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The Star-News

McCall, Idaho

Thursday, February 01, 2018

Phil Janquart

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McCall P&Z to hear St. Luke's McCall expansion plans

Hospital plans to spend \$35 million to build new facility

The public will be able to comment next week on the first phase of St. Luke's McCall's proposed \$35 million expansion and modernization project.

A public hearing before the McCall Area Planning and Zoning Commission will take place during the commissioners meeting that starts at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday in the lower level meeting room at McCall City Hall.

The P&Z will make a recommendation to the McCall City Council, which will have the final say on the proposal.

The application is the first in a multi-phased project that would begin in late spring or early summer, St. Luke's Director of Operations Matt Kaiserman said.

"The first phase would be the re-routing of Hewitt Street toward our rehab clinic, as well as all of the infrastructure upgrades and replacements that need to happen to make the site ready for the actual build process," Kaiserman said.

St. Luke's would follow up with another application, this time for construction of the hospital itself.

"This first P&Z hearing really is specific to the site prep work and the re-routing of Hewitt Street," Kaiserman said. "The Hewitt Street re-alignment is the lynch-pin of this entire project."

The application to be heard Tuesday includes a request for lot consolidation and a rezone from R4 to Civic.

The hospital must expand to keep up with a growing community, Administrator Sean McCallister said.

"It's been a great facility and really served its purpose, but the new facility will open the door to expand new services and enhance existing ones," McCallister said.

Part of the current 30,000 square foot hospital was built in 1956. Additions were completed in 1962 and 1996.

If approved, the hospital would be partly demolished, redesigned and expanded into an 80,000 square foot facility.

Inpatient rooms would increase from 12, which includes three double occupancy rooms, to 17 private rooms.

Three of those rooms would be dedicated to labor, delivery, recovery and postpartum care.

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St. Luke's historically delivered about 80 babies per year, but now delivers between 110 and 120 per year, McCallister said.

"Right now we are shuffling patients around between rooms out of necessity," he said.

Demand for orthopedic services is also on the rise, prompting St. Luke's to recently add a second orthopedic surgeon who will arrive this summer.

"To accommodate two orthopedic surgeons plus a general surgeon, we need more operating rooms," McCallister said.

St. Luke's currently has two operating rooms and an endoscopy suite.

"In the new facility we will have four full-sized, full-fledged operating rooms that have a lot of flexibility around how we can use them," McCallister said.

Proposed construction on the hospital would begin sometime in 2019, with renovation of the 1990s portion of the building. Demolition of the 1950s portion of the building to make way for parking is scheduled for 2020 through 2022.

St. Luke's says it continues to garner support from the community, mixed with concerns over some aspects of the project, such as a proposed helipad on top of the proposed building.

Neighbors of the hospital have expressed worries over noise, frequency of trips, clearance and flight paths.

"Over time, we'll continue to dig into that piece of the project, and down the road as we look to make a final decision we will re-engage our neighbors and the community," McCallister said.

Kaiserman noted that Tuesday's hearing is only on the site improvements and not on the hospital construction or helipad.

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