

Kalispell picks route for downtown trail connector

By

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The Kalispell City Council on Tuesday unanimously and enthusiastically approved the selection of First Avenue West North as the north-south street connector for the downtown core trail.

Mayor Mark Johnson called the decision the council's "culminating vote" in the process to design the Core Area Trail, which has been in the works for about 10 years.

The selection of a street connector now will allow the trail to move into the 60% design phase in the next few weeks, followed by the 90% design phase later in the fall. Planning Director Jarod Nygren anticipated the city will be able to start seeking bids to build the trail around December 2020 and likely start construction this upcoming spring.

"We've gone through a lengthy public process," to reach this milestone, Nygren said.

Meeting virtually via Zoom videoconference, the council discussed a couple of proposed budget adjustments and development proposals.

City staff debuted a new option to allow members of the community to send in public comments during the digital meeting, although there were no public comments received Tuesday evening.

The council passed two resolutions of intent to make budget amendments to the fiscal year 2020 budget—not to be confused with the recently passed fiscal year 2021 budget—to account for some subsequent adjustments from the previous fiscal year.

One amendment is a change to the Bridge and Road Safety and Accountability fund, which was \$202,386 over the correct amount because the budget didn't include the appropriate carryover funding from fiscal year 2019.

The other amendment pertains to the Community Development Miscellaneous special revenue fund, which failed to account for the costs of a lot sale at Old School Station.

The council decided to set a public hearing on both budget amendments on Sept. 21.

Two development proposals also were approved on Tuesday. One was a preliminary plat request for Glenwood West Phase 2, a three-lot, 3.6-acre subdivision on the former site of parking lot space for the Gateway Community Center.

The conditional-use permit for the project was approved in 2019, and improvements are currently being put in place on Glenwood Drive and Two Mile Drive as part of that process. Financial Drive would also require a few improvements to conform to city standards.

The council received two public comments, both concerned with traffic impacts, prior to the meeting. Council member Ryan Hunter also asked about parking provisions for the subdivision and the possibility of sharing parking space with the Gateway Community Center.

The preliminary plat was unanimously approved.

The council also unanimously approved a final plat and Subdivision Improvement Agreement for Cottage Gardens, a subdivision on Three Mile Drive. The preliminary plat for the 11.8-acre, 37-lot single-family residential lot subdivision was preliminarily approved with 20 conditions in 2019. There were no public comments on the final plat request.

Reporter Bret Anne Serbin may be reached at (406)-758-4459 or bserbin@dailyinterlake.com.


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