**CITY OF IRWIN, IDAHO**

**CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES: September 3, 2024**

**Location: Bonneville County Sheriff’s Office, 3329 Swan Valley Hwy., Swan Valley, Idaho 83449**

Meeting called to order by Mayor Larry Perzichilli at 7:00 p.m.

City personnel in attendance were:

Larry Perzichilli Mayor

Darrel Ricks Council President

Troy Vias Council

Shane Fisher Council

Terrie Stromberg Council

Marc Weimar Council

Teresa Dumont Council

Kelly Palmer City Clerk/Treasurer

Jay Rice P& Z Administrator

A Quorum was present.

Guests in attendance: Jon Walker, Dennis Hall, Jim Cooper, Ed Keller, Ron Frazell, Jim Osterhout, Dee Sucher, Bret Harres, Monica Zimmerman, Rhett Bradford, David Kunz, Stacey Hill, Justin Hays, Mateo Urrutia, Brandy Urrutia

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Marc moved the August 6, 2024 Minutes and Financial Report be approved, and bills be paid, seconded by Terrie.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

* 1. Discussion with BLM staff regarding parking lot location and new boat ramp –

Mayor Larry began the conversation stating his phone has been busy with folks looking to resolve the Slide issue. Either close the slide or build a new ramp.

Bret Herres, Acting Field Manager of the Upper Snake Field Office: introduced himself, he has been with the Upper Snake Field Office for over 20 years. The Slide is a county issue, not BLM issue. What they were doing with the parking lot was address the parking problem along the slide.

Jon Walker, County Commissioner: gave history of the Slide: 23 or 25 years ago a document with Fish & Game and BLM and, signed by the County Commissioners, to reopen the slide for three years, five at the most, at which time BLM promised to put in a new boat ramp, parking lot and restrooms at the end of five years. It has been 23 or 25 years ago and that document still sits in my office. County paid to get the Slide reopened after the engineering work and construction work to have the bank rebuilt. Nothing productive has been done to the Slide since then, except nature and erosion and a lot of complaints.

Monica Zimmerman of BLM: BLM is bound by their Planning Documents. In 1991 BLM and Forest Service did Snake River Activity and Operations Plan, that basically identified the management for the South Fork of the Snake River from the Palisades Dam down to the confluence, which includes the Lower Henry’s Fork and portion of the main Snake. That Planning Document was completed in 1991 and identified how the two federal agencies would manage the river corridor. There is Management Action identified in that plan, in 1991, that we could develop a boat access at the Irwin site, which was adjacent to the Irwin Slide on the BLM, if the capacity at Palisades Creek was exceeded. That was never built on the Irwin property owned by BLM. In 2008 the BLM and Forest Service updated that Planning Document and did not identify a boat ramp for the BLM managed land there at the Irwin property. Currently in our Planning Document we do not have the ability to build or construct a boat ramp at the BLM parcel that’s close to the Irwin Slide. So, from our planning guidance that is where we sit at this point in time. Commissioner Walker refers to a letter, I do not know the date, but we have to go by what is in the Planning Document because that is a public process where the public can comment on those different options. All of those documents received a ton of pubic comments and then the Manager in 1991 made the decision and in 2008 made a decision, so that is what we are bound by as a federal agency. That is where we sit today at this point. Don’t know, Bret, if there is anything you would like to add.

Bret Herres: Any plan can change so The Snake River Activity Plan came out of the 1985 Medicine Lodge Resource Natural Plan, our field office operates under four different Land Use plans that go from 1981 to 1985 so it gets confusing, but we are scheduled to start a new Land Use Plan Amendment to combine all those into a single plan, whether we do that independently or whether we get combined in with Challis and Salmon is a potential and be a lot bigger if that happens but that would be the next land use planning effort where the modification of the Snake River Activity Plan could take place.

Mayor Larry: since 2008 the number of boats on river has increased tremendously. The pressure is out of control. There needs to be some kind of control on that river. The Slide is being used because it is a free place to park or put-in, the whole thing needs to come together soon.

Monica added there is an Additional Planning Document that was done in 2018 that specifically

looks at public use and commercial use on the river corridor. It was a Forest Service & BLM public document that went out for public review, it looked at outfitter use, and other commercial use that can occur on the river corridor, any type of scenic flow company was addressed in that document. Also, at that time, we did look at general public use, and what Mayor Larry was speaking to the high amount of use, so there was an alternative or option in that planning document to try to limit public use that did not receive very positive feedback from the public. That was one tool that was used to address usage. So that is another document that has been completed. We manage the river corridor from a 2008 document which looks at access point and a 2018 document that looks at usage, and those are the two documents we use for our management and they are all public documents for public review.

