



TOWN OF JEROME

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MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF JEROME

JEROME CIVIC CENTER
600 CLARK STREET, JEROME, ARIZONA

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024, AT 6:00 PM

Due to the length of this meeting, Council may recess and reconvene at the time and date announced.

6:03PM (0:17) 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Present were Chair Lance Schall, Vice Chair Issam "Izzy" Sharif, and Commission members Rebecca "Becca" Miller, Jeanie Ready and Lori Riley.
Staff present included Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett and Administrative Specialist/Accounting Clerk Michele Sharif.*

6:03PM (0:35) 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the minutes from the regular meeting of April 16, 2024.

Mr. Schall introduces the minutes for approval. He asks if anyone has any changes.

Mr. Sharif & Ms. Miller answer no.

Mr. Schall calls the question to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of April 16, 2024.

2 Commission members, Ms. Ready and Ms. Riley abstain from voting as neither were present for the April meeting.

With 3 ayes and 2 abstentions the minutes are approved.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from the April 16, 2024, P&Z Regular Meeting.

BOARD MEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
MILLER			X			
READY						X
RILEY						X
SCHALL	X		X			
SHARIF		X	X			

6:04PM (1:10) 3. OLD BUSINESS

A. No old business

Mr. Schall introduces the item.

Mr. Blodgett confirms there is no old business to be addressed.

6:04PM (1:14) 4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Workshop & Training session on the Jerome Zoning Ordinance and its application.

Mr. Schall introduces the item and defers to Mr. Blodgett for further introduction.

Mr. Blodgett says originally, he had other training prepared but he was asked to back off on that for a little bit. So he shifted gears to throw something together quickly and apologizes for the lack of an in depth packet for this meeting.

Mr. Schall asks if this will be a shorter meeting.

Mr. Blodgett answers yes, but he'll be sending everyone home with homework. He continued that he printed out two handouts to give everyone present. One of the handouts is the Land Use Element section of the 2018 General Plan (GP), starting with page 17. He continues this is the section that has more direct impact on Planning and Zoning policies than the rest of it which is more geared towards historic preservation and the Design Review Board. He points out, starting on page 23, the various zones in town limits are outlined adding that there have been some parcels that have changed use however these are still usable numbers for our purposes.

Mr. Schall asks if some lots were changed to R2

Mr. Blodgett confirms yes some were changed, additionally one was changed to commercial and one other change he was unable to recall.

Ms. Riley asks if it double covers properties with two zones, for example her own lot is Agricultural and Residential.

Mr. Blodgett says yes, he believes that to be the case, because it exists in both uses simultaneously. He continues it is not uncommon to encounter properties that are dual zoned.

There was some discussion among commission members regarding the zoning and prior zoning changes of plots throughout town.

Mr. Blodgett says what is important in this section are the land use goals, policies, and strategies. He says it is generally what we want to use to inform interpretation of zoning ordinance regulation. He says for example, if we have an issue during review with a new build, where some language might not be defined enough, then we need to lean more towards the policies set forth in the GP. He further elaborates on the purposes of the GP and its correlation to zoning ordinances. He says, understanding the long-term goals of the GP is important, especially when revising any ordinance(s) in the future, taking care to be sure revisions fall in line with the GP, as well as identify items we no longer agree with, adding it is revised every 10 years with the next revision due in 2028. He goes on to share the residential zones are problematic here, they are complicated and sometimes outright crazy trying to figure out what the decision making was, whether we inherited it from the original days of Jerome's founding or was it something that happened later due to misinformation, lack of information, or even in some cases some level of corruption. He says regarding the residential zone, Jerome was in its inception a higher density Town than it is now. We had boarding housings and multifamily housing up and down the main thoroughfares, and even down some of the side streets we had big houses meant to house a lot of people. He says through the adoption of the ordinance in 1977 some policies adopted were along the same lines as the national ideal at the time, in terms of planning theory, geared toward single family zoning. He then introduces the second item printed and provided to the commission members, a CNN article titled "The invisible Laws that lead to America's Housing Crisis", published August 5, 2023. He asks the commission to read the article as it covers some of what he is outlining in better and greater detail. He shares that single family zoning has created problems as well as resolved perceived problems it was intended to, with some of the unforeseen problems coming to fruition now. Mr. Blodgett says Jerome is interesting because our ordinance prioritized the shift to single family zone; everything became a single family house, then parking would be sorted. He continues that he understands that in today's modern context having 7 people renting a house on School Street would be extremely problematic with the parking. He shares when trying to unpack some of the short-term rental problems one thing he noticed is that the ordinance is strict enough that if someone purchases a triplex and they have 2 empty floors not being used, but the property is zoned single family, then there is not really a pathway to turn it into multi-family and rent those out long term. However, with the passage and protection of short-term rentals by the State we would say "sorry you can't legally turn it into two additional apartments" but they could turn around and say, "the State protects my right to operate it as Airbnb's so that is what I am going to do". He continued that in many situations it was the only option left to homeowners and here in our case our own zoning ordinance can be too restrictive. He says the parking issue is always what it boils down to and he doesn't have an answer for that yet, but it is something that needs to be problem solved. He says we have some ability to ease some of the housing problems, if we can find or develop decent policies that allow us to fully utilize the existing housing. He says one idea was along the lines as the commercial zone, in which the Town allows parking requirements to be satisfied using remote parking, however the same flexibility is not available in the residential zones. So one thought would be to allow for the same flexibility in those zones, having a process to formally allow residents to problem solve some of the parking. He says it won't solve all of the problems but every little bite we can take out of the big problem reduces it as a whole. It would be a multifaceted approach with lots of little bites; not one parking lot fixes everything but more like a dozen little fixes over a decade. He presents to the commission, the idea is to find a pathway or pathways that open up the residential zoning so people can fully utilize these medium and high density homes that are single family zoned.

