

City of Stevenson Planning Commission
 City Hall
 May 9, 2016
 6:00 PM

Planning Commission Members present: Scott Anderson, Chair, Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel, Karen Ashley, Shawn Van Pelt - Planning Commission member

Staff Present: Ben Shumaker

Community members present: Mary Repar, Chris Ford, Rose Lucas, Kevin Lucas, Sharon Madsen, Fay Weber, Norm Haight, Dave Switzer, Elizabeth Galloway

Call to Order - 6:02 PM

Preliminary Matters

1. **Chair selected Public comment Option #1**

2. **MINUTES HOY-RHODEHAMEL** moved, and **ASHLEY** seconded, to approve the minutes for February 8, 2016. Unanimously approved.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**
ANDERSON stated the open public comment period is to bring items to the table, which are not on the agenda.

Madsen commented she is strongly opposed to any Bed & Breakfast facilities being allowed in her residential neighborhood, fearing increased traffic and potential for crime. **Shumaker** confirmed there was no change to her residential zone.

K. Lucas questioned the process and conclusions of the B&B ordinance. **Shumaker** briefly outlined the general process taken by the Planning Commission in regards to the B&B ordinance and offered to discuss the specifics after the Planning Commission meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

4. Farm Animals **ANDERSON** introduced the topic with a brief explanation of the work the Planning Commission has done on the Farm Animal ordinance over the last eight months and explained City Councils desire to see more investigation on specific items, such as setbacks. He further commented the task-at-hand is to fine-tune the proposed language, public comment about how the proposed language should change will be allowed, but the meeting is not an appropriate time for public questions about what the current language says.

SHUMAKER presented a staff report and draft ordinance for review and discussion. He discussed the process Planning Commission took to arrive at the draft. He confirmed, under the new language, the Planning Commission recommended “urban farm animals” (ex. Geese, chickens, rabbits, ducks) will be allowed in all residential zones, but not in industrial and commercial zones. In response to neighborhood concerns surrounding

farm animals (pigs, cows, horses, goats) the Planning Commission had recommended limiting farm animals to only the R1 Single-Family and SR Suburban-Residential zone and only on lots 1 acre or larger. City Council wanted Planning Commission to be more restrictive and consider additional set-backs, roaming limits or other options. Shumaker suggested additional options as contained in the staff report and noted that the city will get over these growing pains as development occurs, the population expands, and lots divide to smaller than 1 acre.

ANDERSON questioned language regarding duration limits. **ASHLEY** clarified this language allows for seasonal 4-H animals and discussed the finer details of the definitions for clarification.

Shumaker also reintroduced the self-issued permit system as another method of adaptive management, but recommended against its inclusion as he has done in the past because of the increased workload for City Staff and burden for the regulated public.

ANDERSON opened the floor for public comments on the Farm Animal Ordinance topic.

R. Lucas commented she was not aware of the on-going discussion regarding revision of Farm Animals. They have 2 rescue ponies with special needs, which cannot be relocated due to health reasons. They have made alterations to their property to accommodate past neighbor complaints. She also submitted a letter of support for their ponies, signed by their neighbors.

K. Lucas commented they spoke with nine of their neighbors and no one knew about the Farm Animal ordinance discussions and urged better communication/outreach to affected residents. His major concern is related to discussion at 2/18/16 City Council meeting regarding non-conforming use language and feels strongly the self-issued permit process is too restrictive. He also noted a disparity between the amount of acreage and the number of allowable animals needs adjustment going forward. He also noted language regarding waste removal and encouraged consideration of on-site composting as a means to eliminate animal waste. He summarized by saying he hopes the changes in the rules do not have a negative impact on their quality of life, for ponies they have had, with minimal incident, for 15 years.

Madsen questioned the definition of ‘service animals’ and wanted to know where those types of animals are addressed in the new rules, and if there would be any grandfathering of those animals.

Weber commented her support of the Lucas’ ponies and enjoys having the Lucas’ and their ponies as neighbors. She also spoke in support of composting of animal waste for fertilizer for her raspberries.

Haight questioned language regarding urban farm animals in the SR zone and if they would be subject to certain conditions or if their exclusion was an oversight. **SHUMAKER** confirmed the exclusion of the urban farm animals was an oversight and would be subject to the permitting process. N. Haight commented he does not support the permitting system, citing it as being too restrictive. He commented existing nuisance rules should be sufficient to accomplish the goals of the new revisions. He praised the addition of horticulture and sale of eggs language.

