

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COEUR D' ALENE, IDAHO,
HELD AT THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM

April 1, 2025

The Mayor and Council of the City of Coeur d'Alene met in a regular session of said Council at the Coeur d'Alene City Library Community Room on April 1, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., there being present the following members:

Woody McEvers, Mayor

Dan English) Members of Council Present
Christie Wood)
Dan Gookin)
Kiki Miller)
Amy Evans)
Kenny Gabriel)

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor McEvers called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION: Phil Altmeyer of the Union Gospel Mission led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Councilmember Miller led the pledge of allegiance.

FAIR HOUSING MONTH: Councilmember Miller read the Proclamation declaring April 2025 as Fair Housing Month. Jennifer Smock, Board President of Coeur d'Alene Regional Realtors, accepted the Proclamation and expressed gratitude to the City Council. Ms. Smock highlighted their affiliation with the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and their commitment to strict guidelines, including the Code of Ethics and Fair Housing Standards. To maintain their licenses in Idaho, members must complete both a Code of Ethics class and a fair housing class every three years, adhering to NAR standards at both national and local levels. Upon obtaining their licenses, members swear to uphold a code of ethics and maintain professionalism, with a board of grievances in place to address any violations. Ms. Smock also mentioned their community outreach committee, which organizes various activities. This year, they are conducting a Ramp-athon to build 20 ramps for individuals needing home access. Annually, they host a Realtor Golf Tournament to raise funds for charitable causes, having raised \$10,000 for Safety Net last year and aiming to support Family Promise this year. Additionally, they support the "Miracle on Britton" initiative, striving to contribute more land to such projects and continue their efforts in perpetuity.

IDAHO DISASTER DOGS UPDATE: Firefighter Paramedic Cody Moore introduced team members Morgan and canine Eagle, along with Bridget and canine Bear. The team, part of a Type 3 urban search and rescue unit, includes canine members who assist in various rescue operations. They specialize in urban search and rescue but also have skills applicable to wilderness, ski patrol/avalanche, maritime rescue, mountain rescue, and combat environments. The dogs are trained to rigorous FEMA standards and are crucial in locating missing persons in various scenarios,

including building collapses and natural disasters. Established in 2005, Mr. Moore explained that they are technically the Coeur d'Alene's Fire Department Canine Team and deploy locally, statewide, and nationally. The Idaho Disaster Dogs was created as a fundraising mechanism and relies on sponsors to support their operations. They recently published a children's book about Murphy, a rescue dog who passed away earlier this year. The Canine Team works on advanced obedience and agility training, essential for urban search and rescue operations. Dogs excel in air scent detection, outperforming advanced technology in locating missing persons in large rubble piles. Notable deployments include the hurricanes in Georgia, Hawaii Kona, and Hawaii Maui; Oso mudslide; Oregon wildfires; Silver Mountain avalanche; Lahaina wildfires; and many local searches. Lastly, Mr. Moore thanked their sponsors with the City of Coeur d'Alene as their biggest supporter.

Councilmember Wood expressed admiration for the dogs and inquired about the breeds and their working lifespan with Mr. Moore responding that they primarily use labradors but also have one german shepherd on the team. He added that while there is no strict retirement age, the goal is for the dogs to work until around ten years old, depending on their health because they aim for a balance between the dogs' health and their drive, ensuring an ethical retirement when the dogs start slowing down. Councilmember Wood asked how the rescue dogs interact with police canines when working alongside other first responders. Mr. Moore explained that their dogs operate mostly independently within their designated zones, similar to law enforcement dogs, which typically do not overlap. While the dogs get along well with other dogs, they maintain separate search perimeters to ensure efficient operations. Councilmember Gabriel acknowledged Fire Deputy Chief Jeff Sells, noting his significant role in establishing the program. He highlighted the extensive effort required to convince people of the benefits of having dogs in the fire station. He stressed that the dedication to reach this point is remarkable, and although the public sees only a small part of the operation, he expressed gratitude for the valuable asset the program provides. Councilmember Miller asked why tax dollars are spent on training rescue dogs that are then sent to assist in other areas, and how funding for such deployments is ensured. Mr. Moore explained that national deployments are sponsored by FEMA, which reimburses the city for any lost wages. State and regional deployments are covered by mutual aid contracts, allowing teams to assist neighboring states like Washington and Montana, which reciprocate in times of need. Typically, only one dog and handler are sent, gaining valuable experience that benefits the entire team upon their return. This experience enhances training for local search and rescue teams, ultimately repaying the investment through improved capabilities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

