

Friends of Park County

Promoting thoughtfully planned growth in order to protect and enhance Park County's vibrant communities, sustainable working lands, and healthy natural resources.

The work never ends for those of us trying to create compact communities and hold back the wave of rural sprawl. Here is the busy week ahead.

- **Tuesday May 18 5:30 PM: Your chance to testify before Livingston City Commission on the draft Growth Policy; Friends of Park County suggests some final improvements; massive Heart K Ranch development on the agenda too.**

The City Commission is holding the first of two public hearings on the draft Growth Policy which has been greatly improved by the Planning Board. But it would be even better with some additional improvements to stop the development of convenience stores, gas stations, motels, office buildings and subdivisions – outside the city limits and some other changes. [See a summary of Friends' recommendations below.](#)

The City Commission will also consider whether to consent to the development of 800+ homes and commercial development next to the Yellowstone River at the eastern edge of the city and the annexation of the Montague subdivision.

Here is [a link to the agenda and the materials for the meeting.](#)

And here is [a link for you to participate in the Zoom meeting.](#)

Meeting ID: 810 9099 1017 Passcode: 912475

To participate by phone call: (669) 900-6833

Wednesday May 19 4:00 PM: Friends of Park County free webinar on Park County's draft Conflict Mitigation Regulations.

Learn about the County's draft Conflict Mitigation Regulations and some alternatives for stopping rural sprawl at our free webinar. Our presenters have more than 80 years of combined experience in rural land planning and regulation in Montana and the West. You can find more information [below](#) and [here](#).

- **Thursday 2:30 PM County Commission and Planning Board schedule rare joint meeting to discuss future growth policy issues in Park County.**

The County Commission and Planning Board members will meet together to discuss growth policy goals and objectives and issues and opportunities and general "community concerns" for the County to address in the coming years. They will also discuss the conflict mitigation regulations. This unusual joint meeting should indicate whether and how the County will grapple with the challenge of rural sprawl which is overwhelming Gallatin County and other counties in the Northern Rockies. Public testimony on these topics will be taken at the end of the meeting. This is an opportunity for you to join Friends of Park County in testifying in support of taking decisive action to stop sprawl now.

Here is a [link to the meeting agenda](#), which includes a link to the Zoom meeting and a number to participate by telephone. Here is the [Zoom meeting link](#).

- **Thursday May 20 4:00 PM County Planning Board Meeting discusses draft Conflict Mitigation Regulations**

Following their joint meeting with the County Commissioners, the Planning Board will have its regular monthly meeting. Most of that meeting will be devoted to the draft conflict mitigation regulations. Friends of Park County is not anticipating testifying at this meeting, having already given its opinion on the draft regulations at prior meetings.

Here is a [link to the meeting agenda](#) which includes the link for the Zoom meeting and a dial-in number. Here is the [link to the Zoom meeting](#) that is in agenda.

Livingston Growth Policy: Our suggestions for improvement. We hope you will join us in supporting them by testifying at the City Commission meeting on Tuesday.

Here is a summary of Friends of Park County's suggested improvements to the draft Livingston Growth Policy:

- Prevent a ring of sprawl around Livingston by replacing the remaining urban land use designations for land inside the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction with appropriate rural land use designations. Those urban land use designations allow things like office buildings, outlet malls, subdivisions and apartment buildings in the rural lands outside the city limits. The kind of rural residential sprawl allowed under these land use designations means more forced annexations to prevent septic systems from polluting the Yellowstone River or our ground water supplies.
- Prevent highway commercial zoning at the western I-90 interchange from undermining downtown Livingston and making the entrance to Livingston another ugly commercial strip. There is about 100 acres of land zoned for this kind of development – an area bigger than downtown Livingston.
- Making sure various public facilities plans (like the transportation and sewer plans) are consistent with the compact growth policy.
- Delete or revise one contradictory strategy in order to protect the Yellowstone River's natural features from excessive recreational development.

- Protect lives and property from floods by changing the current land use designation for Ninth Street Island that could allow up to 100 new homes to a new “Flood Risk Residential” or “Flood Resilience Residential” designation.

You can find the detailed testimony submitted to the City Commission on these points on our website, [here](#).

Conflict Mitigation & Beyond:

A Zoom webinar about the next steps in land use regulation in Park County.

4:00 – 5:00 PM Wednesday May 19

Park County’s Planning Board and staff began considering a proposed “Conflict Mitigation Zoning District Regulation” ordinance in November 2019. At its April meeting, the County Planning Board decided to send the ordinance out to the public for discussion over the next several months and possible decision in the Fall.

Friends of Park County’s webinar will examine the draft Conflict Mitigation ordinance and consider its effectiveness in addressing the rapidly rising pressure for rural residential and tourist-oriented commercial development. The presenters will examine zoning districts that have been used in Montana to curb sprawl that are worth considering for Park County.

The presenters have more than 80 years of experience in protecting rural lands from sprawl and improper development in Montana and the West. You can read more about the presenters [here](#).

Advance Registration is required, please sign up to attend at [this link](#)