

GOODING COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING

October 27, 2016

The Commission met for a site visit at the property of Hagerman Wings Farm with the following members present: Judy Stockham, Terry Ruby, Kathleen Goicoechea, Curtis Merrill, Miles Hall and Brendan Ash. Also in attendance were Ami Bennett and Missy Shurtz. Houston and John Shaw directed a tour of the Shaw Shooting Range.

Chairman, Judy Stockham called the meeting to order at 2:26 p.m. on October 27, 2016. The site visit was for a Special Use Permit application made by Houston Shaw for operating an additional shooting range east of the outdoor firearms training school. The site of the proposed special use is located in Section 15, Township 7 South, Range 13 EBM in both the Recreational and Agricultural Zoning Districts. The address is approximately 823 E 2700 S, Hagerman, ID 83332.

Within the Shaw Shooting Range office, Houston gave a safety presentation, outlined the rules that will be enforced on the range and handed out safety glasses and ear plugs to everyone. A copy of the Firearms Training Range Rules SITE VISIT EXHIBIT 1 and the Concealed Firearm Permit Training Class Participant Release Agreement SITE VISIT EXHIBIT 2 are attached to these minutes and incorporated by reference. Houston explained that the office also houses the retail pro shop for firearms, ammunition and accessories sales, on which he pays Idaho state sales tax.

The main firing range, permitted by Special Use Permit No. 180, contains some paper targets backed by berms. For the steel targets, frangible ammunition is required. Houston said that the majority of the noise comes from the main range, used for both military and law enforcement classes as well as those which are open to the public. Houston suggested spraying in some Styrofoam in the ceiling of the range and adding a tin wall filled with gravel to the side to help alleviate the noise. Discussion about suppressors arose; suppressors are specific to each firearm, very expensive and make training with the use of holsters very difficult. Safety is also a compromise with the introduction of another piece of equipment to be cleaned, maintained and checked.

Justin Youngblood explained the sound pressure testing he had done onsite. The state decibel level is 64. Left of the muzzle registers 165 decibels. On the other side of the berm, with a rifle, registered 49 decibels. Reflecting the sound off of a tin and gravel wall was discussed.

On the new parcel, which is closer to town, there are no berms in place yet. From the reference point they tested every 15 yards. Idaho State Statue Title 67 Chapter 91 Outdoor Sport Shooting Act, the volume was below the 64 decibels before leaving the Shaw property.

Shaw's provide their students with the frangible ammunition used onsite. Houston showed where there are ricochet shields on the targets even though they use frangible ammo. (Video 7) The sound of gunfire could be heard while Houston was presenting. Ami asked what that was and Houston said gun shots. Houston confirmed that no one was utilizing the shooting range at that time, since he was giving the tour. Discussion about duck hunting clubs in proximity to the shooting range ensued: 4 or 5 duck clubs within a 3 mile radius. None of John's duck club members were hunting at that time. John requires all his members to shoot 20 gauge light loads.

The range is typically closed from November 1st to March 1st. The duck club members are treated just like any other shooting range client, with no access to the shooting range unless it's open. The shooting range and the hunt club are two separate businesses. The club members do not get special treatment. Houston still does concealed carry permit classes the 4th weekend of the month, but he usually uses the range inside the town of Hagerman [located behind Snake River Grill; city sewer lagoon shooting range typically used by Gooding County law enforcement and for some concealed carry permit classes] between November and March.

The Shaw Shooting Tombstone Range is a more advanced range with depth of targets. There are 2 shooters and 1 spotter; emphasis is on drawing the weapon, accuracy at a certain distance. It's a pistol range, which is quieter. The range has decent sound mitigation with a downward slope, and it faces south. The targets are air targets with double berms to prevent ricochet. A pistol bullet wouldn't make it to town. When an M16 bullet is fired, it will drop 32 feet at the point where it has gone 1000 yards. What is used on this range are the 556 or a 223, which drops somewhere around 40 feet at 1000 yards.

Commission Member Merrill asked about the wave pattern in which sound travels. Justin Youngblood explained the nature of testing that scenario, concluding it depends on what the sound bounces off of. Houston suggested the possibility of adding a barrier to come down the back of the firing shed.

Commission Member Hall asked about the 12 gauge shotgun used by duck hunters and how those decibel levels register. Justin Youngblood elaborated on the studies and equipment he has used for peak and rise time in military firearms. He has not specifically measured shotguns. He asked about the angle ducks are shot at, and John responded about barrel length, etc. A pistol is 155 decibels, rifle 165. Justin Youngblood added that the other consideration with rifle shots from hunting is the additional sound of a projectile hitting the sound barrier, whereas at the range, it's a short range and the shot doesn't get the chance to break the sound barrier, so you're hearing just the gunshot itself.

