

Public Hearing May 10, 2021

Growth Policy and Capital Improvement Plan

Present: Mayor Stump, Rahn Abbott, Mike Walter, Emilie Saylor, Corey Theis, Clerk Ginger Galiger and Duke Gilman.

Guests: Jean Prough, Cory Smith, Steve & Joyce Dobb, Anne Wentz, Colleen Guinnane, Scott Payne with NRE, Jeremy Fadness with WWC Engineering, Kaylie Theis, Kali Stender, Stephanie Kruer, Janet Marsh, Jonathan Laurin, Stacy & Kitt Dale.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.
Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Stump opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming. Starting tonight's meeting with a short history on how we got here today. Our Engineering firm started on the Growth Policy last summer with a survey available to all of our residence and followed up with a public meeting in October that was held at the Senior Center to discuss some of the priorities that the residence had identified. In March we sent the Growth Policy to County Planning Board. In the end of March, the Planning Board recommended approval of adopting the plan with a half a dozen or so, minor comments. Once that was done the Capital Improvement Plan was developed which is basically potential funding sources for the priorities that are identified in the Growth Policy. Now that the County has recommended approval, we are here tonight to hold the last public hearing on this, to take positive or negative comments on the Growth Policy. Following the public hearing, we will follow up with our regular council meeting. Under new business we will disposition on both the Capital Improvement Plan and the Growth Policy. Mayor Stump spoke about the rules of conduct at a public hearing and asked the audience to read through that and stick with the requirements in there. Mayor Stump asked anybody with any proponents on the Growth Policy to please come up. There were none. Next Mayor Stump asked for any opponents on anything in the Growth Policy.

Steve Dobbs introduced himself and came tonight to dispute some comments made by Scott Payne to the Madisonian. ***(I have included the 3- page comments to the minutes).***

The Mayor Stump disputed some of the dates that were discussed by Steve Dobbs regarding the lagoons. Bob also sited monthly water usage for 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Public Meeting adjourned at 6:25

Approved: Mayor Robert Stump

Attested: Clerk Ginger Galiger

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I would like to start by disputing a couple of remarks made by Scott Payne to the Madisonian. First, I am not at all confused by how water use is calculated. I have 5 years of engineering curriculum at Montana Tech in Butte and I worked in the drilling industry for 45 years, so I have a good understanding of calculating flow. Secondly I am not opposed to growth. I ran a real estate office in Sheridan for 15 years and actually did the subdivision right above my house that added 4 nice residential lots to the town of Sheridan. I am whole heartedly in favor of sustainable growth. I am only concerned about growth that would require a new sewer system having to be built before 2032. I have concerns regarding the Town of Sheridan Wastewater System Study 2020 Report and the Sheridan Growth Policy being discussed tonight. I have serious questions on the way the gpcd were calculated during a period of pandemic when all the businesses and schools were not operating at all or at reduced capacity.

Let us start with the census figure. I believe that Mr. Payne was wrong with his estimate of 638 people in Sheridan. The 2020 census puts our population at 752 people. I had physically counted homes in Sheridan and came up with 333, not counting the trailer park and estimated the population at around 740 using 2.2 persons per household. Northern Rockies Engineering had 332 homes in the growth plan but only came up with 638 people, that is only 1.9 persons per household. The U. S. Census uses 2.3 persons per household.

Our current sewer system is designed to handle 701 people by 2032.

My second concern with the Sheridan Growth Plan has to do with Housing Stock. NRE says on page of the Sheridan Growth Plan *"since 2010, no new housing units have been added to the Town of Sheridan housing Stock."*

I have attached a list of 16 new homes built and a total of 22 homes added to the Sheridan housing stock since 2010. These figures are from county tax records. This shows a growth of nearly 1% per year of houses in Sheridan since 2010.

Great West Engineering in 2011 had our population at 645 and in monitoring the flow rates calculated the following:

111,400 gpd winter or 172 gpcd

247,000 gpd summer or 383 gpcd

Northern Rockies Engineering in the Sheridan Wastewater System Study says that "the 2011 values were determined by monitoring of flow and should therefore be considered reasonably accurate."

Northern Rockies Engineering then established their own set of numbers based on monitoring flows from April 1, 2020 to September 16, 2020.

Northern Rockies Engineering came up with the following figures for flow rates:

86 gpcd winter

248 gpcd summer

I have a problem with these figures because they are so much below the 2011 figures with NRE said were accurate. The winter figure is down 50% and the summer figure is down 35% from the 2011 figures.

The winter figure, which is the most important to the capacity of our system, is, in NRE own words, an estimate of an approximation based on less than 2 months of monitoring flows. The report says the figure is based on flows measured from April 1 to May 13, 2020. Only April is considered a Winter month.

All NRE's flows were monitored during a pandemic with businesses, churches and schools closed or at limited use. I obtained water bills from several businesses and the schools and water use for the period April 1 to September 30, 2020 was down by 18 to 24% from the same period in 2019.

2020 was a very dry year and irrigation started late in May and ended in late August which would drastically reduce the amount of ground water that was infiltrated into the wastewater system.

Using NRE's own Wastewater System Study, it says that on August 26, 2020 all the ponds were near empty and that on July 8, 2020 all the ponds were near capacity. If the capacity of the 3 ponds is 33.52 million gallons and we filled that capacity in 10 months, the result is 111,733 gpd. That is 175 gpcd which is way closer to the Great West Engineering figure of 172 gpcd than the 86 gpcd that NRE has estimated. This figure is also above the winter month design capacity figure for our system

Northern Rockies Engineering recommended that the town do the following to check the figures provide in their reports.

1. Monitor water flow rates at times of the year not used in their report to correlate that water and wastewater flows can be used to make reasonable conclusions for existing and future and capacity of the system.
"We recommend a continuous monitoring program of the wastewater system use in the future. Ongoing monitoring is critical to support that additional capacity exists for new wastewater hookups and to address agency review concerns based on past population estimates and approvals. Water and wastewater flow rates can be enhanced by installation of flow meters that provide instantaneous as well as accumulated flow."
2. The irrigation system will need to be operated over longer periods of time in the summer if new connections are added and the system capacity increases. The town needs to assure that the agreement with the landowner assures that this will happen.
3. The report should update to reflect census data.

Have any of these recommendations been done? Why are we moving forward using figures from The Town of Sheridan Wastewater System Study 2020 Report, dated December 9, 2020, to approve The Sheridan Growth Plan, and considering adding additional housing hookups before we follow the recommendations of NRE. We don't have to be in a hurry, let's first substantiate that we have verified capacity in our sewer and water systems before we move forward, which could lead to having to redo our sewer system well before 2032 at additional cost to the residents of Sheridan.

Steve Dobb
5/10/2021