

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
LOWER LEVEL – LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM
702 E. FRONT AVENUE
APRIL 8, 2025**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Tom Messina, Chairman
Jon Ingalls, Vice-Chair
Mark Coppess
Lynn Fleming
Phil Ward

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hilary Patterson, Community Planning Director
Sean Holm, Senior Planner
Randy Adams, City Attorney
Traci Clark, Administrative Assistant

Commissioners Absent:

Sarah McCracken
Peter Luttrupp

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Messina at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Commissioner Coppess, seconded by Commissioner Fleming, to approve the minutes of the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting on March 11, 2025 Planning & Zoning minutes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Hilary Patterson, Community Planning Director, provided the following comments:

- There are two vacancies, 1 for the Planning and Zoning Commission and 1 for the Design Review Commission. If anyone is interested from the public you can find the information on the City's website by clicking on the "I Want to Volunteer" link. There is information about the two vacancies. For the Planning and Zoning Commission vacancy criteria, the person has to live within the city limits, you have to be a Kootenai County resident for 2 years prior to the appointment. They have to be a resident of the city during their term or they could be a non-resident if they are employed within the city limits. This is a 6 year term. The Design Review Commission seat is someone who resides within the districts under the purview under the Design Review Commission, which include the C-17, C-17L, R-17, R-34 by Special Use Permit, the Downtown Core, Downtown North, Downtown East, and the Midtown Overlay. This is a 4 year term.
- There are no public hearing items for the month of May. She would like to schedule a workshop to talk about some code amendments we discussed at the Joint Workshop with the Historic Preservation Commission.
- Ms. Patterson will be doing a presentation to the City Council on April 15, regarding the efforts on

the Downtown Core and the Infill Working Group.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Ingalls commented that Commissioner Luttrupp is not here this evening. We have been informed that he had decided to not continue with a new term with the P&Z. He would like to thank Commissioner Luttrupp for his dedication, support and time. He is been up here for 18 years. Whenever Commissioner Ingalls looked at Commissioner Luttrupp's packet there would be dog eared pages and sticky notes. You could tell he would spend hours and hours looking over the agenda and packets preparing for the hearing items. It would show as he would ask good questions and make grounded decisions. He has been a great mentor for him. On behalf of all the commission, thank you Commissioner Luttrupp for your service.

Chairman Messina stated he agrees with Commissioner Ingalls and wishes Commissioner Luttrupp Tuesday nights off. He would like to thank him for his service. He is appreciated.

PUBLIC HEARING: *ITEM BELOW IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN ACTION ITEM.**

1. Applicant: Melrose Properties, LLC
 Location: 417, 421, and 503 W. Emma Ave
 Request: A proposed zone change from R-12 to C-17L on Three (3) parcels measuring a total of 0.957 (ZC-3-25)

Mr. Holm, Senior Planner, provided the following statements:

Mr. Holms commented he would like to thank Commissioner Luttrupp for his years of service and he will remember fondly his ability to bring everyone together to talk about the agenda item and always asked the applicant if they had approached the neighborhood and included everyone in the process.

Mr. Holm stated the applicant is requesting approval of a zone change from R-12 to C-17L.

DECISION:

Should the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council to adopt or not to adopt the requested zone change from R-12 to C-17L for property owned by Melrose Properties, LLC?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (PROVIDED BY APPLICANT):

In 2015 Parkwood, in partnership with Kootenai Health, acquired the former church building at 521 W. Emma Ave and remodeled it into a daycare facility. This relocation and expansion of daycare services doubled the number of childcare slots that were available to serve the needs of Kootenai Health employees. Over the last 10 years, Kootenai Health has continued to grow their employment base and the waiting list of children for the daycare has grown to over 150. Many other childcare facilities in our community were forced to shutter during the pandemic. So, preserving and expanding the remaining daycare providers is key to meeting the needs of our growing community.

Seeing this emerging need, Parkwood made strategic acquisitions of the three houses to the east of the daycare facility to prepare for expansion. In 2019 we worked with the Idaho Transportation Department to install a signal at US 95 and Emma to ease congestion in the medical corridor and provide improved pedestrian safety across Lincoln Way. Our request for a re-zone is to prepare for an eventual expansion of the adjacent Kootenai Health Daycare facility to better meet the needs of Kootenai Health employees.

There are four (4) findings that must be met for the re-zoning, Findings B#1-B#4.

Findings B#1: That this proposal (is) (is not) in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan policies.

2042 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE:

- The subject property is within city limits.
- The City's 2022-2042 Comprehensive Plan categorizes this area as a "Compact Neighborhood" Place Type

Mr. Holm explained Place Types and that the subject property is designated as Urban Neighborhood Place Type, which are high walkable neighborhoods with larger multifamily building types, shared greenspaces and parking areas. They are typically served with gridded street patterns, and for larger developments, may have an internal circulation system. Compatible Zoning includes R-17 and R-34SUP; NC, CC, C17, and C17L.