Bret: The broader plan is the Land Use Plan. Everything else stems from the Land Use Plan.

Questions and comments from citizens present:

* Are we coming up onto a new plan being done?
* There is a good road going halfway down to the river that would be a great place for boat ramp, it is the lowest point along the river and would not have to do much excavating, like the other boat ramps
* Current documents are 15 years old, they need to be updated and addressed sooner than later because since Covid river usage has increased tremendously. The valley needs help
* Parking lot issue has everyone upset again. The road from Hwy 26 down Beasley is a fire lane for many of the houses, that’s why Bonneville County put in road signs.

Bret answered there is no plan to build a new boat ramp, however, one thing we can discuss is a parking lot for boats, which is what we were attempting to do and I know some of the citizens were not happy about. We are in a tough situation because we purchased property for a specific reason: open space and conservation so it would not turn into or sold off for housing. We’ve done that on Pine Creek Bench and we’re looking into the big green migration corridors. You can bird watch, bank fish, white tail hunt.

Citizens:

* Let the boats park there until this is figured out
* What will it take to get permission from BLM to extend the road and put in a boat ramp

Monica: We do not have the ability to put in a boat ramp because of the planning document we have. We have to manage based on a plan, because our plans are public documents and public review so until we update our plan nothing changes on that.

Bret: We are going to do quite a bit of restoration work there this fall, we were going to mow-in a different parking spot up the road from there and that’s where a lot of citizens didn’t like that parking spot.

Monica: We still have the ability to expand Palisades Creek. It’s 35-to-45-minute float between Palisades Creek and Irwin Slide, at this time we don’t have the ability to put a boat ramp on the BLM managed land at Irwin. We have the ability to expand the Palisades Creek with amount of room for parking. The slide is not on BLM.

Citizen: How often is the plan updated? When is the plan to be updated in Swan Valley

Bret: Last update was 2008. They are looking to update the Land Use Plan, which is in the pre-planning stage.

Monica: It is not on our schedule to amend the Snake River Plan from 2008 at this point in time.

Citizen: What are we doing about Twin Bridges, isn’t that on the plan?

Monica: Good question. There are other boat access points that are on higher priority than Irwin: Heise and Twin Bridges. We can only do what is identified in the current plan and until we update that nothing changes.

Citizen: Why doesn’t the County close the Slide?

Commissioner Jon Walker: We surveyed the area last week so we would know where the road and turn-around are supposed to be, in preparation for this meeting.

There are two separate issues tonight, fisherman’s access and the Irwin Slide. BLM are the land owner, Fish & Game are control folks, and Reclamation owns the water. County owns the road and the slide.

To close the slide, the easiest thing is if you annex the houses on that road, if not, write a petition with signatures on it and present to the Commissioners.

Mayor Larry: What is the new plan right now for that property.

Bret: Habitat Restoration Plan, which is different than the Recreation plan

Monica: For recreation access the 2008 and 2018 guide recreation management. At this time it only identifies “Day Use” for Irwin. Separately, for the land that was acquired (easement from Lynn Dixon) is to restore land and plant vegetation.

Bret: You will see restoration work begin in this fall.

Next summer BLM will hold a Summit to get public comments, concerns, desires to amend the existing Plan.

Mayor Larry thanked Bret, Monica and Jon Walker for attending the meeting.

* 1. Request from Ron’s Towing to change gate height requirement to 6 feet instead of 8 feet. Pat Cunningham made a telephonic request with City Clerk for Council to consider changing the fence height to match Highway Patrol’s requirement of 6 feet. Council denied the request, the privacy fence to remain at 8 feet. Clerk will notify Ron’s Towing of Council’s decision.

**P&Z REPORT**: Two new permits issued: 2024-09 Bully Shed, and 2024-10 for Greenhouse

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** David Kunz lives on Irwin North and asked what the speed limit was on Irwin North, speed limit signs are not posted, but need to be as dump trucks are racing up and down the road and it is unsafe.

There being no further business before the council:

**Mayor Larry Perzichilli called for adjournment at 8:10 p.m.**

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Larry Perzichilli, Mayor Kelly Palmer, City Clerk