Repar reiterated her position to the commission against making rules for situations which haven't happened yet and commented she was not in support of the permit system either, feeling it isn't applied consistently to all areas. She added this discussion resulted from complaints regarding pigs. She summarizes by saying she supports residents being able to, reasonably, grow their own food and there will always be contentions among neighbors and cited Washington Nuisance laws being in place to prevent one neighbor becoming a problem to another neighborhood. She is in support of urban farm animals in Stevenson.

Switzer, resident outside of city limits. He voiced concern over Stevenson's voluminous rules spreading into the County areas, just outside City of Stevenson city limits. He commented, based on the definitions alone, doesn't know if he resides in rural or suburban area but in either case, is not supportive of expanding of rules to include areas outside of city limits.

Galloway is a supportive neighbor of the Lucas' and feels strongly that people, like the Lucas', should be allowed to be grandfathered in to any new rules which might otherwise now disallow their ponies.

Haight added to his previous comments by drawing attention to the language regarding the allowable number of animals on a 1 acre property and read the proposed language which allows up to 10 head of cattle vs. only 15 chickens on 1 acre. He commented the discrepancy in weight and accommodations needs to be addressed in future drafts.

SHUMAKER addressed several questions brought up during the public comment period.

1. He confirmed dogs are considered pets, and pets are allowable anywhere in the city.
2. He confirmed 'grandfathering' is definitely part of any new rules which may impact the Lucas' neighborhood, but new rules would apply to any future owners of the property.
3. He explained Stevenson's Suburban zone is the city's least population-dense area where farm animals are most commonly allowable. D. Switzer questioned what started the discussion surrounding new rules on farm animals and SHUMAKER answered it was the Planning Commission members desire to relax restrictions on chickens, to allow them in other areas of Stevenson city limits.
4. He discussed Nuisance enforcement vs. Adaptive Management techniques. The nuisance enforcement process is a heavy handed tool where the city acts on behalf of the neighborhood to address and/or eliminate a problem. Adaptive Management provides additional steps to work with residents to reach more collaborative solutions to neighborhood complaints. **Haight** questioned if there could be an added step of collaboration to the Nuisance Enforcement process questioned if adaptive management technique can be adopted without the permit process. **SHUMAKER** answered by saying the City can't manage activities without knowing what activities property owners are engaged in. **Haight** commented the rules dictate what property owners are allowed to engage in and should be sufficient without adding unnecessary additional restrictions. **SHUMAKER** responded he is sure a resolution can be reached but not during the limited duration of this meeting and the discussion can continue after the meeting.

SHUMAKER explained how City Council received complaints regarding farm animals

in the City limits which caused them to ask the Planning Commission to develop more restrictive rules regarding farm animals inside City limits. He then commented that the direction of the work being done by Planning Commission seems to be in the direction of relaxing restrictions, which is counter to what the City Council asked for. He suggested going around the table for suggestions on ways to meet in the middle. **HOY-RHAMADEL** asked **SHUMAKER** to cite the specific items City Council wanted the Planning Commission to review. **SHUMAKER** cited the 60-ft setback requirements, adding that applies only to the barn but animals can be right up to the fenceline. He added the setback could be made to apply to animal range and **HOY-RHODEHAMEL** strongly disagreed with a requirement would not be cost effective for the animal owners who would have to maintain 2 fences. **ASHLEY** commented the original complaint was regarding pigs on the fenceline, which is why animal range set-back was a consideration at all. **SHUMAKER** urged commission members to consider how their rules may be applicable as Stevenson grows, so this discussion does not need to be repeated.

ANDERSON commented on the feedback the City Council received was focused on being more restrictive to farm animals in the city limits, but the feedback being received at the Planning Commission is the opposite, to be less restrictive to farm animals in city limits. On the specific topic of waste removal, **ANDERSON** suggested language which allows for on-site composting or other waste mitigation, other than using the term removal. **SHUMAKER** confirmed with those present at the table, staff will research alternative verbiage to allow on-site composting and other forms of waste management.

