

Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning



WHO IS THE PLANNING GROUP?

The Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Group is a group of volunteers who meet twice a month to discuss and implement solutions related to growth and change in the greater Amsterdam/Churchill Area.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

The Planning Group meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at either the Churchill Bank or the Amsterdam Rural Fire Department from 7-9 PM. Anyone can attend and participate. Contact Walt Sales at 570-2128 or Warren Vaughan at the Gallatin County Planning Department at 582-3130. We need your help!

Amsterdam/Churchill Planning Process Moving Forward

This is the second newsletter of the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Group. The Planning Committee has been meeting twice a month since December 2007 to discuss and learn about issues related to growth and change in the greater Amsterdam/Churchill area.

Amsterdam/Churchill has been an agricultural community for over 100 years, and many of the farms originally founded in the late 1800's are still active today. The area has an active church community and many residents have expressed strong support for both the private and public schools. Many of the most valued aspects of the community exist because of this combination of small-town values and the agricultural lifestyle.

Everyone in the Amsterdam/Churchill area has seen change. While much of the growth in the county has been to the east in Four Corners or Belgrade, the Amsterdam/Churchill area has had its share as well: increasing cars are passing through the center of town, the fire department is seeing more and more calls, and, recently, a 400 lot subdivision was approved in the heart of the town core.

For the past year, the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Group has met twice a month to discuss solutions to concerns voiced by area residents that preserve and enhance the quality of life so cherished by the people who call this place home. After three community events, the group has focused on the following goals:

Small-Town Values, Rural Character, and Quality of Life. Many people in the community have stressed that the area is a great place to raise a family, and the strong presence of the church and quality schools contribute to an overall sense of good values.

- *What We're Doing:* The group is currently discussing how to ensure that new neighborhoods in the town core continue to reflect the quality of existing neighborhoods. For example, the group is discussing necessary foot and road connections to allow new neighborhoods to connect with churches, schools, and existing neighborhoods.

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Agricultural Heritage, Rural Lifestyle, and Wide-Open Views. Overwhelmingly, community members have told the planning group that the agricultural nature of the area adds significantly to the quality of life.

- *What We're Doing:* The group is currently discussing ways to protect agricultural canals and ditches from encroachment of new development, as well as discussing standards to protect agricultural land by directing the majority of new growth into the town core.

Increased Local Control. Many residents expressed strong support for community involvement and grassroots democracy, and one of the top priorities discussed by participants was how to more directly and formally involve Amsterdam/Churchill residents in making decisions about the community.

- *What We're Doing:* The group has recently formed a non-profit organization, the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Group, Inc., committed to both drafting the first community plan and to continuing to serve as a forum for future discussion

Efficient and Functioning Infrastructure. The group has consistently heard that infrastructure needs should be addressed.

- *What We're Doing for Roads:* The group is currently discussing a future road plan for both the town core and portions of rural Amsterdam/Churchill;
- *What We're Doing About Sewer:* The group has had several discussions with engineers and members of the sewer board and is discussing policy options to ensure new development in the town core contributes to any new sewer infrastructure that may be needed;
- *What We're Doing About Water:* The group is in initial discussions with both engineers and developers about the possibility of creating a water district to compliment the existing sewer district;
- *What We're Doing About Sidewalks:* The group is discussing options with MDT and with landowners along Churchill Road for the possibility of installing a sidewalk between the two churches.

Community Values. Community values have consistently risen to the top since the beginning of the process as a top priority for almost everyone. The churches, the schools, the family-oriented atmosphere, and the community pride shown by residents were all discussed as something the Amsterdam/Churchill Community needs to consciously nurture as the area grows and changes.

- *What We're Doing:* The group is drafting a set of standards that would prohibit certain uses such as alcohol establishments and casinos. Also, as stated above, the group has formed the Amsterdam/Churchill Community Planning Group, Inc., a 501c(3), to assess present needs, address future changes, and protect sustainability of agriculture in the planning area.