James Korver, Coeur d'Alene, stated that he recently moved to Coeur d'Alene and expressed concerns about the lack of speed limit signs on North 7th Street. He appealed to the City Council to install stop signs or other measures to slow down traffic, emphasizing the safety of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren to be able to play in his front yard. He recounted his conversation with the Police Department, which acknowledged the long-standing issue but did not provide a solution. He requested the installation of a speed monitoring device and stressed the urgency of addressing the problem before summer, when his family plans to visit. Councilmember Wood assured Mr. Korver that traffic issues in the City, including speeding, are frequently addressed. The Police Department regularly runs radar, sets up traffic trailers, and issues numerous

tickets. She clarified that the Police Department's role is to enforce and stressed that while enforcement may not be visible at all times, it is indeed happening. Mr. Korver stated that the population in the Coeur d'Alene area is projected to increase significantly by 2060, and it's crucial to address these issues proactively to prevent tragedies.

Mike Fuller, Coeur d'Alene, stated that the Pedestrian and Bicycle Pedestrian Committee has focused on sidewalk repair, maintenance, and upkeep. They also organized an audit of the downtown area to identify sidewalks needing repair and to address issues affecting people with mobility challenges. He thanked the Council members who attended these sessions and provided valuable insights. He shared that it is concerning what he reads in the paper that walking in the streets is not safe, especially for the elderly and those with mobility issues. He asked Council to address this, particularly with new home construction projects. It is crucial to ensure sidewalks are installed not only in front of these homes but also along the sides to prevent the problem of sidewalks that lead to nowhere and to ensure safety. Mr. Fuller stated that they strongly support the amendment to remove exemptions for developers and homeowners from constructing sidewalks in priority corridors. He asked Council to ensure sidewalks are repaired and maintained, particularly in the downtown area.

Denise Jeska, Coeur d'Alene, expressed her gratitude to those who participated in their wheelchair audits and witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by individuals when sidewalks are broken or missing. She emphasized that for people in wheelchairs or the elderly, navigating the streets becomes a necessity due to the lack of accessible pathways.

Nick Bell, Coeur d'Alene, noted the code violations at 1119 C Street. He stated that their research indicates that the structure is outside of the building code on the north and west sides. The original site plan showed the structure 8 feet off the alleyway, but it is actually 6 feet off the property line, which affects the allowable building height. On the west side, the original plans did not provide any heights, but a 14-foot overhead door was included. The revised plans submitted on March 5th show the structure built to 17 feet 9 inches tall, exceeding the allowable height by 2 feet 9 inches. Mr. Bell stated that the Planning Department was not given all the proper heights but used the information provided to the best of their abilities to calculate setback requirements, but the structure built does not conform to the codes.

Mark Smyly from Coeur d'Alene provided the events regarding the issue of code violations at 1119 C Street mentioned by Mr. Bell. On November 25, a City Inspector couldn't verify the alley side setback and advised the homeowner to pour footings at his own risk. In December 2024, neighbors inquired about the project with the City Planning and Building Departments. In January 2025, during framing, further inquiries were made, and citizens were assured the project was code compliant. On January 14, a City Inspector noted the height on the west side of the structure was out of compliance. On January 16, the City Planning Department advised the owner to stop construction, resubmit plans, adjust the structure, or apply for a variance, and encouraged a property survey. On January 29 and 31, City Departments met with the owner and his attorney, requesting plans that match the as-built structure. On February 28, the Planning Department verified potential code violations but did not require the owner to apply for a variance or change the structure. On March 3, Nick and Kelly Bell, Vince Weibert, and Zoe Truman met with City officials, who assured follow-up on plan revisions. On March 5, the homeowner resubmitted plans

showing the structure as built but did not provide an updated, scaled site plan or elevation drawings for step back calculations. On March 21, the City Attorney and City Administrator advised the Planning Department not to require modifications or a variance process.

