

## SUBDIVISION MEETING

December 18, 2003

5:30 P.M.

Chair Varone: (tape started) ... hearing from this morning. Before we begin, I'd like to introduce the individuals that are in the room today. Commissioner Murray is to my left, oh Carole's gone, Sharon Haugen is sitting at Carole's desk and Sharon is the our Director of Planning, to my right is Commissioner Tinsley all decked out in his suit and tie and to his right is Jeff Erickson, he's the individual that we really need to thank for all of his hard work trying to get this process completed in a timely manner. That being said today is Thursday December 18<sup>th</sup> and it's just about 5:30 in the afternoon. We just have one item on the agenda and it has to do with the County Growth Policy Hearing. There were three individuals that spoke this morning, let me find my list here. Stan Frasier, Mary Clark and Max Milton all three spoke this morning in favor of adoption of the Growth policy and now I'd like to open up to the audience if anyone is interested in speaking in support of and opposition to or in general on the Growth Policy, please come forward and for the record, state your name and address.

Others attending all or part of the meeting: Jim Taylor, Dick Thweatt, Dan Stinson, Fran Penner-Ray, Robert Ray, and Stephanie Wallan.

### County Growth Policy Hearing. (Jeff Erickson)

The Commissioners will hear public comments on the growth policy.

Jim Taylor: Commissioners my name is Jim Taylor, my address is 8422 Diamond Springs Drive. And for once, well maybe not just once, I'm here speaking for myself tonight. Actually I wasn't going to say anything I wanted to listed to what everybody had to say, but I kind of think maybe you want to hear something. Let me just say this. I haven't had an opportunity to review this document in a lot of detail but I am very impressed with the effort that's been made. I think it's a very workable document, having said that of course there are some concerns which I was going to submit in writing but given the lack of input that I think you'll hear tonight, I'll just touch briefly on a couple points that I would hope and maybe are somewhere included in that document but maybe I missed it but I look at this growth policy as a document that should last this community well into the future and to do that I think there has to be quite a bit of flexibility in that document to account for certain things and of course all three of you Commissioners know what I'm all about in trying to develop certain areas of the County and probably most recently looking at expanding public services like regional water systems and maybe even sewer systems. The one issue that I find with the document and it's not so much with the document itself it's with the map that shows the land use and the defined areas for preferred growth and that sort of thing and it just seems to me that if public systems were to develop in certain areas of the County it would change the character of the growth from that point onward quite a bit and I would hope that the land use maps in those preferred areas have flexibility enough in them that they would recognize that if this type of thing does take place, those boundaries could change so that it reflects the use of those facilities and I know I've talked to each one of you about certain advantages of areas and development of this type of infrastructure and areas and what it can do to benefit existing development and future development and I would hope that this growth policy allows for that to happen and actually encourages it because I think ultimately if we look down the, way down the road, we're going to see a lot of people that need housing and need affordable housing and need high quality infrastructure particularly water and sewer and also the roads and street networks and I think as a document that serves us into the future it has to have a certain flexibility built into it that recognizes that when this type of infrastructure whether it's put in privately or publicly or through partnerships however, that certainly is going to impact growth and it should and it should encourage

higher density growth for example and I would sure like to see this document encourage that type of thing. Other than that, I will say again that I think you did a very good job and I believe we're on the right track here. Thank you.

Chair Varone: Thank you Mr. Taylor. Anyone wishing to speak to it, please come forward, for the record state your name and address.

Dan Stinson: Dan Stinson, Helena Montana. I just want to encourage you guys to pass thing and get it going. I think it's time it was over with and we move on to implementation. We're like a child learning to rock and we can't figure out if we should start with the left foot or the right and in the meantime the train of progress is dragging us down the tracks. I just think it's time that we move on from here. Thank you.

Chair Varone: Thank you Mr. Stinson. Anyone else wishing to speak tonight please come forward for the record state you name and address.

Dick Thweatt: My name is Dick Thweatt, I live at 36 Harrison Avenue in Helena. I'm here representing Plant Helena, you have my written comments that I submitted last week sometime I think and I would just echo what Dan would say I think we've worked on this document for seven years now, nearly seven years and it's gotten much better over the last two years and I'm sure if we took another seven years it could be better still but let's not. There's a lot of work to be done implementation, I think that's where it's going to really do this community good is when we start taking some of these ideas in this growth policy and putting them into effect with specific regulations, you know zoning regulations, neighborhood plans, development standards, that sort of thing and that'll be a very challenging process for the community and for you all as the governing board I know. But let's get on with it. That's basically what I want to say is, I was reminded when I was thinking of this the film 'The agony and the ecstasy' and where Rex Harrison plays the pope and he goes into the 16<sup>th</sup> chapel and he yells up at Charlton Heston who's playing Michael Angelo and he keeps saying 'when will you make an end', now's the time to make an end.

Chair Varone: Thank you Mr. Thweatt.

Commissioner Tinsley: Madam Chair, I was thinking more along the lines of 'Terms of Endearment'

Chair Varone: You've only been here a year. Anyone wishing to speak today please come forward for the record state your name and address.

Commissioner Murray: Madam Chair, remind people not to hesitate because we're going to adjourn.

Chair Varone: I do this two more times and then it's done.

Commissioner Tinsley: I have a curtain call in about an hour and a half, I really do.

