

FINDINGS OF FACT FOR A PRELIMINARY PLAT OF THE RANCHES AT BELT CREEK PHASE 3 MAJOR SUBDIVISION LOCATED IN THE S 1/2 S 1/2, SECTION 18, AND N 1/2 N 1/2 SECTION 19 TOWNSHIP 18 N., RANGE 7 E., P.M. CASCADE COUNTY, MONTANA

The application requesting preliminary plat approval for The Ranches at Belt Creek Phase 3 major subdivision was received on March 7, 2019. The submittal was determined to contain all required components sufficient for adequate public review on April 4, 2019 and scheduled for public hearing for the Cascade County Planning Board on May 21, 2019 pursuant to statutory requirements. Notice of the public hearing was sent to adjacent property owners on May 3, 2019 and published in the Great Falls Tribune on May 5, 2019 and May 12, 2019.

Big Sky Civil and Environmental (subdivider) and Mark Hawn, Trophy Property Developers Inc (owner) request preliminary plat approval for Ranches at Belt Creek Phase 3 major subdivision consisting of nineteen (19) residential lots ranging in size from 5.00 acres to 30.245 acres. The total acreage of the project site is 143.98 acres.

I. PRIMARY REVIEW CRITERIA

Effect on Agriculture

The proposed subdivision presently consists of two (2) parcels of land (143.98 acres) within the Agricultural (A) Zoning District. To the north of the project site are the previous two phases of The Ranches at Belt Creek major subdivision in the Rural Residential 5 Zoning District. To the west is Old Armington Road and US-89 with The Ranches at Belt Creek commons area and some residential development. To the south and east is undeveloped grassland. The soil is made up of a variety of soil types, none of which are classified as prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance. Ipano-Ticell loams, 4 to 10 percent slopes (48.4%) and Castner-Sinnigam complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes (29.2%) are the dominant soil types at this site. The parcels are of a size that it could potentially be put into agricultural production, however the poor viability of the soils would hinder sustainable agricultural operations beyond grazing or wild hay.

Effect on Local Services

The proposed subdivision will receive law enforcement services from the Cascade County Sheriff Department and fire protection services from the Belt Rural Volunteer Fire Department. The developer has installed a fire suppression cistern with a capacity of 44,500 gallons, or 10,000 gallons minimum, plus an additional 500 gallons per residential lot. This cistern was installed in 2008 before The Ranches at Belt Creek subdivision commenced, this facility has also been tested and approved by the Belt Rural Volunteer Fire Department.

A letter requesting comments was sent to the Belt Rural Volunteer Fire Department Chief and any response received from them will be forwarded to the Planning Board and the County Commissioners.

Parkland dedication is not required as part of this subdivision as per 76-3-621 (3)(a) which states, "A park dedication may not be required for: land proposed for subdivision into parcels larger than 5 acres."

Based on trip generation factors available from the Institute of Transportation Engineers and traffic counts from the Montana Department of Transportation, the 19 new residences that feed onto Old Armington Road will generate between 181.8 vehicular trips per day and 60.04 vehicular trips per day at full build out during peak times. The upper estimate is based on the average daily trip generation rate of 9.57 for single family housing, however the lower estimate is based on 3.16

average daily trip generation for Recreational/Vacation homes between the months of May through August, which is the predominant use of the Ranches at Belt Creek subdivision. The applicant's Traffic Impact Analysis does not anticipate adverse impacts on Old Armington Road or Peacemaker Ridge Road.

Letters requesting comments were sent to the Montana Department of Transportation and the Cascade County Road and Bridge Division. Any comment will be forwarded to the Planning Board and the Cascade County Commission.

Effect on the Natural Environment

Subdivision of the site is not expected to create significant surface run-off problems. The proposed development is outside of any regulated floodplains, will not alter any lakebeds or stream channels, and is approximately a quarter mile east of Belt Creek on top of a bluff. The Department of Environmental Quality has reviewed the subdivision masterplan as part of the Sanitation in Subdivisions Act and has approved the storm water design to mitigate runoff resulting from development in the subdivision. Additionally, drainage features existing on the property have been designated as no-build zones by the applicant and developer.

The soil is made up mostly of Ipano-Ticell loams and Castner-Sinnigam soil and is not classified as prime farmland or farmland statewide importance. Additionally, the property has not been put into agricultural production in recent history. The project was sent to the Cascade Conservation District for review, any comments received will be forwarded to the Planning Board and Commissioners.