Kelly Bell, Coeur d'Alene, discussed the homeowner's liability and the City Planning Department's responsibilities regarding the issue at 1119 C Street. She emphasized that the homeowner must ensure code compliance and noted that he signed documents absolving the City of responsibility for his failure to provide correct documentation and measurements. With regards to the City Planning Department's concerns about financial hardship, she argued that the homeowner's delay in resubmitting plans made any hardship self-induced. She mentioned a 2019 precedent where a variance was denied despite neighbor support. Ms. Bell highlighted the unfairness of inconsistent enforcement and raised concerns about the structure's potential commercial use, which conflicts with zoning regulations. She requested a stop order until the building complies with the code, or a variance process is conducted and called for strict enforcement to prevent commercial use.

Vince Weibert, Coeur d'Alene, noted the code violations and the failures of the City Planning and Building Department at 1119 C Street. He emphasized that the process has shown a disregard for the neighborhood. He stated that the homeowner was given opportunities to correct errors but chose to continue work in violation of the stop work order. Mr. Weibert highlighted the unfairness of the situation, where neighbors who followed the rules are now facing hardship and loss of property value. Mr. Weibert urged the Council to take action and ensure fair enforcement of the rules as well as protect the integrity of the neighborhoods.

Joe Deacon, Coeur d'Alene, invited the Council to attend the Veterans Appreciation Breakfast on Saturday, April 5, at 9:00 a.m. at the VFW Hall.

David Passaro, Coeur d'Alene, thanked the Council for Council Bill 25-1008 amending sidewalk requirement exceptions for the priority corridors which are high traffic areas with schools, apartments, bike riders, walking commuters, and auto traffic. He acknowledged that some may view the change as a burden to homeowners but emphasized the importance of improving public safety and mobility. Mr. Passaro reminded the Council of a previously approved five-year sidewalk plan that was never fully implemented and urged a unanimous vote for Council Bill 25-1008. He suggested looking into funding options to complete unfinished sections of priority corridors with the increasing downtown density and the critical need for sidewalks especially during summer and winter months.

David Taylor, Coeur d'Alene, noted that the Tubbs Hill Foundation has released its Annual Report highlighting the productive year of 2024, which included several trail projects and cleanups. He noted that 2025 has started well with two trail days and ongoing work at Corbin Point to make it more accessible. Mr. Taylor emphasized the importance of their partnership with the City Parks Department and the need for more volunteers. He acknowledged the daily efforts of community members who pick up trash on Tubbs Hill, which sees over 370,000 visitors annually.

Richard Fortman, Coeur d'Alene, shared the financial struggles faced by city employees. He stated that despite loving his job, he had to leave his position at the Streets Department due to insufficient pay. Mr. Fortman detailed his monthly expenses, highlighting the inability to cover basic needs and

emergencies. He emphasized that public servants should be able to afford to live in the community they serve. He urged the Council to make Coeur d'Alene a place where employees can raise families and requested better financial planning and support during upcoming Police and Lake City Employees Association (LCEA) negotiations.

Councilmember Wood asked about the 1119 C Street issue whether there will be a variance process coming forward to the Council. Councilmember English agreed for the need to address the concerns raised during public comment. Councilmember Gookin proposed adding a discussion item to the next meeting agenda to review this issue, with the City Building and Planning Department heads to be present to answer questions. He added the need to ensure that the rules are enforced fairly and consistently.

Councilmember Gookin responded to Mr. Korver's comments by noting that 9th Street is also problematic. He mentioned that the City has a traffic calming policy, which could be implemented on these collector streets designed to handle more traffic. While placing a stop sign on every corner is impractical, other measures can be implemented.

