

Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Group
March 12, 2010

Gallatin County Commissioners
311 West Main St., Room 3000
Bozeman, MT 59715

Dear Commissioners:

We would like to take this opportunity to show our support and justification for the “two-stage” zoning process in front of you. As you are aware we came before you last in December 2009 and January 2010 with our Community Plan regarding the Amsterdam/Churchill area. We now have an established planning area to implement our Guiding Principles as land use change occurs. The Amsterdam/Churchill Community Plan involves:

- Two years of community dialogue and conversation regarding Values and Goals focused on local concern;
- Formation of a non-profit organization, the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Group (ACCPG), to guide the process and draft policies to further the community’s identified Goals and Values;
- Utilization of the input of various County departments;
- Unanimous passage by the County Commission.

After passage of “Our” plan, the ACCPG resumed work in January to draft the zoning regulation needed for implementation of the Plan. It became very evident that the time frame to provide a complete and comprehensive regulation for the protections afforded in the plan would leave an unacceptable time gap to the landowners and residents in our area. This “time gap” is in reference to Policy 5.5, Sand and Gravel Resources. You are well versed in the issue at hand with timing of permits and expiration of interim temporal fixes; this letter focuses on steps taken and to be taken in the “two-stage” process.

While the Rural Chapter in the Plan was being formed, the County formed a Task Force to work on local recommendations to improve the Opencut Mine permitting process. Our Rural Committee kept watch with the intent to use the recommendations if they followed our Plan under 5.5.2. Concerns of the Rural Committee were to require a public hearing and allow permits following a conditional use permit. With the work of the Task Force in place we were able to draft language in our policy and focus on other local issues.

While having no control over the expiration of the emergency zoning put in place, we felt our duty was to move ahead with our own regulation addressing sand and gravel mining operations. This will allow the concerns brought forward during the formation of the community plan to be in place following the expiration of existing zoning.

March 16, 2010

Page 2

We mailed a letter (attached) explaining our next steps over the next several months and inviting anyone to attend our meetings. This letter was also posted on our website. We wanted our area landowners to understand this process and feel welcomed to interact with any concerns. The outcome of the mailing resulted in four (4) new participants with various issues but none regarding Policy 5.5 in our Plan. One of those participants remains as an active member on the planning group.

Our intent with the “two-stage” process is to cover the issue at hand, then proceed drafting the remainder of the Regulation. We hope to come before you by summer of 2010.

We want to thank you for your past support, input and direction regarding the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Plan. We also want to thank you for the opportunity to come as a community and address our local issues and concerns with our Plan and regulation.

Sincerely