

28 November 2004

✓ Rapid City Planning Commission  
300 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Rapid City, SD

Rapid City Council  
300 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Rapid City, SD

I am writing in regard to a concern I have with respect to the process of approving land use plans in Rapid City. I attempt to keep apprised of proposals, changes to proposals, and resulting changes as proposals move from the Future Land Use Committee, to The Planning Commission, to the City Council. As a private citizen, it is an impossible task.

I am recommending a change to the process which will make it easier for citizens to keep informed and remain part of the process of requests and approvals. I suggest the following, or similar, procedures be adopted:

1. Requests for land use or changes to land use plans be submitted to the Future Land Use Committee not later than 15 January of each year.
2. The Future Land Use Committee would act on the proposals and forward to the Planning Commission not later than 15 February of each year.
3. The Planning Commission would hold public hearings and forward to the City Council for approval/disapproval not later than 15 March of each year.
4. The City Council, at their discretion, would approve/disapprove the proposal without prejudice or hold a special council meeting to discuss those items which are in contention. This would normally be conducted and resolved before 30 April each year. Once approved no change to the Land Use Map could be accepted until 15 January the following year.
5. Should an issue be of such a nature that resolution is not possible within the time frame, it would be sent back to the Future Land Use and Planning Commission for either settlement or compromise, but could not be resubmitted by the requesting party until 15 January the following year.

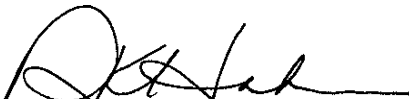
This recommendation results in the following:

1. Routine proposals would have a standard time frame in which to be either approved or disapproved.
2. Contentious and serious issues affecting the proposal action would be processed under a specific time frame. This allows citizens to track items of interest and to respond. This can only improve procedures by ensuring private citizens and neighbors of projects under advisement are given a voice within specific time frames. This removes any possibility of citizens feeling proposals are slipping through the system without their knowledge or input.
3. Frivolous and/or numerous changes could be avoided. All individuals involved in requests would have specific deadlines to meet, and it would simplify the present process of changes filed unsystematically, capriciously, and indiscriminately without any structure.

I strongly recommend that the following requirement be added to the process: Any developer requesting a change to the Future Land Use Plan be obligated to place an ad in the Rapid City Journal (at least 3 inches by 3 inches), on not less than three occasions, which announces the changes requested. It must be stipulated that the terms of the change be written in plain English, not legal descriptions, and specify exactly what is being requested by the developer. Again, this will allow the citizens of Rapid City and affected neighborhoods to be aware of proposed changes.

I'm making this recommendation at a time when major decisions made by the Planning Commission and the City Council will have long term impacts on Rapid City and the surrounding area. These decisions will affect not only the present residents, but generations to come. The wrong decision(s) could result in destroying the picturesque beauty of our hills, ugly urban sprawl, and the loss of control of our emerging growth. Far better to take the extra time, give these issues some thought, and make the right decisions regarding the future. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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