

Riverfront Council Leadership Team
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2013, 5:30 pm
Bernice's Bakery 190 S. 3rd St. West
Missoula, MT. 59801

Attending: Doug Hawes Davis, Gwen Hoppe, Mary LaPorte, Jonathan Qualben
Staff: Jane Kelly, Office of Neighborhoods, City of Missoula
Guests: Mike Haynes, Director, Development Services; Patricia Busse, Resident

I. Zoning Issues in the Neighborhood

Mike Haynes, Director of Development Services, provided background for zoning in the Riverfront neighborhood, including presentation of the map displaying current zoning designations and restrictions.

A specific concern, raised at our last general meeting held on June 19, concerns a new construction on 1st Street and Cottonwood. Neighborhood concerns include the size (3 units), the 5-foot setback, and the large basement with no egress. The previous building burned down about 8 years ago. Originally there was a 3-unit property on the site, but in the meantime zoning has changed to RT2.7 (2 units). Although nothing was done for the years the lot remained vacant, the owner was able to obtain a variance because of the 3-unit configuration of the original structure.

Looking ahead, the Committee seeks to ensure that any new construction follows the existing zoning and remains consistent with the character of the neighborhood. An example of potential concern is an existing 6-unit property on S. 2nd Street. If that building burned, we would not want a 6-unit replacement. We do not want a similar situation to happen again.

Discussion:

- Zoning in our neighborhood is very mixed, and complicated. There are 12-15 distinct zoning districts. It is difficult to change zoning districts, but if there was consensus in the neighborhood, City staff would work with us.
- Doug presented an example of the complexity with his own home. Zoning seems subjunctive. He questioned the role of the Leadership Team/ Neighborhood Council regarding this.
- Mike noted that the City is concerned with putting limits on residents' rights.

Next Steps/What can be done?

The neighborhood can present a concern. We could petition for an Overlay to the zoning; notably a return to a 7-ft setback for new construction. Other items concern the waiting time for rebuilding residential and commercial properties.

Gwen suggested that we start with what we have now, and build from there. We may decide that more "zoning down" is needed. Variances can occur if appropriate.

This issue will be taking up at the next general meeting; an ad hoc task force may be formed.

II. Plan for Future General Meetings

The next general Meeting will be held on September 10