The subdivision is not expected to adversely affect native vegetation, soils, water quality, or the quantity of surface or ground waters, as required by the Department of Environmental Quality non-degradation standards. Disturbed areas during development will be re-seeded and the weed management plan will be followed to reduce the spread of noxious weeds. Additionally, any disturbance of over an acre will be required to obtain a General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

Effect on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

This location is in a low population density area that has experienced limited residential development and is near conservation easements, block management lands, and federal and state parks and forests. The applicant identified a variety of species that have been known to visit the area, such as deer, antelope, and game birds. Humans and pets are likely to have a negative impact on wildlife in the area, however landscaping could provide more habitat for wildlife. No critical habitat areas have been identified. Letters requesting comment have been submitted to the Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, any comments received will be forwarded to the Planning Board and Commissioners. The subdivision will not result in closure of public access to hunting or fishing areas, nor to public lands.

Effect on Public Health and Safety

Based on available information, this subdivision does not appear to be subject to potential natural hazards such as flooding and rock slides; nor potential man-made hazards such as nearby heavy industrial or mining activity. Wildfires are always a possibility in subdivisions adjacent to grassland when located in rural areas. Fire and emergency services have been addressed. Vehicle access to the subdivision will be from Old Armington Highway and Little Belt Way.

II. REQUIREMENTS OF MONTANA SUBDIVISION AND PLATTING ACT, UNIFORM

STANDARDS FOR MONUMENTATION, AND LOCAL SUBDIVISION REGULATION

The subdivision meets the requirements of the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act and the surveying requirements specified in the Uniform Standards for Monumentation, and conforms to the design standards specified in the local subdivision regulations. The subdivider and the local government have complied with the subdivision review and approval procedures set forth in the local subdivision regulations.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CASCADE COUNTY GROWTH POLICY

The proposed subdivision is in general compliance with the Cascade County Growth Policy to preserve and enhance the rural, friendly and independent lifestyle currently enjoyed by Cascade County's citizens and by ensuring that all new roads be built to county specifications, designing subdivisions so as to minimize the risk of fire, promoting adequate ingresses and egresses, adequate water supply systems, requiring local review of subdivisions meet DEQ regulations, and by complying with the weed district's weed management plans. The area is not located in a designated Resource Protection Area, Prohibitive Development Area or Conditional Development Area; therefore, those standards are not applicable to the proposed subdivision.

SETBACK STANDARDS

The minimum standards must comply with the Cascade County Zoning Regulations.

SLOPE STANDARDS

Development on slopes exceeding twenty five percent is prohibited except where a licensed engineer, with demonstrated experience in the field of slope stabilization certifies that the development will create no slope failure or erosion hazards.

OFF-STREET PARKING STANDARD

All parking in the proposed subdivision will be accommodated on the premises and entirely off street.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD

The minimum standards must comply with the Cascade County Zoning Regulations.

SOIL EROSION STANDARD

The proposed subdivision should not cause soil erosion or other adverse impacts of runoff on neighboring properties, roads, or watercourses.

SOILS LIMITATIONS STANDARD

Soils that have moderate or severe limitations for the proposed subdivision will be identified and measures to mitigate such limitations will be implemented.

ROAD ACCEPTANCE AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

Legal access, described as public street and utility easement, to the lots will be provided on the final plat. There is one private access road that is being privately maintained by the HOA

to access the subdivision. The County will not have responsibility for road maintenance until such time as the County accepts the internal roads as County roads.

FIRE PROTECTION STANDARD

This development lies within and receives fire protection services from the Belt Rural Volunteer Fire Department. Response time will be dictated by weather and road conditions. A letter has been sent to the Belt Rural Volunteer Fire Chief asking for comments on the proposed subdivision. Any comments received will be sent to the Planning Board and the County Commissioners.

SCHOOL SYSTEM'S CAPACITY STANDARD

Letters were sent to the Cascade County Superintendent of Schools and the Great Falls Public Schools Superintendent, and the Belt Public Schools Superintendent. Belt Public Schools responded on February 26, 2019, that the schools in their district would have the capacity to service students from the proposed subdivision, although may need to adjust bus routes

IV. EASEMENTS FOR UTILITIES

Any comments received by staff will be forwarded to the Planning Board and County Commissioners. All easements will be shown on the final plat.

V. LEGAL AND PHYSICAL ACCESS

1. Legal access will be provided to all lots through private street easements placed on the final plat. The existing roads in this subdivision will not be county responsibility until such time as the county accepts them.

VI. OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In making their recommendations and decisions, the Cascade County Planning Board and the Cascade County Commission shall consider the following:

- A. relevant evidence relating to the public health, safety, and welfare;
- B. the Summary of Probable Impacts;
- C. the Cascade County Growth Policy; and
- D. the provisions outlined in the Cascade County Subdivision Regulations and the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act.

VII. DECISION ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the proposed subdivision.
2. Approve the proposed subdivision with conditions.
3. Table the proposed subdivision for further study.
4. Deny the proposed subdivision.