



Caribou County Commissioners have authorized the beginning of an Agricultural Group/Committee to lead discussion regarding the current zoning ordinances for the County in regards to Agriculture.

Recently County Planning and Zoning Administrator, JoAnna Ashley, attended the 2020 American Planning Association of Idaho's (APA Idaho) annual conference. A primary focus of this conference was the issues that Idaho, and specifically rural Counties are facing as Idaho continues to experience rapid growth. An effect of this growth has been an alarming rate of agricultural lands being converted into low-density housing and then ultimately high-density housing.

Nationally, from 2001 to 2016 an estimated 11,000,000 acres of farmland and rangeland were converted to urban and highly developed land use (4.1 million acres) or low-density residential land use (nearly 7 million acres).

In addition to this conversation Mrs. Ashley has been in contact with several people who own large tracts of land in Caribou County and concern has been expressed regarding the current zoning requirements for residential homes in the Agricultural (AG) Zone.

In May of 2019, after a six-month moratorium on zoning applications (variances, conditional uses, and subdivisions), the County passed a new zoning ordinance. Prior to this ordinance change the requirement for a residential home in the AG Zone was one-acre minimum with a density of 120-acres. There were significant issues with this approach as there was no checks or balances in place to ensure that the same 120-acres weren't utilized for multiple one-acre splits. For example, someone owns 130-acres and could split off a one-acre piece, leaving them with 129 acres, which then they could split another one-acre off nine more times in theory. The new ordinance adopted, established that there was a 40-acre minimum for a residence in the agricultural zone. Nearly two years in to this new ordinance, this has addressed the unintended consequences of the previous ordinance, unregulated subdividing in the Agricultural zone. However, it has failed to take into account an issue it created, the complexity of passing on the farm/ranch when the child of the landowner will need a home to live in, and it is not practical to split 40 acres out of the farm to give the child a place to build their home. Issues such as this as well as others Mrs. Ashley has observed, and after consulting with the Commissioners, have concluded that the best approach would be to get those that are affected most by these ordinances involved so they may share their perspectives as well as their needs.

We are inviting those who have farms or ranches (regardless of the size) to take part in this beginning survey to help guide the approach forward in the County. There is a total of 10 questions and the survey should take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. Please participate and share your opinion so that the County can be better informed in addressing the needs, concerns, and issues our agricultural community faces. You can access [the survey here](#). This survey does not collect any identifying information; therefore, your answers will remain anonymous.

If you are interested in being a part of these conversations or attending future meetings please [click this link](#) to provide the County with your contact information so they can send you notice of future meetings and discussions.

The County Commissioners and Mrs. Ashley greatly appreciate your participation with this. If you have other family and friends in Caribou County who are involved in farming or ranching please share this information with them.