dixon stated that this area does not have the large high rises that are depicted in the missing middle housing report. Dixon feels that if they reference those apartments, it makes the middle housing more identifiable. Dixon feels that the concepts in the missing middle housing section are some of the most enjoyable areas of town, including some of the small developments that have courtyard developments. Dixon stated that walkable centers is mentioned 91 times and in warmer climates it makes more sense, but some things in this plan are more forced rather than realizable. Dixon suggested rather than force things in because it is the buzz word of the day, instead look for what would make sense. This is an automobile community and that comes through in the back part of the report. Dixon went on Google to look at where things were walkable and where things were not. Dixon stated that there is not a single sidewalk from the Grand Teton Mall out to a road, other developments do have sidewalks down through the development to get out to the major road. Things like that will improve walkability as parking lots are not a safe area for pedestrians. Dixon feels overall the document is much different from previous plans and much more visionary, and that is good. Dixon feels that there is room for improvement specifically in the action areas with respect to the zones and making the specific to the zones. Dixon stated that the document needs tuning and clean up.

Hicks agrees that this Plan is visionary. Hicks hopes politics doesn’t get in the way of making it work. Hicks felt the action areas were specific to Downtown. Hicks stated that overall it is a great document. Hicks stated that it is long, but a lot of people aren’t going to read it. Hicks hopes they continue to get input and have this be a living document. Hicks stated that he likes the stress put on infill and reducing the size of the footprint of the overall City. Hicks stated that if anything had emphasis it would be the traffic plan and the footprint, even more so than the bicycle path.

Romankiw likes the document and feels good work was put into it. Romankiw likes the background in this document as to how the plan was created and the history of the city and the demographics in the different areas. Romankiw likes that the survey results are in the appendices so that anyone can see the information gathered. Romankiw likes the references to the other document in Section 2. Romankiw stated that this is an aspirational document and she noticed that it was explained several times that it doesn’t have enforceability. Romankiw stated that as a lawyer she appreciates the explanation of the legal framework and a reminder of what the Plan is supposed to be, it is not law, it is not code, and a lot of people misunderstand that. Romankiw feels that this document will set up the City to do well over the next ten years.

Cantu expressed his appreciation for the hard work of the staff and others involved. Cantu stated that with increased population comes increased traffic, and congestion and noise. Cantu stated that none of these things have been addressed, but he feels the plan overall is good and will lead in the right direction. Cantu stated that walkability mentioned needs to be looked at more. Cantu stated that he likes the breakdown of the 5 areas.

Morrison stated that the last Comprehensive Plan process was long and painful, and this process seemed to go better easier and the way they went about it was better. Morrison has shared comments with the staff. Morrison feels staff has incorporated everyone's comments and suggestions. Morrison likes measurable goals so they can see if they are making "progress". Morrison stated that it is a visionary document, and it is written in understandable language. Morrison stated that this Plan will be useful and make Planning Commission easier. Morrison feels it will be easy to keep updating over time and could come more frequently than anticipated because of the growth patterns.

Wimborne pointed out that although the objectives are the same in the different areas and possible repetitive, she likes that by doing those by areas, the staff has identified specific issues in specific neighborhoods. Wimborne gave an example of lack of walkable centers, is addressed differently in Area 1 vs. Area 2 or 3. Wimborne stated that although it seems there is repetition, the thing that is different is staff has gone deeper, like clearly identifying where commercial nodes need to be located, and that wouldn't happen if the community wasn't divided into specific areas.

Dixon stated that he felt it was good when they identified something specific such as in Area 2, they talk about local improvement districts as a tool for improving alleys, or construct 5th and 6th Streets on street bikeway from Boulevard to Holmes. Dixon feels that is very specific and the public can comment on that specifically, however other things are the same statement from one area to the next and there is nothing that focuses in on why that area. Dixon is wanting to see comments specific to the area, and the general comments to multiple areas should be covered in the general part of the document.

Applicant: Brad Cramer, City of Idaho Falls. Cramer stated that they will keep coming up with ideas to engage with the ag community and he is open to ideas on how to do that. Cramer stated that the ag meeting was in the late spring/early summer, and they were concerned that it could be right in the middle of planting season. Cramer stated that they had contacted 2 individuals noted in the emails, and asked who they thought should be contacted, but those weren't the only 2 people that were contacted. Cramer stated that they will keep trying. Cramer thanked the Historic Preservation Committee to get the timelines and history of the City. Cramer stated that walkability areas as a parking tool, is an action item that to review, and a lot of the actions within the plan will state "explore", "review", "consider", because while somethings were clear, there were a lot of things that weren't clear, and so the direction to the staff is to explore deeper. Cramer stated that there is a Plan for the Northgate and 1st Street Corridor that is online currently, and the City recognizes that there needs to be reinvestment in the area. Cramer stated that it remains to be seen how this Plan will impact the location for the water tower and that decision as made prior to the Plan coming out. Cramer stated that they do need more work on low/moderate income housing. Cramer stated that they are trying to partner with the Community Development Block Grant Program on more items to expand their capacity to deal with housing issues. Cramer asked Dixon to send the red pen/general edits to him. Cramer stated that they did have the document reviewed by a retired schoolteacher, and not everything was caught. Cramer stated that the 5 areas were expected to have some more specific than other, and some of the areas don't make total sense together, including Area 4. Cramer stated that they have done specific area plans and those take an enormous amount of work with the community that they didn't have the capacity to do. Cramer stated that the goal is to start having the conversation and anything that was clear is where you see the specific actions, however the