Houston said everyday he teaches classes he parks his truck immediately over the berms and has never had a broken window, a flat tire, or a paint chip.

The barricade on top of targets means that if a shooter hits the top of the plate it hits the barricade and goes into the berm, if he misses the target it goes into the berm. Four shooters on the line can be shooting at once on the Barrel Range. John and Houston demonstrated (minus firearms) the moving target, also bermed with shields above the targets. That range is primarily a pistol range but is not included in the class until shooters have mastered the first two days of skills.

Houston stated that they have never had an accident at the shooting range.

At the next range over, Houston explained that it was a typically pistol range. A 50-yard sight-in, only, is done with the berm and rifles. The range layout is such that students hone skills for very controlled shooting on the move; walking while sights stay on target. This particular range is not utilized much with the 5-day military classes, as Houston simply does not have time.

The next shooting range is located on the additional property and pertains to the current application for special use permit. It is a bermed, graveled area, with a shed from where shots are fired at targets behind cars. They have employed much heavy equipment in the forming of terrain. Houston explained that the shooting area from this range is one of the main culprits of the noise. Although the range is heavily bermed, those prevent stray bullets but don't do much for noise mitigation. The range is setup specifically for shooting from different positions, with the shed area having certain "windows" through which students shoot; emphasis is placed on knowing where the site picture is in regard to the muzzle. It is an extensive course of fire containing 45 targets from the start to the end. It's a non-stop course of fire with a spotter calling out and the shooter going through.

Houston summarized that a barrier on the east side of this range would be significant to mitigate noise.

Commission Chairman Stockham asked if this range was on the parcel originally permitted by Special Use Permit 180. Houston confirmed that this was a new parcel. It was built at the beginning of 2016. Last November they bought 25 acres from Turners and then combined the existing 7 acres to create the 33-acre parcel on which the addition has been planned.

Houston explained that at the end of the shooting line, the percussion is going out unrestricted from this range. It would be a logical area to put up posts with tin sheets, about 15-foot tall packed with gravel, making a bullet-proof, sound absorbing wall, from the back of the berm to

the front of the sagebrush. This method/construction has been used with success at the Mid-South Institute.

John added that another alternative would be to use dirt and berm the whole thing out. Commission Member Merrill asked about the residents on Quicksilver Drive. Discussion about the location and proximity ensued.

Justin Youngblood explained the safety issue of ammunition being shot at a lesser velocity, as some opponents suggested. He explained that the frangible is a compressed particulate and needs to be going at a certain speed to break apart and do so safely. If you download the ammunition, it will lead to hand loading, which is dangerous - they don't make it like that for a reason, as it will not break apart properly and you will actually cause ricochets.

Houston led a tour of the range designed for more tactile, real life training. This provides training with the gun you are going into combat with so you're able to fix the manipulation and the jams in the gun you will actually go into combat with. Once you learn that manipulation it's time to do it on the move, from a covered position, it needs to be second nature. They work on problem solving which targets are down range, which are not called out by a spotter this time but which have to be identified on the move. It's a much more advanced training range than the previously discussed ranges. It's used on day 4 or 5 of the military and law enforcement classes, not amateur shooters. Most have been shooting for 15 years. The shooting at this range is a fraction of what is being shot at the other ranges, only being used once a week. They are running 6 people through per hour.

Coliseum 2 is in the beginning stages of being built. No targets are yet in place. The berms on the newest parts of the range are extremely high with additional dirt to be added, pushing them another 4 or 5 feet higher. This is another range to be reserved for the advance shooters, only after instructor approval.

The Commission observed from about 1400 yards away, the neighbor, Cathy Brown's, broken window as she had discussed in her testimony. The window that is broken is facing the east, across from the Hagerman Wings Farm corn fields where members shoot at ducks. The Shaw Shooting Range is north of Brown's residence.

Commission Chairman Stockham thanked John for showing the Commission the orientation of the window, as it clarifies some things.

Justin Youngblood pointed out that he's noticed on the drive out that Coliseum 2 has numerous trees acting as a barrier between the range and town. He asked John if those would remain there as the excavation and berm construction continues. John responded that those trees

would remain part of the facility and he would be willing to plant more trees if that would help provide some sound barrier. John concluded the tour by reiterating that they want to maintain the facility at below the required decibel levels and continue to be good for this county. They employ four full-time employees, they bring in income with both the range and the hunting club and would ask that the permit be approved. They want to do what is necessary to keep the sound levels down.

The site visit adjourned at 4:34 p.m.