VAN PELT questioned if population growth would justify rezoning dense SR districts to R1 or other designations where existing restrictions will naturally limit allowable animals. **SHUMAKER** explained current zoning code was set up in 1972 when SR (suburban), at the time, meant no water/sewer, however growth has brought that infrastructure and adding another zoning district or rezoning some areas might be something to consider. **VAN PELT** commented he feels higher density neighborhoods should not be allowed to be built in SR areas

ANDERSON questioned the disparity between quantity of animals kept and weight of animals kept. **SHUMAKER** explained the term ‘Animal Unit’ which is based on weight but said he wanted to keep simpler verbiage and used animal numbers in the draft text. There was general discussion about the differences in uses of the term, its appropriate application in this discussion and speculative situations where the rules may be enforced. **ASHLEY** commented she preferred the inclusion of the term ‘Animal Unit’ as a more accurate method of determining the number of allowable animals on a property. **VAN PELT** reaffirmed his preference for amending zoning rules for higher density R1/R2 neighborhoods and allowing for attrition to resolve as growing SR districts are rezoned in the future.

Repar commented there is no shame in simplicity and suggested including language to simply exclude “problem” animals (ex. pigs). She also acknowledged the Commission members have worked hard on this issue and have a tough task in finding common ground to satisfy everyone.

SHUMAKER asked whether there was Planning Commission consensus on many of the proposed solutions, including the exclusion of pigs and roosters (as suggested in Peter Spiro’s public comment letter) from the definition of allowed farm animals, additional setbacks for barns and animal ranges, requiring animals owners live on the property, and

“animal units”. There was no consensus. **Haight** commented roosters are necessary to the health and well being of the hens and impacts the quality of the eggs produced.

ASHLEY commented this issue was raised when 4H pigs were allowed too close to property line and had a negative impact on neighbors. She believes 4H project animals provide a good experience for kids and commented the current language allows small, fur-bearing animals, which also have a strong odor, and some people may also object to being allowed in city limits.

ANDERSON asked the group if they wanted to consider the creation of a separate category for pigs, there was no consensus. Commission members commented on the stalemate. **SHUMAKER** referenced the percentage of properties in the SR district meeting larger than 1 acre and how many properties would be affected if the minimum lot size were increased. **SHUMAKER** asked if Commission members wanted to increase minimum lot size from 1 acre. Commission members’ consensus was to keep the minimum lot size to 1 acre. **SHUMAKER** asked again if Commission members wanted to exclude pigs from the definition of Farm Animal and Commission members confirmed they are farm animals. **ANDERSON** commented attrition will eventually address the problem animals in high density neighborhoods. **SHUMAKER** summarized the proposed changes Planning Commission members have agreed on. Commission members authorize staff to revise proposed language to allow for on-site composting of farm animal waste, **ANDERSON** confirmed.

HOY-RHODEHAMEL turned the discussion to the permitting system. **ANDERSON** commented he felt permitting system should be eliminated from consideration as being too heavy handed. There was continued general discussion about the appropriate size groups for species, appropriate space to each and calculations/impacts. **SHUMAKER** summarized the general discussion by confirming Commission members want to see new language which increases the number of chickens allowable and significantly restrict the number of large farm animals allowable on lots 1 acre and larger. **ANDERSON** asked the Commission whether roosters should be allowed in SR zones. There was support to continue allowing roosters in SR zones.

SHUMAKER solicited contact information from community members who wanted to receive a copy of the final draft which will be presented to City Council at their next meeting.

ANDERSON asked for a motion. **ASHELY** moved to direct staff to revise the draft to allow more chickens and fewer large farm animals. **VAN PELT** seconded the motion. Unanimously passed.

5. Planning Commission Vacancy- **ANDERSON** clarified Executive Session rules for the record and asked both candidates why they are interested in joining the Stevenson Planning Commission.

Repar stated she has been interested in the work of the Planning Commission for several years and was involved in the City Comprehensive Plan review process. Her focus is generally on environmental and community issues feels it’s important to maintain a sense of community, in all areas of policy making, as the population grows in Stevenson.

Ford stated he’s been a member of the community for 40 years, an active in it’s

development. He became a resident of the City of Stevenson in 2003 and as the city continues to grow, he wants to be a part of planning for that growth. He has been involved with the Planning Commission and City Council and wants to devote more time to the Planning Commission, going forward.

ANDERSON asked both candidates if they will have sufficient time to devote to their duties as a member of the Planning Commission.

Repar stated yes, she is retired and with the exception of one upcoming family obligation which will require a short absence, she is otherwise available.

Ford stated he is also retired and has recently backed off of other volunteer positions, making him available for Planning Commission.

ANDERSON asked both candidates if they have any known conflicts of interest which may interfere with their duties as Planning Commission members.