Fran Penner-Ray: My name is Fran Penner-Ray, I live at 501 Adams and I emailed my comments to you folks earlier this week, but I wanted to reiterate my support for the growth policy and a lot of the good things that you put in there that can protect the land uses around the City because I think there's places where it makes sense to put industrial things, it makes sense to put subdivisions and it makes sense to zone it for horse farms or whatever and I think it's going to take a lot of courage to go forward with doing things that will protect the water quality and quantity for the folks out there. You've already got wells out there that are drying up, you've got places where there's contamination from too much fertilization, fertilizer that's out there and you're going to be needing to set minimum

lot sizes that say in this area you can't put 10 houses on twenty acres, it just won't make sense, you can't support those wells and septic systems in that kind of density and I would encourage you to consider mustering the political world to set up a joint water and sewer authority which could look at the boundaries between the City and the County and do some wastewater planning and get loans and get grants and develop wastewater treatment that would help those dense subdivisions in the Valley because the City can't do it for the County, but together they could go forward and make a difference for the long term because you've got City densities out there and small septic systems don't work well for the long term and I can tell you all have worked really hard on this one and it's good to see the policy in place and now you'll have to move forward with the really hard work of the regulations, but I think they're necessary and for those that might squirm a little bit we have to be responsible to the larger community. It's not just what you do on your little parcel, it's what the whole neighborhood is going to look like.

Chair Varone: Thank you Ms. Penner-Ray and it's interesting that you made a comment about the City and County working together on water resolutions we have begun those discussions just so you know, so Thank you for you're being so astute. I appreciate it. Anyone else wishing to speak today?

Robert Ray: My name is Robert Ray. I live at 501 Adams Street Helena. I would like to commend the Commission for moving forward with the growth plan. I encourage you to adopt it and as previous citizen spoke I encourage you to move forward after adoption on implementation of the growth plan. I also have concerns as my wife spoke about water quality and quantity in the Valley and I think it's something that needs to be really addressed, taken a big hard look at. People, as my wife also mentioned, people have sometimes a little bit of concern regarding private property rights and the ability of government to regulate and I look at private property rights as I look at a car, they're both property that people have and they both have responsibilities that go along with those property rights, those responsibilities include not hurting other people, obeying things like speed laws that are there to protect others that are on the roads just as we do with regulations and zoning in terms of minimum lot sizes and terms of setbacks from water bodies and that sort of thing. People at first are reluctant when they first think of oh gee I have to have a 75 MPH speed limit that's really going to impact how I make my plans across the state or whatever, but people also recognize that it's a necessary evil, if you want to call it that, when you're living in a community with a lot of other people and regulations are there to allow people to live together with certain standards and protect everybody's need to get along with other people. Thank you.

Chair Varone: Thank you Mr. Ray. Anyone else wishing to speak this evening? There's one individual left in the audience that has not spoken tonight and Mary I, if you want to speak again you're very welcome too. But there's another individual here that, are you interested in speaking today mam?

Sharon Haugen: Madam Chair, I might introduce that is Stephanie Wallace, Vice Chairman of our City/County Planning Board, for those Commissioners who may or may not have met her.

Stephanie Wallace: and I live at 906 Stuart Street. I actually wasn't planning to comment tonight, I think Dave Cole was planning to be here but I think we all expected maybe a larger turn out and I guess I would have to say on behalf of the Planning Board that I think the fact that there isn't a huge turnout and the comments we've heard tonight have been supported that this is probably as much of a consensus document that we could hope to get and I think that's a very positive thing. I was came into it kind of towards the end, I was on the planning board back in I guess I left in '97 and we were just starting the work on the Lincoln area plan at that time and I was sort of astonished to come back and have the process still going and got to be part of the end of it and I think it has been a very cooperative process and from what I've seen from what was in the original drafts and what is in the final I don't think that the specific language necessarily what everybody wants, but I think it's

something that we can all agree on and get behind and I'm very pleased to be at this point I think in the process and working with Jeff and Sharon has just been a great experience, they've been tremendously supportive as I'm sure you've experienced also going through this process and hopefully we'll have some draft regulations for you in 2004. Thank you.

Chair Varone: Thank you very much. This morning there was discussion and praise from the full commission and from Sharon and Ron Alles about the process and about the time it took and about the hard work of everyone and in particular the planning board and the group of folks that worked through all of those issues, it was obvious to all of us when the Commission was going through the document for the second time that the full planning board read every single line and they were very thoughtful about the comments, recommendations we had and in many instances they came back when we reached consensus with not only language that supported our intent but the language was much better so if you'd just pass our thanks on to the board I'd appreciate it.

Stephanie Wallace: I'll do that, Thank you.

Chair Varone: Thank you. Commissioner Murray?

Commissioner Murray: Madam Chair, I'd remind the commission that we have been functioning under the old document for the last two years by moving ahead and adopting this and getting into the next phase we can implement the plan that we haven't been able to do for the past two years that we've been operating under the old growth document and unless Mr. Milton's going to speak, I'm prepared to make a motion.

Chair Varone: I believe I need to close the public hearing first. For one time, I was right and he was wrong, holy cow. He's usually whispering to me you need to do this, you need to do this. Is there anyone else wishing to speak today? For the second time. For the third time. This formally closes the public hearing. Okay Commissioner.

Commissioner Murray: Madam Chair, I humbly ask that we render a final decision at the Public Meeting on December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Commissioner Tinsley: Second.

Chair Varone: All those in favor, signify by saying 'I'

Commissioners: 'I'

Chair Varone: Motion carries. The meeting on December 23<sup>rd</sup> will be held in this room at 9:00 in the morning and anyone wishing to attend you're welcome to be here. Thank you very much for coming tonight.