

**Minutes of Meeting
Advisory Board Interview
January 6, 2020
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 items. Also present was Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present was Kootenai County Resident Barry Stearns.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business:**

Planning and Zoning Commission Applicant Interview: Barry Stearns

Chairman Fillios invited Kootenai County Resident Barry Stearns to introduce himself.

Mr. Stearns stated he had been a resident of the County for about twenty-five years. He said he was a builder, operating mostly within the County, so he had become very familiar with concerns in the local building community. He added that he had served as president of both the local and state Homebuilders Association and was a member of the National Homebuilders' Association.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan asked the first question from the interview sheet.

- **What skills and experience in group dynamics would you bring to the Planning Commission that would make you an effective Commissioner?**

He said he believed part of the mission for the commissioners was to help represent the broad interests of the public. He stressed the importance of listening to all involved in an issue before making a decision.

Commissioner Bill Brooks remarked that he was not satisfied with the provided list of questions and would like to ask his own. He asked if Mr. Stearns was a member of NIBCA (North Idaho Building Contractors Association) and whether he felt that this constituted a conflict of interest.

Mr. Stearns said he was a member and did not feel it would create a conflict of interest. He explained that he viewed it as representing only one of many equally valid points of view in the community.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he wanted to have this question asked plainly because there had been a substantial controversy created by a small number of people who declared people like realtors or builders could not offer objective opinions as members of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He noted that he disagreed with their position.

Chairman Fillios asked the next question from the interview sheet.

- **What do you see is the fundamental role of the Planning Commission?**

Mr. Stearns replied that its purpose was to act as an advisory board to the County Commissioners. He noted that understanding and educating the public on the Comprehensive Plan was a substantial part of the duties.

Chairman Fillios proceeded to the next question from the interview sheet.

- **What are your thoughts on the Comprehensive Plan and its updating process?**

Mr. Stearns replied that the original Comprehensive Plan was a little litigious, complicated and repetitive. He said he felt that the members were doing a good job of simplifying it. He stated he felt the process was going in the right direction.

Commissioner Duncan asked the next question from the interview sheet.

- **An effective Planning Commission requires members from all walks of life to ensure that the entire community is well represented. Would you share why you believe your background or experience would be a helpful addition to the Commission? Is there a community segment you feel you represent?**

Mr. Stearns answered that he had worked a great deal with Community Development, so he was very conversant with the issues they handled. He added that he had also worked with legislators in the area, through his membership in the state association, and this had allowed him a wider scope of understanding. He added that he also had frequent contact with different City Planners and Council Members and understood the challenges they faced as well.

Commissioner Brooks asked if he, as a builder operating in the County, had experienced any serious personal conflicts with anyone in Planning and Zoning or Community Development.

Mr. Stearns said he had had differences of opinion with people but nothing he felt would impact his ability to work with anyone. He asserted that his relationships with the groups were pretty good.

Chairman Fillios asked him to speak to the list of traits offered on the interview sheet.

- **Effective Planning Commissioners have certain common traits such as the ability to express oneself clearly and concisely in public; listen to opposing views and still keep a clear focus on where the real public interest lies (objectivity); keep an open mind on new ideas; define what's really at issue on any matter; take the long view; and assemble information and use it to make**

meaningful recommendations. Can you give us an example of a useful trait you would bring to the Commission?

Mr. Stearns remarked that he was accustomed to public speaking and was able to convey his points in a clear and concise manner. He stated he was applying for the commission out of a concern for the County's rapid growth. He said he had ideas on how the issues created could be addressed and wanted to work for the benefit of the County.

Commissioner Brooks asked if he knew anything about Agenda 21 or Agenda 2030 and how they related to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Stearns said he was not familiar with those topics.

Chairman Fillios asked his view on property rights.

Mr. Stearns commented that the number one reason people moved to this area was that they believed their rights would be protected. He said he believed people should be free to use their land as they saw fit, as long as that use did not harm the rights or well-being of others.

Chairman Fillios asked if Mr. Stearns had any questions for them.

Mr. Stearns asked for confirmation of the meeting schedule of the commission. He added that he knew familiarizing himself with the Comprehensive Plan would require substantial additional time and effort.

Commissioner Duncan informed him that the Comprehensive Plan would come before the BOCC on January 23, 2020. She said the public testimony had already been taken, so the meeting would be for deliberations: the BOCC would decide whether to accept it, change it, or send it back to the commission. She proceeded to the last question on the interview sheet.

- **Do you have time to devote outside of meetings to study and research issues?**

Mr. Stearns said he did and that he would try to get up to speed as quickly as possible on all the materials.

In response to a question from Chairman Fillios, Mr. Stearns said he had been a builder for about ten years; before that, his background had been in managing a lumber company.

Commissioner Duncan predicted that the next big issue the commission would take up would be to create language regarding the proposed reentry center.

Chairman Fillios added that the BOCC had asked Community Development and the Planning Commission to work on wording and parameters included in the land use

codes. He explained that, as things were now, the BOCC would have no real basis to say yes or no on the question because it was not specifically covered in the codes.

D. Public Comment (Discussion): 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 was no public comment.

E. Adjournment (Action): Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