Councilmember Gookin acknowledged Mr. Fortman's concerns about the high cost of living, which affects everyone. He noted that increased impact fees will help but pointed out the inconsistency with the urban renewal agency attracting wealthy individuals, thereby pushing out the working class. He recalled proposing employee incentives for cost-cutting efforts years ago and suggested revisiting this idea. Lastly, he emphasized the need to explore various opportunities to support city employees. Councilmember Miller appreciated the comments made and encouraged a close review of recent budget presentations, highlighting the City's unique payroll challenges. She noted that while Councilmember Gookin often votes against tax increases, raising taxes over the years could have helped address financial issues. She also emphasized that the City does care about its people and offered assistance in understanding payroll challenges. She mentioned an ad hoc committee focused on attainable housing on Atlas and efforts to provide local workers housing. She acknowledged ongoing discussions in the Building and Planning Departments about ways to address issues like barndominiums and appreciated the community's positive and concise input, assuring that their voices were heard.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mayor McEvers announced and congratulated Councilmembers Miller, Evans, and English for their ten years of service.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. Approval of Council Minutes for the March 18, 2025 Meeting.
2. Approval of General Services/Public Works Committee Meeting for March 24, 2025
3. Setting of the General Services/Public Works Committee Meeting at Noon on April 7, 2025.
4. Approval of Bills as Submitted.
5. Approval of SS-24-11 Chatfield Final Plat
6. Approval of **Resolution No. 25-013** - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF COEUR D'ALENE, KOOTENAI COUNTY, IDAHO, DECLARING CERTAIN VEHICLES USED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT TO BE SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF THOSE VEHICLES AT AUCTION; AND APPROVING

A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DIVING AND UNDERWATER SURVEYING SERVICES FOR THE WASTEWATER OUTFALL INVESTIGATION AND CONDITIONAL ASSESSMENT PROJECT.

MOTION: Motion by Evans, seconded by Gabriel to approve the Consent Calendar as presented, including **Resolution No. 25-013**.

ROLL CALL: Wood Aye; Evans Aye; Miller Aye; Gabriel Aye; Gookin Aye; English Aye.
Motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-014

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF COEUR D'ALENE, KOOTENAI COUNTY, IDAHO, DECLARING CERTAIN SIGNAL EQUIPMENT TO BE SURPLUS, AUTHORIZING THE DONATION OF THE SURPLUS PROPERTY TO THE CITY OF LEWISTON, IDAHO, AND APPROVING A DONATION AGREEMENT.

STAFF REPORT: Streets & Engineering Director Todd Feusier noted that the City is working on a major project on Government Way, upgrading 10 intersections and attempting to add an 11th one with extra grant funding. This process has generated many used parts, which typically cost money to dispose of. He explained that this equipment is of little to no value to Coeur d'Alene due to its incompatibility with the City's current signal equipment. Many of these parts, such as signal heads and brackets, are over 30 years old, leak water, and have little life left. The plan is to recycle what they can and send the rest to the landfill. Mr. Feusier mentioned that they reached out to local agencies, and the City of Lewiston expressed interest in the used signal parts. Lewiston is willing to pick them up, which saves on disposal costs. They need these parts as they lack funding to upgrade their older equipment. Mr. Feusier stated that they are generating close to 300 used signal heads from this project, and Lewiston is also interested in the old signal cabinets, which no longer fit the new equipment.

DISCUSSION: Mayor McEvers stated that he is excited to see this kind of collaboration and support for another city. He emphasized the importance of striving to be good in the community and helping out whenever we can.

MOTION: Motion by Evans, seconded by Miller to approve **Resolution No. 25-014**; Declaring various pieces of used signal equipment and related items as surplus and authorization to donate these items to the City of Lewiston, Idaho.

ROLL CALL: Evans Aye; Miller Aye; Gabriel Aye; Gookin Aye; English Aye; Wood Aye.
Motion carried.

COUNCIL BILL 25-1008

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE AMENDMENT OF SECTIONS 12.28.180(G), 12.28.210(A), 12.28.210(C), AND 12.28.240 OF THE COEUR D'ALENE MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING CURB AND SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENTS, AND PRIORITY PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS; PROVIDING FOR THE REPEAL OF

CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR THE PUBLICATION OF A SUMMARY OF THE ORDINANCE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE THEREOF.

