



**CITY OF HELENA
Zoning Commission
December 10, 2024 – 6:00 PM
Meeting Minutes**

[Recording Available Here](#)

Members Present:

Alyssa Sorenson, Betsy Story, Mark Roylance, Mark Runde (Alternate)

Members Absent:

Rebecca Harbage (Chair), Nicole Anderson

Staff Present:

Michael Alvarez, Kyle Holland, April Sparks

Call to Order and Roll Call

- (0:00:05)** City staff called the meeting to order, roll was taken. A quorum was present. Chair Harbage was noted as being absent, and without a current vice-chair, staff instructed the Commission to nominate an acting chair from the present members for the meeting.
- (0:01:02)** Ms. Story nominated herself, noting she was the longest tenured member in attendance in person. Mr. Roylance seconded the nomination. A voice vote was taken, and the nomination was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

- (0:01:36)** Minutes from the October 3, 2024 meeting were approved unanimously.

Regular Items

Item 1

Staff Presentation and Questions for Staff

- (0:03:28)** Mr. Alvarez gave a presentation on the application for a proposed zone change from R2 to R4, B2 to RU, and B2 to R4 for the Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows. No public comment had been received.



(0:16:35) There were no questions for staff.

Applicant Presentation and Questions for Applicant

(0:17:02) Greg Wirth spoke on behalf of the applicant and stated that there were no further comments from the applicant, and felt Mr. Alvarez presented the application entirely.

(0:17:56) Mr. Wirth asked if there were any covenants or restrictions of uses on these properties. Mr. Wirth stated that the covenants on the property mainly deal with architectural standards.

Public Comment

(0:18:34) Public Comment was opened. Two members of the public offered comments in opposition to the proposed zone change.

Commission Discussion

(0:27:09) Chair Story asked Mr. Alvarez some clarifying questions about changes to the zoning districts in the past. Mr. Alvarez stated that the zoning for these areas has not changed in the past, but that the plat has changed, which has changed the street layout, and the current zoning districts no longer line up with these parcels and noting reasoning for some of the requested changes. Chair Story asked if it would be likely for the applicant to come back for a conditional use permit to try to achieve the same outcome for building out the subdivision. Mr. Alvarez stated that there are more uses allowed in RU than in R2 and would need clarification on what type of conditional use permit would be applied for.

(0:31:06) Ms. Sorneson asked for clarification on the intent of the RU district and creating the possibility for townhome style dwellings. Mr. Alvarez confirmed that townhome style dwellings were one of the major product types that could be offered in RU zoning, but for this specific area, the applicant would be better able to answer their intent for building types.

Motion

(0:34:51) Mr. Roylance motioned to recommend approval of an ordinance amending City of Helena ordinance no. 3097 and the official zoning map for the City of Helena that: Changes the zoning district from R-2 (residential) to R-U (residential-urban) for the property legally described as Lots 6 and 18-25 in Block 26; Lots 1-3, 4A, 5A, 6-9 in Block 48; Lots 1-9 in Block 49; Lots 1 & 2 in Block 50; Lots 1-17 in Block 51; Lots 1-4 in Block 54; Lots 1-7 in Block 55; Changes the zoning district from R-2 (residential) to R-4 (residential-office) for the property legally described as Lots 1-



2 in Block 53; Changes the zoning district from B-2 (commercial) to R-U (residential-urban) for the property legally described as Lots 16-26 in Block 28; And changes the zoning district from B-2 (commercial) and R-2 (residential) to R-4 (residential-office) for the property legally described as Lots 1-2 in Block 52; of The Peaks Phase 1 of the Crossroads at Mountain View Meadows Subdivision, in the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana. Ms. Sorenson seconded the motion.

- (0:36:34)** Ms. Sorenson stated that by skewing more residential in this area, it will likely be a better fit than B2 and having a mixture of density in a new construction area is positive for providing a diverse pool of different types of property, and will be voting in favor. There was no further discussion on the motion. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously (4:0). There was some discussion on the dates this item would go before City Commission.

Item 2

Staff Presentation and Questions for Staff

- (0:39:28)** Mr. Holland gave a presentation on the application for a conditional use permit to allow contractor yard use in a B2 zoning district for a property legally described as Lots 9,10,11 and 12 in Block 22 of the Grand Addition to the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana, addressed as 1126 Poplar St. No public comment had been received.
- (0:48:55)** Mr. Holland was asked about the addition of a sidewalk along the south side of the property. Mr. Holland stated that is up to the Commission's discretion to recommend such a condition. Mr. Holland was asked how common it is to require sidewalks for conditional use permits. Mr. Holland noted that typically there is a future building permit associated with a conditional use permit and that becomes a condition of the building permit approval, noting a conditional use permit without a proposed permanent structure is uncommon. Mr. Holland also showed the existence of current sidewalks on the other side of Poplar St.

Applicant Presentation and Questions for Applicant

- (0:51:32)** Jack Isbell asked that additional sidewalks be postponed until a building permit is issued for a structure at a later time. Mr. Isbell was asked if he plans to build a structure on the property in the future. Mr. Isbell noted that it was something that has already been explored but has not been financially viable. The proposed use is a stop gap, and that he will continue to the develop the property later.

Public Comment



(0:53:54) Public Comment was opened. There were two public comment in support of the Conditional Use Permit, along with some questions of the applicant.

Commission Discussion

(1:00:05) Chair Story opened commission discussion with posing the questions brought up in public comment to the applicant. Mr. Isbell stated that traffic from the yard would not impede into private property adjacent to the lot, that weed mitigation is part of the proposed process, and that garbage containers would go where the provider instructs. Mr. Runde took the opportunity to disclose that a colleague stood to gain financially over this project, but that he himself didnot.

Motion

(1:03:41) Mr. Roylance motioned to recommend approval of a resolution granting conditional use permit to allow a contractor yard use in the B2 zoning district for the property legally described as Lots 9, 10, 11, and 12 in Block 22 of the Grand Ave Addition to the City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana, as shown on the Certificate of Survey filed under Doc. No. 300423. Ms. Sorenson seconded the motion.

(1:04:24) Ms. Sorenson stated her desire to see a sidewalk added in future development. A voice vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously (4:0). There was discussion as to when this item would go before City Commission.

General Public Comment

(1:05:55) There was no public comment.

Member Communications / Proposals for next Agenda

(1:06:15) It was noted the next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, January 14, 2025, and that there may be an item for that meeting.

Adjournment

(1:07:21) The meeting was adjourned.