Mr. Holm listed the applicable Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives under Community & Identity, Growth & Development, and Jobs & Economy.

Findings B#2: That the public facilities and utilities (are) (are not) available and adequate for the proposed use.

Mr. Holm noted that the city departments have reviewed the request and have determined that public facilities and utilities are available and adequate for the proposed use. Specifically, Fire has no comments or conditions, and Police indicated they do not have any concerns, but did request that when the property gets developed, it would be best to make sure that entrances and exits are not conflicting with the parking lot and driveway approaches for the properties to the south. This will help to ensure safety through sight triangles, due to the fact that there will be heavy traffic during morning drop off and evening pick up.

Findings B#3: That the physical characteristics of the site (make) (do not make) it suitable for the request at this time.

Mr. Holm described the physical characteristics of the site and immediate area, which is characterized by rectangular lots with a combined frontage of approximately 194 feet along W. Emma Avenue and depth of approximately 215 feet. Existing structures include single-family homes featuring one to two stories, wood-frame construction, and modest setbacks of 20 feet +/- from the street. The site currently does not have paved sidewalks along W. Emma Avenue, with minimal on-site parking (driveways only), and mature street trees providing partial shading. A buffer exists to the north to help screen the shopping center.

Findings B#4: That the proposal (would) (would not) adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood with regard to traffic, neighborhood character, (and) (or) existing land uses.

Mr. Holm described the comments from City Engineer Chris Bosley on traffic. The proposed zone changes themselves would not adversely affect the surrounding area with regard to traffic, as no traffic is generated from a zone change alone. However, the applicant intends to expand the existing daycare center within the proposed C-17L zoned properties to the east. Although the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Trip Generation Manual provides no direct comparison between land uses, it estimates that three single-family residential properties (Land Use Code 210) generate an average of 9.52 trips per dwelling unit for a total of 28.56 trips per day. For comparison, just one employee at a Day Care Center (Land Use Code 565) generates an average of 26.73 trips per day. A significant increase in trips will be generated from this change in land use. However, Emma Avenue has the available capacity to

accommodate the additional traffic.

Regarding neighborhood character, Mr. Holm described the neighborhood surrounding 417, 421, and 503 W. Emma Avenue as a mix of housing types and commercial presence. Situated between US-95 and Government Way, quick access to these north/south corridors to I-90 is gained from this area. The recent addition of a controlled intersection at US-95 allows for safe vehicle movements at the intersection.

There is an eclectic mix of residential, civic, and commercial retail are nearby. Ironwood Square, Kootenai Health, The North Idaho Eye Institute, and a strip mall are in close proximity. The residential component located on the north side of Emma Ave. is bookended between Kootenai Kids (daycare) and various professional offices and a coffee stand to the east. Sidewalks do not exist in front of the residential homes in the area.

The housing stock on W. Emma Avenue varies in size and condition, reflecting a mix of older homes and maintained properties typical of mid-20th-century development. The street is lined with mature trees.

Mr. Holm said the proposed C-17L zoning district is suitable as a transition between residential and commercial zoned areas and should be located on designated collector streets or better for ease of access and to act as a residential buffer.

Decision Point:

Mr. Holm noted the action alternatives this evening. The Planning and Zoning Commission must consider the request for a recommendation to the City Council on whether the proposed zone change from R-12 to C-17L should be adopted or rejected.

Mr. Holm concluded his presentation.

Commissioner Ward asked if this is approved, are they obligated to put a sidewalk in along Emma Avenue. We can't see where the proposed driveway will be.

Mr. Holm replied that the decision about a sidewalk is ultimately up to Engineering. But because there is an adjacent sidewalk to the west, they will be putting in a sidewalk. He also noted that with a zone change it does not require a site plan like a Special Use Permit does.

Commissioner Coppess stated these are four properties. Is the intent to make it one property?

Mr. Holm replied, yes. His understanding is they will be adding onto the buildings and providing additional parking as required by code behind the building. The applicant can speak more about it.

Commissioner Ingalls stated he went and looked up these three properties on the County's website. These add up to 0.97 acres. These are in the R-12 zone. What is allowed in an R-12 in terms of multi-family if this was not approved? If this was not child care, the old Comp Plan said this was an area of transition. Could someone try to maximize 12 units on this piece of property?

Mr. Holm replied that someone could not put 12 units on the property. R-12 has a limitation because we do not have pocket housing. The maximum housing would be 2 units on any parcel. This would be if the parcel was 11,000 square feet, then someone could have two single family homes or a single family home and an ADU on each lot. This would be a maximum of six units.

Commissioner Ingalls stated where he was coming from is sometimes it becomes unfair to look at the traffic generation of a proposed use. Right now, there are three single family homes versus a child care center. Maybe another component would be to say it's not single family residents but the maximum by right now would be X versus what would be allowed with the requested change. Would this be three single family homes forever? Probably not. If he lived next door, he wouldn't want to see more traffic, but things do

change.