STAFF REPORT: City Engineer Chris Bosley noted that he previously proposed raising the threshold for requiring sidewalks and curbs with new construction. He explained that currently, if you pull a building permit for \$30,000 or more, you must install a curb or sidewalk if none exists in front of your home. This requirement doesn't apply to repairing existing sidewalks. He stated that the \$30,000 threshold, set in 2008, should be adjusted for inflation to about \$45,000 today. He recalled that he was also asked to consider exceptions to ensure the value of sidewalk improvements isn't disproportionate to the construction value. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) suggests a maximum of 20% that someone should pay. Mr. Bosley proposed increasing the threshold for curb and sidewalk installation from \$30,000 to \$45,000 based on the value of the building permit and adding exceptions for projects like replacing shingles, windows, or siding, which don't significantly improve property value.

Trails Coordinator Monte McCully in his staff report noted that 30% of Coeur d'Alene neighborhoods lack sidewalks because they were built before sidewalks were required. Municipal Code §§ 12.28.210 and 12.28.240 currently allow exceptions to sidewalk construction due to hardship, geographical constraints, and distance. Mr. McCully explained that the proposed amendments will remove these exceptions, requiring developers and owners to construct sidewalks in the identified Priority Corridors regardless of distance or other exemptions. The amendment specifically identifies twelve priority corridors, primarily routes from neighborhoods to schools, that will no longer be exempt from sidewalk construction requirements.

DISCUSSION: Councilmember Gabriel requested clarification on what happens if a \$45,000 permit doesn't cover the entire sidewalk. Mr. Bosley explained that if the building permit is \$45,000 or more, such as a \$100,000 permit for an addition to a house, it would require installing a sidewalk along the frontage, which could range from 40 to 100 feet depending on the property's frontage. This is why the proposal suggests raising the threshold from \$30,000 to \$45,000. The cost per foot for sidewalk replacement varies based on contractors and the construction industry at the time. Mr. McCully added that in this way, minor repairs like flooding in the house won't trigger the requirement to build sidewalks. Councilmember English stated the importance of addressing the "sidewalks to nowhere" issue as a safety concern. He acknowledged that while there may be gaps in sidewalk coverage, it's crucial to start somewhere. He added that initiating sidewalk construction will encourage neighbors to follow suit, creating safer walking areas for children. Councilmember Wood noted that in older neighborhoods of Coeur d'Alene, sidewalks are often inconsistent, with some areas having them and others not. She inquired whether expensive maintenance projects, such as new roofs or windows costing over \$45,000, would require the installation of sidewalks. Mr. Bosley clarified that these maintenance projects would be exceptions, as they do not involve expanding the home's square footage. Therefore, such work would not trigger the sidewalk installation requirement. Councilmember Evans asked if the exceptions listed on page 3 of the ordinance and amendments apply to all priority pedestrian corridors mentioned. Mr. McCully confirmed that all 12 pedestrian corridors are included.

Councilmember Gookin inquired whether the exception for maintenance projects like roofing or siding would still apply unless the property is located in priority corridors. Mr. Bosley clarified that

maintenance projects should be exceptions regardless of location. Councilmember Gookin expressed concerns about the financial burden on homeowners and questioned the rationale behind the \$45,000 threshold for building permits. Mr. McCully emphasized that the goal is to address loopholes exploited by developers rather than burden regular homeowners. Councilmember Gookin raised concerns about homeowners in neighborhoods without sidewalks needing to install them if they pull a permit for \$45,000 or more. Mr. Bosley confirmed that the 450-foot distance exception still applies. Councilmember Gookin asked about new construction and teardowns, and Mr. McCully clarified that the 450-foot rule remains except in priority corridors. Councilmember Gookin mentioned Mr. Passaro's suggestion during public comments about exploring other options, such as Class 1 bike lanes, which would be the city's responsibility instead of the homeowners. He also pointed out issues with maintaining sidewalks, where some are heaved by tree roots, causing people to also walk in the streets. Mr. Bosley stated that a lot has to do with the volume of traffic on certain streets, in some neighborhoods, people walk in the streets because of low traffic volumes. Mr. McCully noted that sidewalks are often unnecessary in neighborhoods like Sanders Beach or Fort Ground, where slower traffic prevails. He explained that most of the streets in question are collectors or arterials, except for 19th Street, which has a partial trail. Higher traffic volumes make streets less safe without sidewalks. Councilmember Gookin raised a concern about Dalton Street between Ramsey and I-95, which lacks residential frontage and is not a priority corridor. Mr. McCully explained plans to install a trail on the south side of Dalton Street, emphasizing the need for funding and prioritizing dangerous areas. Councilmember Gookin expressed concerns about the financial burden on homeowners, especially in older neighborhoods where installing sidewalks might be impractical due to existing trees and garage setbacks.

