

Steven Dean Taylor

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November 20, 2025

Mark Morse, Mike Waters, Chris White
Yellowstone County Commissioners
P O Box 35000
Billings, MT 59107

RE: Variance Application, 2523 Jessica Street

Commissioners Morse, Waters, White:

By way of introduction, my name is Steven D. Taylor, and I own the property commonly known as 2523 Jessica St. in Mackenzie Meadows subdivision in Yellowstone County.

This letter is in support of my appeal to the Yellowstone County Commission of a denial of my variance request, which was denied on November 20, 2025 by the Yellowstone County Public Works Department.

Previously, I sent two letters dated September 30, 2025 and October 22, 2025 to Monica Plecker, Director, Yellowstone County Public Works in support of my variance application. These letters, comprising my arguments in favor of my variance application and the procedural history of the proceeding, need be read in context with the additional material presented herein. As these letters are readily available to you in the county file of this proceeding, I have not attached these letters hereto.

On November 12, 2025, I received a letter from Ms. Plecker, dated November 10, 2025, explaining her reasoning for recommending denial of my variance application. This letter is also readily available to you in the county file of this proceeding and is not attached hereto. The following material rebuts the bullet points in Ms. Plecker's letter, which comprise her reasons for denial of my variance request.

The first bullet point states: "The approach was not constructed as permitted and is not in compliance with county policy." This point is conceded and discussion of how and why this occurred is thoroughly discussed in my letters, dated September 30 and October 22, 2025. This bullet point also states: "Uncontrolled access points have a direct relation to safety." Neither evidence nor supporting arguments are included, showing how wider driveways impair safety. Accordingly, this statement is a gratuitous assertion, and is hereby gratuitously dismissed. Contrairly, my reasons why wider driveways enhance safety, especially on narrow streets without sidewalks such as Jessica St, are presented on page 2 of my letter, dated October 22, 2025. Moreover, should a driver lose control and drive off of the maintained surface of the roadway, driving onto the flat surface of a lawn is considerably less dangerous than into a deep ditch.

The second bullet point in Ms. Plecker's letter states" Allowing fill material to remain as is will have an adverse impact on both available flow and storage capacity of roadside

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ditches.” Though it is understandable how fill material in the ditch aside Jessica St. might have a minimal effect upon storage capacity of the ditch, it is difficult to comprehend how available flow can be measurably affected providing that culverts of identical size as those used beneath my driveway and all other driveways in Mackenzie Meadows are installed as was done at 2523 Jessica St.

The third bullet point states: “Long-term maintenance issues of the culvert could arise, as the longer the culvert, the more difficult to maintain.” It is difficult to understand how a “longer” culvert beneath fill and lawn can be more difficult to maintain than the culvert beneath a concrete driveway such as in place at every house in MacKenzie Meadows. Moreover, driveway culvert maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner rather than the county.

The fourth bullet point states: “The fille (sic) was placed to facilitate irrigation. The County would prohibit private water lines and sprinklers in its right of way. These private lines and systems when placed in the right of way create a maintenance burden and hardship for maintaining the right-of-way.” As clearly stated on page 1 of my letter, dated October 22, 2025, I extended the culvert and leveled the ditch with topsoil to “facilitate mowing” and to install a proper, i.e., effective, sprinkler system. In order to effectively irrigate the area nearest the maintained surface of the street where irrigation is most needed due to fill material not well suited for growing grass while, at the same time, minimizing overspray onto the traveled surface of the street so as to not adversely affect traffic safety, sprinkler heads need to be near the street, rather than 20 or more feet away on the opposite side of the ditch.

While consulting with the developer of Mackenzie Meadows, I learned that “every” property in Mackenzie Meadows having grass extending to the street has sprinkler lines and heads near the streets and on the street side of the ditch well within the county rights-of-ways. Consultation with builders, landscape contractors, and property owners has revealed that this is true of all or nearly all properties having sprinkler systems anywhere in Yellowstone County. It is inconceivable that Yellowstone County Public Works will require all Yellowstone County property owners to relocate their established sprinkler systems outside of any associated county rights-of-ways. Finally, maintenance of private sprinkler systems is the responsibility of the property owners rather than the county, mitigating any potential “burden and hardship for maintaining the right of way.”

On September 19, 2025, I spoke with Logan McIsaac, Project Manager of Yellowstone County Public Works Department via telephone. During this conversation, Mr. McIsaac, informed me that the concrete driveway connecting my house with Jessica Street, as finished, measures fifty-seven feet, but that this expansion would be overlooked providing that I returned to the Public Works Department and applied for a fifty-foot permit on or before October 07, 2025. This conversation is documented in my letter to Monica Plecker, dated September 30, 2025. On October 07, 2025, my builder, Jeff Hill of Hill Builders visited the Public Works Department to apply for this fifty-foot permit as

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advised by Mr. McIsaac but was informed that such permit would not be issued at that time. No reason for denial of the requested fifty-foot permit was given. Having been told by an agent of the Public Works Department that the seven foot expansion of my driveway beyond the fifty-foot limit of the promised fifty-foot permit would be overlooked once the fifty-foot permit was obtained, it is reasonable to expect that this offer will be honored.

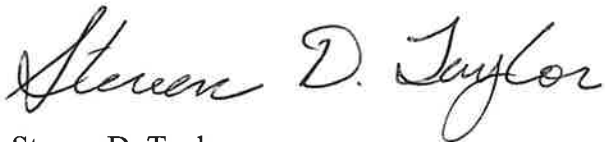
Considering the arguments presented herein in context with those previously presented in my letters dated September 30 and October 22, 2025, one must conclude that the denial of my variance request by the Public Works Department should be reversed and my variance should be expeditiously granted.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter upon arrival.

Please also read this document into the minutes of this proceeding and record the minutes into the county records.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven D. Taylor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Steven D. Taylor

Copies: Hill Builders, File