Public testimony open:

Applicant Chris Meyer introduced himself and was sworn in. He said he is a partner with Parkwood Business Partners and was involved with the acquisition of the church across the street and the conversion of the daycare. That facility was able to double their availability of child care slots for Kootenai Health that benefitted their employees. Kootenai Health is the largest employer in the community. They are trying to attract and retain employees. The child care benefit has been a huge advantage over the years. This has been a pleasure for us at Parkwood to help facilitate that and learn about the daycare industry. Why this site made a lot of sense is because it is within walking distance to the hospital where most of the employees are located. In addition, it has good access. They did partner with the State of Idaho in 2019 to install the traffic signal to allow for better pedestrian safety crossing the facility. Because it was a former church, it has plenty of outdoor space. Kids want to get outside and play. State Codes requires that you have enough outdoor space. The growth of Kootenai Health has almost doubled their employee head count. Now their daycare needs have grown as well. There is a waiting list of 150 employees that would like to get their kids into this facility. They would like to facilitate this for them, not knowing yet if they need more younger kids in care. There are a lot of moving parts that are still happening. The other piece of this application is the frontage improvement. We would continue the sidewalk. The changes in the neighborhood and in the community are coming at us rapidly. About a month ago, the Idaho Department of Transportation announced their intention to completely rebuild the US 95/I-90 Interchange. Those changes are to rebuild the intersection. Looking forward to 2045 in their traffic model planning involved a widening of US byway of 95 all the way down to the Emma Ave signal light which means they would have to acquire right of way in front of our daycare facility and remove some of the parking. We can see the writing on the wall that the community will need the additional traffic planning growth which is going to squeeze into some of our adjacent properties. Parkwood is trying to be proactive. They decided to proceed and ask for the zone change application now, knowing that the rest of the plan was a work in progress.

Commissioner Ingalls asked have they thought about knocking down all of the buildings and shifting everything over and redoing the parking lot?

Mr. Meyer replied they have done some early modeling and massing plans. There are a series of pros and cons. We want to make sure the traffic signal stays in place. It is a priority as well. The daycare is an employee satisfier but it's a loss leader as well.

Commissioner Fleming asked what are the hours of the day care facility.

Mr. Meyer replied the child care facility hours work well with Kootenai Health employees that have day shifts.

Commissioner Fleming asked if their intention was to preserve the current structure and extend it? Parkwood historically has done good things in this town. We see you treat your neighbors very well. You will be installing sidewalks and trees. Please try soften it and be attentive to the surrounding residential uses. You always give back what we ask for. She feels confident what you will bring to this project is a good solution for the hospital and community. She feels this is a good thing for the community.

Commissioner Ward asked if the daycare is a use strictly for the Kootenai Health employees? Who paid for the traffic light on Emma and highway 95?

Mr. Meyer replied yes, because of the demand within the facility it is just for the employees. The traffic light was also private and public partnership when it was installed. Parkwood paid a portion and Kootenai is reimbursing through some other arrangements. The City and the State had some funding.

Public testimony closed.

Commission Discussion:

Commissioner Ward stated the community needs more daycare facilities. He thinks this is a great idea. This ties to their employees is even better. He does not like they have to go to C-17 to do it, but he understands why.

Commissioner Ingalls stated he agrees with Commission Ward.

Chairman Messina agrees with both commissioners.

Motion by Commissioner Fleming, seconded by Commissioner Ingalls, to recommend that City Council adopt the C-17L zone change (ZC-3-25). Motion carried.

Commissioner Coppess stated that he wanted to mention that the commissioners did receive a written comment that was sent by a member of the community about traffic. It was included in the packet.

Commissioner Fleming read the comment from Makena Cooney which read, "I disagree with the proposal for a zone change of parcels 417, 421, and 503 W Emma Avenue. The area has already increased in traffic through the neighborhoods and newly built commercial properties have impacted the parking of the area for residents. More commercial buildings tearing down old homes, taking up more street parking, and increasing both noise and traffic in settled neighborhoods is not in the best interest of the people."

Commissioner Coppess stated the commission talked about the need for daycare facilities. The impending growth of urbanization across the town. This is a critical need for the employees in the health care business.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioner Coppess	Voted Aye
Commissioner Fleming	Voted Aye
Commissioner Ingalls	Voted Aye
Commissioner Ward	Voted Aye
Chairman Messina	Voted Aye

Motion to approve carried by a 5 to 0 vote.

Commissioners McCracken and Luttrupp were absent.

Commissioner Ward stated a lot of daycares are tied into schools. He follows the state legislation and they do not help with any funding and funding falls under the private sector. When he looks at the zoning code, the first place that a daycare is allowed is an R-8 only as a special exception. This makes it difficult for someone who wants to take in six children to provide childcare in their home. Someone should be looking at the zoning districts and see if daycares can be included at more restricted zones maybe R-3 as a matter of right with certain limitations. This may encourage people that can't do it right now.

Ms. Patterson replied the City does allow childcare as a home occupation.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Commissioner Ingalls, seconded by Commissioner Fleming, to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Prepared by Traci Clark, Administrative Assistant