Councilmember Wood expressed concerns about the ordinance's language regarding maintenance and its threshold, suggesting that it should be more specific to avoid interpretation issues. She stated that she agrees with Councilmember Gookin about exploring a sliding scale rather than just the \$45,000. Councilmember Miller suggested defining maintenance procedures, addressing the impact on trees, and offering permit discounts or incentives for sidewalk installations. Councilmember Gookin agreed with these ideas and raised a question about the impact on housing affordability. Councilmember Miller stated that there are developer incentives for attainable housing.

Councilmember Gookin expressed that he is open to the proposal if incentives are provided to lessen the burden on homeowners. He emphasized the need for more feedback and clarity before fully supporting this initiative. Councilmember English agreed, noting that as the City approaches budget season, it's important to reflect organizational values in the budget. He suggested allocating funds for sidewalks, which benefit the community.

MOTION: Motion by Wood, seconded by Miller, to table **Council Bill No. 25-1008** for further discussion.

DISCUSSION: Councilmember Gookin emphasized the need to consider the burden on homeowners and explore ways to implement the requirements in a manner that would be satisfactory to all parties involved. Mayor McEvers asked about the historical context of the \$30,000 threshold and the impact of raising it. He suggested that clear direction should be provided to staff to ensure effective implementation.

Councilmember Wood stated that the Council provided feedback during the discussion. She emphasized the importance of clear language to avoid interpretation issues. Councilmember Gookin mentioned funding options and the possibility of a sliding scale. Mr. Tymesen highlighted the significant increase in property valuations in Coeur d'Alene. He used the example of a \$700,000 home undergoing \$100,000 worth of improvements, which would trigger a \$10,000 sidewalk replacement requirement. He preferred avoiding a sliding scale, suggesting that the \$45,000 threshold for alterations, excluding maintenance projects, is sufficient. He argued that property value should not dictate the need for a sidewalk, as the permit threshold has already been raised, and certain maintenance projects are excluded. He noted that a few \$400,000 homes would require sidewalks and that 10% value for sidewalk installation is impractical. He concluded by supporting the current approach over a sliding scale. Councilmember Gookin noted that the threshold for requiring sidewalk installation has been raised from \$30,000 to \$45,000. He suggested that using a percentage of the property valuation might be a more logical solution, as it would prevent the need for future revisions. He argued that a higher value home would naturally incur higher remodeling costs, making a percentage-based approach fairer. Mr. Tymesen proposed considering a reasonable cost for new sidewalks, suggesting a scale to ensure that sidewalk costs do not overburden remodels. Councilmember Gookin agreed and asked for a summary of the proposal to be submitted to Council for better understanding. Mr. Tymesen stressed the need to avoid overburdening remodels and to manage the requirements effectively without relying on tax assessments. Councilmember English added that while considering the scaling options, he believes 50% is too high and 25% is too low. He suggested that 35%, or about a third, would be more appropriate. He requested a few options to be presented for Council's consideration and expressed support for the proposed methodology.

ROLL CALL: Gabriel Aye; Gookin Aye; English Aye; Wood Aye; Evans Aye; Miller Aye. **Motion carried.**

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Gookin, seconded by Evans, that there being no other business, this meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.