

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 8, 2017

6:00 PM

Planning Commission Members Present: Scott Anderson, Karen Ashley, Chris Ford, Shawn Van Pelt,
Excused Absence: Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel

Staff present: Ben Shumaker

Community members present: Rick May, Mary Repar, Ben Sciacca

Call to order: 6:00 PM

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. **Chair Selected Public Comment Option #1:**
2. **April 10, 2017 Minutes: FORD** moved to approve; **ASHLEY** seconded; the motion carried without opposition.
3. **Public Comment Period: Repar** explained that Skamania County still has a \$48,500 grant from Washington State Department of Commerce to be used on the Old Grange Hall in Stevenson. Mary hopes the building can be rebuilt and used as a public community space and is looking for support from community partners. She said Scott Pineo, previous Facilities Director with Skamania County, had done an assessment years ago. These funds could be used for another engineering assessment or plans for rebuild. The County has a limited time to respond to the State if it would like to accept the grant money. She spoke with Greg Griffith through the state historic office. She said the building has been used as a saloon, dance hall, skating rink, etc. and that the City and County continue to get calls from people wanting to rent it. Please contact Mary at 509 427-7153 if you want to help.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. **Draft Sewer Plan: Identifying Friction Points Shumaker** explained the Planning Commission's part in updating the City's Sewer Plan. He said Public Works has been preparing the general plan, one of the 2 types of plans required by Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) staff is working on. **Shumaker** is bringing this topic to the Planning Commission to close gaps between the existing collection system and the system necessary to serve future growth. The Collection System is the focus for the Planning Commission. He presented 6 pages of the 150 page report. He said the Comprehensive Plan should influence the Capital Improvement Plan for the sewer system and the realities of the sewer system need to influence the Comprehensive Plan.
There was discussion about the status of private septic systems in the City (how many and condition); the size of replacement and new pipes in the collection system; how many new houses can be added in next five years without straining the system; and private/public partnership opportunities for extending the collection system. Ben will:
1) Bring policies for private septic systems' approval to planning commission, including replacement plans, if they fail.
2) Bring in a representative from the Skamania County Environmental Health Department for discussion on managing private septic systems (Topics of interest included

monitoring, property owner education, maintenance requirements, reporting, special areas of concern related to groundwater quality based on septic).

May discussed the potential for a sewer line in Kanaka Creek Road and Del Ray Avenue as potential barriers for development and gaps that could be closed. He focused especially on the ~100 foot gap between the current sewer line and Del Ray that could be constructed as part of the Kanaka Creek Road project occurring this summer. Planning Commission members agreed with May and asked what they could do to help facilitate the project. **Shumaker** suggested a letter from the Planning Commission to the City Council would be an effective way to state their desire. After discussion about the financial savings and lesser traffic disruptions, the Planning Commission authorized **Anderson** to sign a letter to the Council on their behalf.

NEW BUSINESS

- 5. Zoning Code Residential Density: Residential Planned Unit Developments Shumaker** introduced the staff report and draft regulations for Planned Unit Developments. **May** suggested greater reliance on US Corps of Engineers' Jurisdictional Determinations in determining whether how potential wetlands interact with gross development area and site specific density. The Planning Commission considered whether the need to obtain a Jurisdictional Determination prior to submitting an R-PUD application was added a barrier to entry for proposals.

MOTION: Ashley believed it was reasonable and moved to recommend City Council approval of the R-PUD Zoning Code amendment subject to including a Jurisdictional Determination as a prerequisite to application. **Ford** seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- 6. Zoning Code Residential Density: Minimum Lot Area, Townhouse and Condo, Manufactured and Mobile Homes, Other Topics Shumaker** provided an overview of residential density and suggested the Commission consider adjusting the Minimum Lot Width and Depth to allow more flexibility for construction within 6,000 sf lots of varying shapes. He asked the Commission to consider if they want smaller lot sizes in the R2 and R3 Districts. **Repar** commented she doesn't want to have big houses on small lots; she believes greater density is good, but with smaller houses and suggested considering shared green spaces in lots that are small (including nature areas to soak up rain water). **VAN PELT** said he supports these changes. **ANDERSON** asked about the negative aspects. **Shumaker** said some of what Mary noted regarding stormwater controls dealing with permeability issues, and possibly the level of density becoming out of character with Stevenson. **Repar** noted rural aspects are not lost even if houses are close together if there are added trees, etc. **Sciacca** said the City needs to consider all the extra costs to property owners of added requirements. He noted tiny house communities are attracting worldwide attention positively. Tiny homes are being classified as being on their own running gear like manufactured homes, with shared water and sewer systems. He said Stevenson could gain positive attention by regulations friendly to tiny home communities. **Repar** said mixed ages of people in our community is a plus, and that younger people can afford the smaller houses.