Repar answered No, she has no conflicts of interest. She added she feels very strongly that environmental features like green spaces plays heavily into promoting a healthy quality of life and sense of community and supports increased focus and effort on building infrastructure to support business and residents.

Ford stated his wife is an employee of the City of Stevenson but her position will be involved in his place on the Planning Commission.

SHUMAKER explained the role of the Planning Commission in interpreting and applying rules. He asked both candidates if they would be able to act fairly and impartially apply and enforce rules which they may not personally support.

Repar stated she has been a member of the City's Board of Adjustments and military service background make her comfortable following and applying established rules exercising judgement.

Ford stated he is retired local law enforcement with a long history of similar responsibilities.

ANDERSON asked for final comments from either candidate before the executive session.

Repar asked if Executive session could be held to the end of the meeting so they may stay for the rest of the agenda items. Commission members agreed to that. **Repar** added her thanks to the Commission members for the opportunity to participate and will be happy and respect the decision in any choice. [Item tabled until later in the meeting]

6. Zoning Code Reformat **SHUMAKER** presented ZON2016-01 Zoning Code proposed format changes include table-based information. He further discussed the intent of changes to make future discussion and questions easier to research and answer for staff, Commission members and the public, easier to understand and may also uncover new action items.

ANDERSON suggested focus on commercial, commercial/industrial zones as first round of reformat. **SHUMAKER** asked for direction on public participation strategy for this

issue.

Repar commented regarding public participation policy and urged wider advertising of public meetings, beyond only publishing on the City's website on line. There was general discussion about different methods of advertising public meetings and agenda topics. In regards to the zoning code reformat, **HOY-RHODEHAMEL** commented no press releases for format changes unless new policy issues are uncovered in the process. There was general discussion about Planning Commission members expectations on what staff projects are brought to the Commission for direction.

6. Downtown Revitalization Plan **SHUMAKER** distributed presented hard copies of past downtown studies and plans for Commission member review before the next meeting and asked each of the Commission members to make note of 3-4 topics/issues that stood out. **SHUMAKER** asked if Commission members would like to participate in this manner or if they preferred staff take more lead and developing a plan. He then presented a draft scope of work he presented to City Council and discussed how the action items identified would help guide future discussions and the Planning Commission's involvement in Downtown Revitalization efforts. **ANDERSON** announced his work with the Stevenson Business Association in forming a new Downtown Revitalization Committee and discussed similar goals. There was general discussion about the different possible activities the new committee might focus on. Commission members took hard copies of Stevenson historic analysis documents. **SHUMAKER** commented his preference for either the recently formed Committee, or City staff to take the lead on the project, to prevent duplicate efforts.

7, 8. Staff and Commissioner Reports **SHUMAKER** reported the train whistles have stopped with the at the Russell Street train crossing. He reported City Council approved the revised Overnight lodging ordinance, with minor change to allow hostels in the CR district and changed the definition of hotel. He then reported a successful Community Clean-Up Day with over 40 volunteers and business owners helping. He then explained part of the original purpose of the day to address nuisance properties with volunteer support and building partnerships to address maintenance needs/projects at the schools, county facilities and similar areas around town. He also listed the projects completed at Walnut Park, along Vancouver Avenue and along Highway 14.

ASHLEY announced the upcoming visit to the Port of Skamania recreation dock by the Golden Rule Peace Boat on June 16, 2016 along with a potluck and presentation about the boat at the Methodist Church.

ANDERSON announced the formation of the Downtown Revitalization Committee with the Stevenson Business Association.

HOY-RHODEHAMEL announced an Open House being held by Skamania County EMS on Saturday, May 21, 2016.

Repar announced the expansion of the Community Gardens. Two plots will be dedicated to growing food for the Senior Food program. Anyone wanting a plot should contact Mary Repar. She also announced a successful orienteering course the previous weekend and the next Grange event at the library.

9. Executive Session **SHUMAKER** announced the Planning Commission members were entering Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110(h) to discuss the candidates for replacement Planning Commission member. Executive session began at 8:29 and was scheduled to last 10 minutes. At 8:39 the meeting was reopened to the public.

ANDERSON moved to recommend to City Council appoint Chris Ford as the new Planning Commission member. **ASHLEY** seconded the motion. 3 aye - 1 nay. Vote carries to recommend Chris Ford.

SHUMAKER confirmed the action items for next Planning Commission meeting.

Adjournment - 8:40 PM

Approved _____; Approved as Amended _____

Scott Anderson, Chair
Minutes by Jennifer Anderson

Date: