PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

Monday, January 11, 2016

6:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Ashley, Glenn Morris, Shawn Van Pelt, Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel

PUBLIC PRESENT: Rick Jessel, Phil Ginter, Scott Anderson, Rob Farris

STAFF PRESENT: Ben Shumaker, Rob Farris

Meeting convenes at 6:00 PM and Morris assumes chairman duties.

Preliminary Matters
1. OFFICER ELECTIONS: [Agenda item is postponed until the end of meeting and finally tabled until February regular meeting.]

2. PUBLIC COMMENT OPTION: Morris selects Public Comment Option #2.

3. MINUTES: Ashley moves and Van Pelt seconds for approval of the December 14th, 2015 Meeting Minutes, unanimous approval.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD None.

New Business
5. BIENNIAL COM PLAN AMENDMENTS: Shumaker explains biennial amendment cycle for review of Comprehensive Plan amendment proposals. No proposals were received during this cycle, and no action is taken to establish a review timeline.

6. VACANT POSITION INTERVIEWS: [This agenda item is moved ahead as the first new business item] Morris begins interview with questions to Anderson and Ginter on Stevenson as a “bedroom community”. Anderson answers first saying that jobs and housing are related and a City focus on becoming a bedroom community would make housing more expensive and reduce involvement in local community dynamics. He references increased access to broadband internet as a method to promote new businesses and local jobs as an alternative. Ginter responds that he started living in Stevenson as a commuter to Portland and doesn’t feel that being a bedroom community should have such a negative connotation. All communities are a bedroom community to some degree, and he sees opportunities for civic involvement whether a person is a commuter or not.

Morris asks a second question about tourism in Stevenson. Ginter states that tourism is a beautiful thing and provides many benefits for the community. He references the development at the Port and how it helps provide jobs for community members. Anderson describes tourism as the “right now” for Stevenson and balancing the need to support that while still looking to transition to the “what’s next”.

Ashley asks how the candidates will deal with enforcement of development regulations that are going to make the applicant angry. Ginter states his
willingness to enforce regulations that need to be enforced, but also to treat conflicts on the regulations as an opportunity to reevaluate and change things if no one is happy with them. Anderson agrees and will look to focus on the purpose of the regulations, enforce what’s there and change it when its not what the community needs. He referenced the Planning Commission’s work on the farm animals regulations as a good example of that.

Ginter asks the Planning Commission what they see as their “job description”. Morris sees it as bringing policies up to date with community desires. Ashley focuses on the visioning aspect of policy setting. Van Pelt describes the Commission as a buffer for City Council, removing a huge time burden from the Council by conducting detailed reviews of development applications and gathering public participation prior to setting policies.

The Commissioners decide not to go into executive session to review the merits of each candidate. Morris thanks Ginter and describes him as a worthy candidate for inclusion. He goes on to express his appreciation for Anderson’s past contributions to the Commission and desires to see him return. Hoy-Rhodehamel sees a need for an experienced member to join the Planning Commission after former Chair Paul Hendricks’ election to City Council. Van Pelt thanks Ginter for submitting his statement of interest and for his reasoned involvement in the recent development of vacation rental policies.

Ashley sees Anderson’s experience on City Council as an asset to the Planning Commission, but knows he is very busy with other community activities. She asks him whether they would impact his role on the Commission. Anderson sees his community activities as complementary to service on the Planning Commission. He expresses his desire to remain involved in City governance and knows that service on the Commission will help him advocate for certain policies, such as broadband expansion and use.

Ginter says he applied for this position because he was worried that no one else would and wanted to be available if the community needed him. He goes on to say that it makes sense for the Commission to select Anderson to return.

Hoy-Rhodehamel moves and Van Pelt seconds to recommend City Council appointment of Scott Anderson to serve the unexpired term of Paul Hendricks. Unanimous approval.

7. 2016 COMMISSION WORK PLAN: Shumaker introduces the list of potential projects prepared by staff. Commissioners feel more time is needed to review the memo, the Comprehensive Plan and develop their work plan. The item is tabled until the February meeting.

8. ZONING INTERPRETATION: Fire Station Parking. [This agenda item is moved ahead as the second new business item.] Farris describes the Fire Department’s efforts to select a new building site and eventually construct a new fire station. He describes the parking limitations of the current fire station and the struggles the department faces as it tries to share street parking and neighboring parking lots with others. His request to the Planning Commission involves the establishment of a parking standard for fire stations because they don’t exist in the Zoning Code. The standard will then be used to help the Stevenson Fire Hall Strike Team evaluate sites based on the total size requirement of a new building and parking lot.
Ashley asks how many firefighters typically respond to calls. Farris says they 4 to 20 of their 22 total volunteer members are usually available to respond. Shumaker describes the staff recommendation which has two separate aspects. One aspect would be based on the number of apparatuses kept at the station and the second would be based on the square footage of the building outside of the apparatus bays. The group discusses the dynamics of fire fighter responses and the potential building the fire department is considering (~11,000 sq ft facility shared with the Skamania County Department of Emergency Management). Van Pelt provides a visual for all to consider as he describes the building as similar in size to A & J Market and the recommended standard requiring a parking lot about half of the size of the grocery store.

Several Commission members express their concerns about the parking demand that would be generated by the new building and recognize that the demand could be accommodated differently in different areas of the city. A location in the downtown area is seen as a bigger concern because the demand for street parking is so much greater.

The general preference of the Commission is to review future proposals on a case-by-case basis. Nonetheless, the Commission and especially Morris stressed their desire to provide the Fire Department with some guidance to work with, even if a specific standard is not established. Morris suggested 30 spaces.

The Commission as a whole agrees that 30 would be an appropriate number to use for guidance purposes and makes no official interpretation of the Zoning Code.

**Old Business**

9. **NONE.**

**Staff Reports**

10. **VERBAL REPORTS:**

Stevenson Fire Hall Strike Team. Shumaker expresses his appreciation for Farris’s participation in the meeting and the accurate description he gave. He felt it was important to separate his potential conflicting roles as Zoning Administrator for the parking decision and facilitator of the Strike Team’s efforts.

Animals/Overnight Lodging Ordinance Schedule. Shumaker says the City Council has been provided an intial handout on the use matrix and will hold a public hearing at their February regular meeting.

**Discussion**

11. **COMMISSIONERS’ UPDATES**

Morris describes an upcoming surgery and receives well wishes from his fellow Commissioners.

Ashley describes an issue her veterinary business is having related to a broken water line and her parking lot and tree, which have been substantially undermined. She will be gaining firsthand experience on how the Critical Areas Code is implemented as the problems get fixed.

12. **THOUGHT OF THE MONTH:** **NONE.**

13. **PERMIT UPDATE:**
Adjournment - 7:33 PM

Approved _______; Approved as Amended _____

_________________________________________
Chair       Date

Minutes by Ben Shumaker