Shumaker noted additional payers in the sewer system user-base as a positive aspect. **ASHLEY** said it could be very beneficial to encourage this change.

Shumaker discussed townhomes versus condominiums; they end up looking the same even though one is allowed and the other not. He asked if the Commission wants to create a separate process to allow townhouses outside a PUD? He explained that manufactured homes are different from mobile homes—it is considered a mobile home if constructed before 1976. In the 1990s Stevenson allowed mobile homes. Is it time to move past mobile homes in Stevenson? He explained modular versus tiny homes—tiny homes are built on wheels. He asked if the Commission wants to make a change to allow tiny homes? This will be considered at the next planning meeting. Mary noted tiny homes stay put, whereas mobile homes come and go, hence, a trailer park.

Shumaker said there are other townhome plans we can use. Or the City's PUD process can accommodate them. The City can also develop its own regulations outside of that. **Shumaker** will give more thought to this and present the 6 decision points for consideration at the next meeting.

7. CUP2016-02 (Sciaccia Wedding Venue): Review of draft Denial and Issue Final Decision

Shumaker reminded that the Commission asked him to prepare denial language based on harmony and public safety. He drafted it based on harmony only—he's more comfortable with the harmony aspect than safety, since there is very little in in the record on safety and only one negative finding is required for denial.

MOTION: **ASHLEY** moved to approve the Denial language as presented and Issuance of Final Decision. **FORD** seconded. All approved.

DISCUSSION

8. Staff and Commission Reports: Fee Schedule, Critical Areas Ordinance Update (Wetlands), Shorelines Management Program Update

On the Fee Schedule, **Shumaker** said he has a draft but the update is not ready, needs more staff level input with public works and city administration. He is trying to equalize the permit fees for each so that the fee doesn't influence the type of permit requested by property owners/developers.

Critical areas update: **Shumaker** has received comments from DOE on wetlands and will prepare changes in concert with amendments to the habitat provisions.

Shorelines: He's ready to move forward more on this. Skamania County has passed us now—they're at the policy level, ready to submit final draft. When that happens, the City will reconvene our advisory committee. **Shumaker** requested authority to use the County's draft. He said it will benefit the City and will be on the agenda next meeting. All agreed.

ANDERSON reported on the Stevenson Downtown Association (SDA). The interviewing committee chose Paul Hendricks as the Director, pending board approval. Joe Schlick and Bonnie Heemeier were assigned to the Design and Promotion Committee. He noted the City's Walnut Park could be a focus for this group. Economic revitalization and restructuring are outstanding committees to be filled.

9. Thought of the Month: Conditional Use Permitting Reflections

Shumaker reviewed the conditional use denial process: There were two meetings and they were difficult; he commended the Commission on how they worked through the

issue. He asked to see if this denial experience, a first for this Planning Commission, resulted in any suggestions for improvement. **ANDERSON** asked why they had to hold an extra meeting. **Shumaker** responded said he wanted a chance to prepare better thought out findings and a good record of the decision making process, since we haven't had to deny a proposal. He said just one meeting will suffice in the future. **Sciacca** said the extra month gave the opposition time to gain momentum against his cause, but that he also was unprepared because of lack of reviewing information he received via email from the City. He said they were therefore unprepared to defend their case, but have no regrets after fully considering all the work it takes to operate a wedding venue.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Approved _____; Approved with revisions _____

 Scott Anderson, Chair Date
 Minutes by: Julie Mayfield

Planning Commissioner Attendance

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	Jan	Fe	Ma	Ap	Ma	Ju	Ju	Au	Se	Oc	No	De
Anderson	X	+	+	+	+							
Ashley	X	0	+	+	+							
Ford	X	+	+	+	+							
Hoy-Rhodehamel	X	+	+	+	0							
Van Pelt	X	+	+	+	+							

+ = present; 0 = excused absence, — = unexcused absence, X = cancelled meeting