

Project Re:Code
Landscape Group
Meeting Notes
March 22, 2018

The meeting started with a power point presentation showing pictures and landscape drawings of the different required landscaping in Billings. That was followed by some images of the existing street trees in different areas of billings. Some trees were approximately 100 feet apart while others were only approximately 25 feet apart. A couple of the newer development did not have street trees or a minimum of trees. Although there were no trees on the newer developments they do meet code as it is currently written. The group discussed the spacing of trees and what may be the best distance between trees. It was further discussed that tree spacing may not be the solution but number of trees required for lineal feet of frontage. Tree grouping should be encouraged along with shrubs, perennials and ground cover plants.

The discussion turned to the Shiloh Overlay District and how it is a required landscape for all properties regardless of zoning or lot size. There is also a point system to determine if you meet the requirements of the code. It was pointed out that Bozeman has a similar system but there are a few more options available to the developer, although some of those options do not seem to be realistic or desirable options. It was suggested that the new landscaping requirements needed to provide flexibility while being consistent throughout.

A point of discussion that was brought up was the Interstate. It was expressed by a member that they felt the interstate was not a street frontage as no business is allowed to take access off of it. It was suggested it could be landscaped as a required landscape strip but not as street frontage.

Discussion began to narrow down to a consensus that the group would like to pursue a code similar to the Shiloh Overlay that will offer choices to the developer and a point system to be met. The point system will be designed to encourage a more water conscious landscape. The group also stated it is important to encourage sustainable landscape and low water use landscape to be more water conscious.

The group agreed to begin to get some minimum requirement recommendations from group members who deal with plants on a daily basis. The group felt that to begin with they will recommend that there is a street tree planted for every 50 feet of street frontage. It was recommended that minimum tree size is 1.5-inch caliper, ornamental trees should be a minimum of 1-inch caliper, at time of installation. Evergreen trees should be a minimum of 6 to 8 feet at time of installation. Recommended mulch types were crushed stone or decomposed granite, organic mulch should be shredded bark. Crushed stone and shredded bark stays in place better than round stone or bark chips.

The group will be meeting again on April 25, 2018 at 3 pm.