



would grant the proponents a special privilege. The remainder of the draft condition limits the total number of lots which would have R3 zoning to one quarter of the total (80) lots in the subdivision. This, **Shumaker** says, is in acknowledgment of the public opposition to this proposal and the previous desire to limit multi-family construction within this subdivision.

Following this presentation, the Planning Commission provides **Appearance of Fairness Disclosures**. When asked whether they have any financial interest in the outcome of this decision, any ex-parte communications on this proposal, any conflicts of interest, or whether anything else would impair their ability to be fair and impartial in their review of this variance request, all commissioners respond in the negative. Neither the proponent nor any commissioner challenges the appearance of fairness, and the hearing continues.

**Grendahl** addresses the commission as the subdivision proponent. He appreciates the flexibility in the draft condition and states his preference for the second part of the modified condition which would give him a greater ability to evaluate which lots are best suited for multi-family development. He also notes that the location of those lots should be somewhere within phases 1 through 3.

**Ashley** states her general agreement with this proposal and asks for clarification on whether they can increase the 9-lot limitation. **Shumaker** responds by describing the total number of units (single family lots + multi-family units) in more detail, and that 1) allowing additional multi-family lots would not be supported by the existing traffic impact study, 2) traffic impact studies are typically required for similar proposals, and 3) the absence of a traffic impact study for increased units would grant this applicant a special privilege.

**VHR** asks for clarification on the maps provided as an attachment to the staff report and where multi-family housing would be. **Shumaker** reviews the current zoning and proposal for 4 multi-family lots and a draft line for where the 9 potential lots might be. He says this line is subject to change based on City Council zoning decisions, but is intended to help illustrate where the lots might be located. **Ford** agrees that City Council should review the final location but noted that the figure includes 3 of the currently proposed 4 multi-family lots.

**Anderson** asks the proponent if there is anything else he would like to add. There being none, he closes the public hearing at 6:24 PM and begins the planning commission discussion describing the proposal as a potential win-win-win. **Shumaker** cautions that the draft variance decision needs to occur within the context of SMC 16.38.010, and that the proposal might temporarily confuse the final approval process. However, he said in the end the options available in the draft modified condition should make the issue easier to understand for all involved.

Seeing no additional deliberation, **Anderson** moves to approve the variance to Chinidere Mountain Estates Condition #7 limiting multi-family construction according to the findings and modifications prepared by staff. **Ford** seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

## 5. ZONING DENSITY

**Shumaker** describes the mis-titled staff report related to residential density, and its intent to introduce the issue for the planning commission to better define the scope of the problem and tailor the amendment effort to solve it. The chart on Page 2 of this memo is **Shumaker's** focus and he describes what would be expected density curves in a transition from more rural areas to more urban areas. He describes the "Minimum size per dwelling" (Required lot size divided by allowed number of dwelling units) curve as roughly following the expected decrease in square footage as areas become more urban. He then contrasts this with the 2 other curves which contain irregularities in the expected decrease. The "Minimum single-family size" (Required lot size for single-family homes) curve being the most irregular. After decreasing from 15,000 square feet in the SR District to 6,000 in the R1 and R2 districts, the size increases in the R3 District to 7,500 square feet. The minimum single-family lot size then goes down again to 6,000 in the C1 District, and the group begins to discuss whether and why the minimum single-family lot size should always be 6,000 square feet in Stevenson. After a number of questions from commissioners, **Shumaker** attempts to better explain the meaning of square footage in each curve applying to the lot size, not structure size and averages based on number of units, not requirements for each specific unit.

The planning commission also discusses the maximum lot size concept as a way to encourage density. **Anderson** focuses his initial discussion on how the Comprehensive Plan's Urban Reserve areas might accommodate the growth and reinvestment that is coming to the Gorge now that the recession has ended. **VHR** focuses her discussion on the costs of permitting and the gaps where infrastructure capital improvements are necessary to serve areas outside the City. **Ford** notes the need for coordination with the County whose private road policies make future infrastructure extensions difficult. **Ashley** discusses the coming growth and the need to manage growth so it contributes to the character of our community instead of stripping its character.

