

March 2, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Planning Division  
Council Chambers

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Donna Cosgrove and Commissioners, Brent Dixon, Kurt Karst, Michelle Mallard, Gary Mills, Jared Peterson, Leslie Polson, and Margaret Wimborne.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Commissioners Jake Cordova, Paul Savidis and George Swaney.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Planning Director Renée Magee, Assistant Planning Director Brad Cramer and approximately five interested citizens.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Cosgrove called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the hearing procedures for the public.

**MINUTES: January 19, 2010.** Polson indicated the last sentence on page five should read, “Polson understands the codes that govern parking are restricting expansion of the aquatic center, and she does not want to see the same issue in this situation.” **Commissioner Wimborne moved to approve the minutes of January 19, 2010, as amended. Motion seconded by Commissioner Mallard. Motion passed.**

**Public Hearings:**

**Conditional use permit: Eastern Idaho Technical College, 1600 South 25<sup>th</sup> East.** As an employee of the college, Mills recused himself from the discussion and vote. Cramer reviewed the staff report, a part of the record.

The hearing was opened to the public.

**Burton Waite -1600 S. 25<sup>th</sup> East.** Mr. Waite, president of EITC, indicated a problem with cut-through traffic existed prior to the improvements on Hitt Road and was exacerbated by the construction. The college is trying to determine a reasonable method to control traffic going through campus. It has become a safety issue for all concerned, including children attending summer camps. The campus road between Ashment Avenue and Hitt Road is a thoroughfare. Waite explained the plan is to place a temporary gate at the Ashment entrance to stop cut-through traffic. The gate will be opened during periods required for college purposes. There have been discussions about limiting access via card, but currently funds are not available for implementation. Cut-through traffic uses the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access to avoid the intersection at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Hitt Road. Waite is also aware of individuals driving over the shrubs between the Toys R Us parking lot west of campus and the EITC 17<sup>th</sup> Street access to avoid the 17<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. Speed bumps have not slowed the speed or amount of cut-through traffic, and the

college is trying to determine an effective method to increase safety by reducing non-campus traffic.

Karst asked if a traffic count was taken at the EITC 17<sup>th</sup> Street access and Waite replied there were three traffic counters but he does not recall the exact count at the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access. There was a traffic counter off Hitt Road along the north road of the campus. The intention was to count traffic going around to the rear of the campus. There were no classes being held at the time the counter was in place.

Dixon asked about the development of the Hitt Road entrance. Waite stated the EITC entrance was moved north to coincide with the WalMart entrance when the store was built. He stated a vehicle leaving WalMart in its center lane at Hitt Road has an arrow pointing straight into the EITC parking lot. Based upon a question from Dixon, Waite said he does not know the number of EITC students living in the area near Ashment Avenue. Dixon asked if gates within the campus have been considered to eliminate the option of cross-campus cut-through. Waite answered that option has been discussed but is not preferable for students attending classes. Wimborne asked if the students have been surveyed to assess their reliance on the Ashment Avenue access. Waite answered drawings were posted. He is not aware of receiving many comments.

Dixon asked if the college owns property at the northwest corner of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Hitt Road. If Hitt Road had a southbound right-turn lane, back-up traffic will be reduced and the cut-through will be a less desirable option. Dixon also asked about the northern road along campus becoming a public road. Waite stated the college owns the property north of the road and expects future campus development. He was hesitant about a main thoroughfare going through campus. Mallard asked about blocking off the northwest corner of the north road rather than closing Ashment Avenue which is used by people accessing the college from the west. Waite replied that may mitigate one problem, but another gate will be required to reduce traffic utilizing the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access as a cut-through.

