

COUNCIL APPROVES RESUBDIVISION OF GLACIER RAIL PARK

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The Kalispell City Council brought the Glacier Rail Park another step closer to completion at their meeting on Monday evening.

Council members approved resolutions to allow the Flathead County Economic Development Authority to annex an additional 3.38 acres of land into the city to be included in the new project. The land was under county jurisdiction and zoned for heavy industrial use. It was rezoned for use as part of the rail park after the annexation was approved.

The council then approved a new preliminary plan that will subdivide the 44-acre rail park into seven different lots with one common area lot.

Back in 2014, the council had approved preliminary plans for the park to be subdivided into 20 smaller rail-served lots, but the Flathead County Economic Development Authority has since decided bigger lots were more marketable than the smaller ones and are looking to change their tack.

“As the project progressed it just came to light that those smaller lots aren’t really what they are going to need,” said Kalispell Senior Planner Jared Nygren during his presentation to the council. “These larger lots are what they are targeting.”

The vote merited little discussion among the public or the council members. The project has been in the works for months, and these were mostly incremental procedural steps to keep making progress.

The Kalispell Planning Board had recommended the resolutions for approval.

The Glacier Rail Park is currently under construction along Whitefish Stage Road and the Stillwater River near the border with Evergreen.

Once it is complete, the rail tracks that have run through the center of Kalispell will be removed and businesses that depend on their proximity to the tracks will relocate to the rail park, which will allow the tracks to circumvent town.

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