

**Minutes of Meeting  
Community Development  
February 17, 2021  
10:00 a.m.**

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were Community Development Director David Callahan, Chief Building Official John Mills and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Cameron Haug from Selkirk Construction, Shelly Rosenberger from Rosenberger Construction, Cameron Peterson from Timbered Ridge Custom Homes, Shawn Anderson from Monarch Custom Homes and Tom Torgerson from Century 21 Beutler & Associates.

- A. **Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.
- B. **Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. **Business (Action):**

**Kootenai County Permit Approval Concerns and Ideas for Resolution Discussion with Local Builders**

Community Development Director David Callahan reviewed his department's current state. He said they were processing more building permits than ever before despite having staffing issues. He reported that they had filled all but one of their open positions at the moment and hoped that remaining slot would be filled soon. He added that they had hired consultants to take on some of the overflow and he hoped to reach a turnaround time of two to three weeks for plan review.

Chairman Fillios commented that salary issues had been addressed in the department when it was found that many of the staff were paid substantially less than what was offered in surrounding areas.

Tom Torgerson, from Century 21 Beutler & Associates, voiced his support for the action taken on salary issues.

Cameron Haug, from Selkirk Construction, complimented Mr. Callahan and Chief Building Official John Mills for their hard work. He expressed his concern regarding the effects of the delays experienced in processing requests such as increased expenses and loss of subcontractors. He remarked that the wait time for inspections had improved substantially over the last few months. He explained problems building companies had with liability issues for flaws not spotted during the plan review process. He suggested that the County begin allowing foundation-only permits and explained potential advantages of that system.

Mr. Callahan noted that the County already allowed foundation-only permits, where appropriate.

Chief Building Official John Mills said they were considering creating a list of designers that might be eligible for streamlined processing, based on past performance. He stated they were working on ways to implement such a list in an equitable fashion.

Shelly Rosenberger from Rosenberger Construction expressed understanding for the difficulties faced by Community Development due to COVID, personnel turnover and increased demand due to population growth.

Mr. Callahan explained ways the companies could help speed up the approval process. He voiced his enthusiasm for improving the situation in any way possible. He said he would bring ideas for expediting permits to Legal for review.

Cameron Peterson from Timbered Ridge Custom Homes also offered his support for the increased acceptance of foundation-only permits.

Mr. Callahan pointed out some problems that had been experienced with this. He remarked that in almost 50% of the instances in which a foundation-only permit was submitted, substantial problems had been found that had to be addressed by the builder.

Chairman Fillios stated that the County's two primary responsibilities were to collect taxes and to provide for public safety. He said ensuring public safety was one of the aspects of reviewing permits.

Mr. Callahan explained that, if a foundation-only permit were approved, the builder could only do the foundation; no framing or other work could be done until the rest of the plan was approved.

Mr. Mills offered details on some of the problems he faced when working with a foundation-only approval. He restated his preference for adopting a list of providers that could be offered expedited approvals, if such could be done in a legal, equitable fashion.

Ms. Rosenberger voiced her interest in the expedited provider list. She urged that Mr. Callahan and Community Development be cautious about placing rules in effect due to the poor performance of a few builders that would handicap the majority.

Mr. Mills reported in the last 30 days, about half of the reviews for single family homes received approval. He said the other half had various items that needed to be corrected. He added that some plans had been through the process multiple times.

Mr. Torgerson offered suggestions for making the new process function. He also said he felt many of the reasons the 50% of plans that were rejected, as quoted by Mr. Mills, had not been for substantive reasons.

Chairman Fillios voiced his support for Mr. Callahan and said he felt that Community Development would find the proper concessions that could be made, as well as any process changes that would be beneficial.

Shawn Anderson from Monarch Custom Homes asked if a fee could be paid for a builder to receive expedited review. She suggested that the income could be used by the County to allow Community Development to hire more staff. She said she felt it would actually save the builders money in the end.

Mr. Callahan confirmed that many of the fees charged by Community Development were out of date and that he would bring updated amounts to the Board for approval soon.

Chairman Fillios explained some of the laws that both the County and Community Development had to obey in relation to these questions.

Mr. Callahan said he would review the comments and suggestions from the meeting and discuss them with Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Pat Braden to get his input, then report back to the Board.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan voiced her support of Mr. Callahan’s proposed actions. No objections were made.

**D. Public Comment:** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing. There were no public comments.

**E. Adjournment (Action):** Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk

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