**Cindy Mills – 395 Redwood Drive.** As an employee of the college, Ms. Mills agrees the campus sees heavy traffic usage. She knows many students use Ashment Avenue to avoid Hitt Road. Having campus accesses only on Hitt Road will increase traffic on Hitt and compromise safety for students and campus personnel in addition to the citizens of Idaho Falls. Mills suggested using jersey barriers to block the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access because it is not a highly-utilized access. Ashment Avenue could remain open with jersey barriers being placed along the north road as well as south of the Ashment Avenue entrance. These will lessen cut-through traffic by impeding people who do not need to be on campus but not create further congestion on Hitt Road.

**Steve Bunnell – 135 Webster Avenue, Rexburg.** Mr. Bunnell is the maintenance and operations supervisor at EITC. Student population has increased over time, but there were not many traffic problems until WalMart was built. The previous EITC president had some disagreements with the original development plans for WalMart, and the current site was

developed. A proposal has been presented to the Department of Public Works to build additional parking areas and sever roads currently utilized as thoroughfares; however, it seems unlikely this project will be included in the 2011 budget given the current financial picture. EITC has worked with Schiess & Associates to develop the proposal. The police department is in full agreement with the proposal. A road across campus was discussed but it was determined that would create too much traffic going through campus. This proposal appears to be the most cost effective method for reducing cut-through traffic. The fire department supports this proposal and it meets their requirement to be able to reach every building on campus in three ways.

Mallard asked if any temporary barriers had been implemented to cut off traffic. Bunnell answered some measures had been taken on occasion, but vehicles drive across the grass or take whatever measures they deem necessary to cut through the campus. The police have offered their full support. Dixon stated citations for vandalism, such as driving over grass, are more costly than traffic violations. Bunnell said every soft approach they have implemented has not been effective. Karst asked the traffic count at the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access and Bunnell replied approximately 150 vehicles.

**Gary Mills – 395 Redwood Drive.** Mr. Mills believes closing two accesses to EITC will create too great of an impact at the intersection of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Hitt Road. In addition, closing the Ashment Avenue access may create on-street parking issues on Ashment Avenue. The base under parking lots is different than the base under streets. The parking lot is not built to handle the additional load. In addition, Mills has seen people parking in the fire lanes during special events and closing Ashment Avenue may exacerbate the problem. When south bound traffic stacks on Hitt Road and blocks the southern Hitt Road access, EITC access will be reduced to one access from Hitt Road.

**Burton Waite – 1600 S. 25<sup>th</sup> East.** Mr. Waite indicated a barrier was suggested near building 6, but the fire department will require a costly turn-around according to Scheiss & Associates. Cosgrove noted the possibility of a gate similar to what is being proposed for Ashment Avenue. As to fire lanes, people are ticketed. Some thought has been given to making the southern Hitt Road exit a right-turn only. There have been many discussions about all the issues and the best options for resolving the concerns.

There were no further comments and the hearing was closed to the public.

Peterson believes cross access for students is important and he wishes to see entrances and exits fully maintained. He believes more effort should be made to determine how the students are using the accesses. Karst agreed but indicated the data for the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access leads him to believe that particular access could be closed. As expansion has occurred, the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access has become less important. The access could be closed without impacting traffic flow on 17<sup>th</sup> Street or Hitt Road, and closure may improve traffic flow in the area. Karst is concerned about closing the Ashment Avenue access due to the comprehensive plan requirement for multiple accesses. Closure of that access will force a significant amount of traffic onto Hitt Road which is

an arterial, and traffic should be minimized on arterials whenever possible. Karst suggested encouraging WalMart to repaint and restripe its center lane so as not to indicate straight-through traffic leads directly to the campus.

Polson agreed with closing the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access because it is not heavily used and it is good to eliminate any possible accesses onto 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Mallard agreed and suggested exploring options rather than closing the Ashment Avenue access. The Commission is not doing its duty if it pushes on-campus traffic problems onto the intersection of Hitt and 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Closing the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access may enhance traffic safety, but that is not true of closing Ashment Avenue.