[Note: **SVP** joins the meeting at 7:30 PM.]

The group also discusses the difference between a large subdivision developer and the typical home-/landowner who seemingly just prefers to initiate short plat even when they could do a small subdivision. **VHR** discusses the fee structure and the lack of public infrastructure requirements. **Shumaker** corrects her to say that public infrastructure is required for either short plats or subdivisions. The common conception is that they aren't and potential applicants don't hear/understand/believe that infrastructure is required even when staff tells them. **SVP** notes that many small lot divisions and short plats benefit from having connections to existing roads and utilities and that is one reason not to pursue more dense divisions which would require extension of infrastructure *into* the site as well. Options for addressing these issues are discussed and include amending the application fees to make short plats and subdivisions more comparable or allowing some flexibility for small subdivisions to obtain preliminary plat approval without a public hearing process.

The group notes that other issues will require better coordination between City Zoning densities, infrastructure standards, infrastructure system plans, and capital improvement plans as well as better coordination between the

City and the County on regulation of development within the Stevenson Urban Area. At this time, the planning commission feels it is more appropriate to hold off on zoning density discussions until they start the wider discussion on all of the issues and “friction points” which could prevent the City from managing the growth that we are poised to experience.

Planning commissioners ask Shumaker to draft a letter to City Council stressing their desire to hold a joint goal setting session to address residential growth within the City and the Stevenson Urban Area. **Anderson** stresses that time is of the essence in this letter and goal setting meeting so that the 2017 budgets can include what is necessary to address these issues next year instead of waiting until it’s too late. Key points of the requested letter include 1) a description of the growth that is coming to Stevenson, 2) a description of several of the friction points that might prevent or make the growth less than desirable, and 3) the planning commission’s charge to “*plan and manage growth*”.

After meeting with the city council, the planning commission also envisions meeting with the County board of commissioners and planning commission to talk about a sub-area plan and/or interlocal agreement for the regulation and review of land development in the Stevenson Urban Area. **Shumaker** notes that these agreements exist between all cities and counties in Oregon and all but a few cities and counties in Washington. **Ford** recommends finding some of those agreements to use as the basis for initiating our own.

## **Old Business**

6. None

## **Staff Reports**

7. STAFF & COMMISSIONER REPORTS: **Shumaker** updates the group on the City Council’s coming town hall meeting at the Hegewald Center, Chinidere’s hope to obtain final plat approval at the September Council meeting, and the upcoming Washington Planning Director’s conference he will be attending.

**Anderson** notifies the group of the Monday, September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting the Stevenson Downtown Association will be holding from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Stevenson Library. The meeting will focus on the efforts of the new Downtown Association and the changes that might be likely as the SDA and the SBA reorganize and coordinate responsibilities. All commissioners are invited to attend.

**VHR** discusses her review of the downtown plans developed in 1991. The Skamania Lodge was just being built and much of the plan focused on pedestrian connections to the Lodge. She says she expected the 25-year old plan to be out of date. Shockingly it wasn’t; traffic and parking issues were identified that we are still dealing with. She was surprised to see a stop light proposed as a potential traffic solution at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Russell. Housing growth was an issue for the then ~1,100- and ~8,000-strong population of the City and County.

**SVP** talks about the business atmosphere downtown and how business is exceeding expectations at the Red Bluff Taphouse. He wonders whether it will continue as the weather turns. Fellow commissioners comment about how nice it is to have that addition to downtown.

**Ashley** describes her experience obtaining a critical areas permit for slope erosion caused by a city waterline break which affected a fish bearing stream. Construction may need to wait until the spring.

**Discussion**

8. THOUGHT OF THE MONTH: None.

**Adjournment – 7:51 PM**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_; Approved as Amended \_\_\_\_\_

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Scott Anderson, Chair

Date:

Minutes by Ben Shumaker