general comments indicate something that they need to go into more. Cramer wanted to make sure that the generic phrase was listed so the community knew they would continue to talk with them. Cramer stated that they will check the maps and there have been edits going on since Dixon has seen the maps. Cramer stated that they have listened to a lot of comments but have not made all of the changes. Cramer stated that missing middle housing and figuring out where to have it make sense is still an important thing to keep working on and taking the report and applying it to this community is important. Cramer stated that the mall was built in 1984 and there were very few zoning standards, and there was no pedestrian consideration, and later on more businesses have sidewalks because the Plan stated to make the community more walkable, so the codes required pedestrian access. Cramer stated that Plans are supposed to work that way and find the generic and funnel it down to the specific until it becomes a way of doing business in Idaho Falls. Cramer acknowledges that pedestrian access could be better, and they will continue to work on it and have conversations regarding it. Cramer stated that City Council just approved \$4+million grant to go towards developing a public transportation, and they will be posting a position for a transportation director to get that system up and running. Cramer stated that it was clear from the community that Public transportation is needed in this town. Cramer stated that not everyone drives and not everyone has cars, and their voices need to weigh into the Plan, and public transportation and walkability is part of that voice. Cramer understands the need for both bike/pedestrian paths, and parking. Cramer is not saying that bike/pedestrian is the most important thing to focus on, but for decades cities like Idaho Falls have done all their planning around the car and that is why there is sprawl. Cramer stated that they are trying to bring bike/pedestrian transportation up to a level playing field with the automobile. Cramer stated that they constantly allow subdivisions to be built without a good bike/pedestrian connection and sidewalks don't count they are designed around roads and roads are for cars and are not the most connective or convenient route. Cramer stated that the Connecting the Community Plan shows bike/ped network that works for someone on foot or bike. Cramer stated that the community wants better walkability/bike path, and it was a loud and clear voice, not a buzz word. Cramer stated that they are going to take that general sentiment and funnel it down to a requirement. Cramer hopes that the feeling that the staff was just pushing an agenda is a minority feeling. Cramer and all staff took pride in listening and that is hurtful feedback to get the sentiment that they are not listening and rather pushing an agenda. Cramer stated that a struggle in any effort of engagement is they find that they have to find a balance, and some of the comments that they might not use, are because they don't reflect what has been heard from others. Cramer explained that if they hear everyone wants to drive, from one voice, but 100's of voices says not everyone wants to drive, they have to figure out how to reconcile those two opinions. Cramer stated that they are not pushing an agenda and have made a lot of changes to fall into place with the voices they have heard.

Dixon closed the public hearing.

Wimborne stated that the logical next step is to forward the document to City Council and those minor edits and redline comments can be done. Wimborne stated that the Plan represents months of work and 100's of voices and also reflects other plans, proposal, and documents that have guided the City and have been referenced in this Plan. Wimborne feels that the next step is to go to City Council.

Romankiw agrees with Wimborne and feels that it should go to City Council with the redline edits that are grammatical and/or readability issues.

Morrison feels that with a few edits made it could move to City Council. Morrison stated that they could add and subtract to this document for weeks, but the work that has gone into the document is comprehensive and it is close enough that it can be presented to City Council, and they can work with it.

Hicks understands that they want this completed by the end of the year. Hicks stated that that gives them 2 months. Hicks stated this is the first public hearing and there were a lot of good comments and in addition to the emails that he has seen. Hicks feels that there are areas that need edits and suggests that they take the information from tonight's meeting and all of the comments from the public and ask staff to incorporate those comments and come back in November with a more readable document. Hicks feels it would be a cleaner, more presentable, more complete document if they incorporated some of tonight's comments.

Wimborne stated that it is important to incorporate the thoughts and comments from the public, but we need to make sure that those are weighted against the other comments and thoughts that have been received over the last few months. Wimborne feels that the comments discussed tonight is reflected in the Plan. Wimborne agrees that there is some editing that needs to be done, but if they wait until December to get it to City Council, it won't get voted on until January or February and another month or two is not going to radically change the Plan. Wimborne suggested having edits reviewed but doesn't feel that any thing has been raised tonight that would change the Plan substantially.

Denney moved to recommend to the Mayor and City Council approval of the Imagine IF Idaho Falls Comprehensive Plan with the suggested edits, Morrison seconded the motion.

Hicks asked if that motion is stating that they will incorporate all comments made? Dixon stated that he understands that it would be all things that could be incorporated for the next City Council meeting. Denney agreed. Wimborne clarified that Denney stated edits and that includes grammar, style and items that Commissioner Dixon has brought up and they should be reviewed.

Dixon attempted to restate the Motion to reflect Denney's intention. A Motion to forward the document to the Mayor and City Council with this Commission's recommendation for approval, buy prior to sending it to the Mayor and City Council, they will make clean up edits and incorporation of some of the comments from the public that can be done in that time frame. Denney agreed.

Dixon called for roll call vote: Wimborne, yes; Denney, yes; Hicks, no; Romankiw, yes; Cantu, yes; Morrison, Yes. The motion passed 5-1.

Gene Hicks opposed the motion for reasons previously stated.

Cramer indicated that the Plan is scheduled to go before City Council on December 9, 2021.

Next Meeting November 2, 2021.

Dixon adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Beckie Thompson, Recorder