Dixon asked if the Commission needs to approve gates on the interior of the campus. Cramer replied the Commission needs to approve any material changes to the site. Wimborne has concerns similar to other Commissioners but does not believe closing the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access solves the problems the college is facing. She would like to see more information on how students use Ashment Avenue and she questioned the possibility of a temporary conditional use permit while the college reviews other options.

Dixon stated Hitt Road is a major arterial and is intended to move traffic across town. Closing an access to a minor arterial and to a collector street seems backwards from the intended outcomes. A number of people have mentioned tonight that they use the Ashment Avenue access. If the only access is on the east side of campus, people will still race around to get to the west side of campus, even if traffic is not drive-through traffic. Dixon encouraged the City to approach the college about a right-hand turn lane at the intersection of Hitt and 17<sup>th</sup> Street. Dixon suggested the possibility of internal gates controlled by campus usage. He believes there are better solutions than closing the accesses as proposed.

**Commissioner Peterson moved to deny the conditional use permit to reduce the number of access points to EITC. Motion seconded by Commissioner Dixon. Commissioner Polson moved to amend the motion by approving the closure of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access. Amendment seconded by Commissioner Karst.** Cosgrove asked if there is any option for approving a portion of the request and Cramer answered yes. Cosgrove questioned the usage of double negatives and suggested withdrawal of the amendment. **Commissioner Polson withdrew the amendment.** Dixon stated it is important to note the traffic counts provided are for a very unusual period of time due to closure of the Hitt Road north of the campus main entrance. There is no data on student access as the college was not in session at the time of the traffic counts. Cosgrove asked about the possibility of approving an amended conditional use permit and Magee replied there could be a motion to approve the closure of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access and request more data on the Ashment Avenue access. **Commissioner Peterson moved to recess the conditional use permit to reduce the number of access points to EITC until data showing student usage can be determined. Commissioner Wimborne seconded the motion. The motion passed, 4-2, with Commissioners Karst and Polson opposing.** Karst believes the applicant deserves an answer and the only significant data missing is the importance of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access. People with experience on the campus can understand how unimportant that entrance to the campus has

become. Polson agreed. Karst added the count for the 17<sup>th</sup> Street access should be added to the record rather than relying upon recollection.

**Business:**

**Final Plat: Eagle Rock Town Center, Division No. 3.** Magee reviewed the staff report, a part of the record. Staff is recommending a cross access agreement for this parcel and the parcel to the south to reduce the number of accesses onto Utah Avenue. Also the location of the driveway on Utah Avenue on this parcel crosses a piece of private ground not belonging to the developer.

Dixon referred to the access point along Snake River Parkway and asked if there will be issues with clear sight on both sides of the access. Magee answered the driveway will comply with the standards for a collector street. She believes there is better visibility than indicated by the curve shown on paper. A fast food restaurant is planned for the site and stacking room for a drive-through window needs to be balanced with street access.

**Jeff Freiberg, 356 W. Sunnyside.** Mr. Freiberg believes the cross-access agreement is already signed and recorded.

Commissioner Dixon indicated the access issues have been reviewed and the request for a final plat is fairly straightforward. **Commissioner Dixon moved to recommend to the Mayor and City Council approval of the final plat, Eagle Rock Town Center, Division No. 3, with the condition a cross access agreement be recorded prior to issuance of building permits. Motion seconded by Commissioner Mills. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Miscellaneous: Election of officers:** Commissioner Mills stated the committee nominated Jared Peterson as Chair; Kurt Karst, Vice Chair; and Leslie Polson, Secretary, for a term of one year. No other nominations were put forward. **Commissioner Dixon moved to accept the nominations for officers as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wimborne. Motion passed unanimously.**

**A social and economic profile of Bonneville County and Idaho Falls.** Cramer presented several highlights from the social and economic profile which will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan. The profile has not been updated since 1997. Cramer asked the Commissioners to review the information and offer comments.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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Donna Carlson, Recording Secretary