Mr. Blodgett then shares an update he received from Ms. Muenz, from the League of Arizona Cities and Towns regarding HB 2721 Municipal Zoning – Middle Housing. He shares it doesn't affect us directly, but it is great to see where the legislators are in terms of policies. He reads that it requires cities and towns with a population of 75,000 or more to allow for the construction of middle housing such as apartments, town homes or multi-unit residences on all lots zoned for single family residential use within a mile of the city or town's central business district. He says it's interesting to see these policies now coming out to attempt to resolve the housing crisis, adding that the state of Arizona alone is short 270,000 housing units. He says obviously we have far fewer people, but we should seriously consider and discuss the possibility of trying to do something similar here. He asks what can we do to allow people to have long term rentals? What can we do to work with them on parking rather than just penalize and tell them no? He continues to some degree the future of our community is going to rely on the ability to generate housing that is affordable. He says the real start on that action is policy. He says policy sets a direction, and we need to set a new direction; the direction we have currently got us here and saved the town, but now the situation economically and culturally has shifted, and we need to shift with it. He urges the commission to dive in and look at the article and at the zoning. He would like to have discussion at the next meeting regarding their thoughts and ideas about what we can do to allow single family housing to be increased in a smart way. We can increase the density using multiple multi-zoning or an ordinance allowing for it, we don't have to go through and rezone every parcel, but some basic umbrella policies can allow for significant change. He says he knows in Jerome the term "growth" can be a bad word, but this isn't growth so much as it is sustainable change. He shares for

most of human history we've lived in high density pockets as groups of people, and now we need to rethink how we're living to make this a livable town again. He says it is important and has been one of the biggest things he's had to deal with in the past 2 years, sharing personally he would not be able to be here, live here and have his job if he wasn't able to rent a house from the Town affordably because the other rentals were more than he makes in a month. He says the first way to fix this is good policy, let people open up their homes for rent, adding it won't be an overnight switch flip. He says that is all for his presentation and says he'd love to hear anyone else's thoughts.

Ms. Ready says she knows they've talked about the issue before, including the possibility of allowing Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) for properties that have the space to rent and feels like that would be a great opportunity to have some kind of review over what's happening. She continues they could look at the parking issues and find solutions rather than blanket denial, adding she feels we could get creative with it and would really like to encourage looking into the option of CUPs for multifamily usage in the single family district.

Mr. Blodgett shares for those that are new, what she is referring to is the idea that we can use the CUP to grant multifamily usage. For example in a single family zone multifamily use is a conditional use, meaning situationally we can go through and do review for situations that fit and which are likely not a fit or are pushing the limits of a property.

Ms. Riley comments that a lot of the homes were meant for multifamily so to let some of the homes go back to that, she doesn't see what's wrong with it as long as we can figure out the parking part.

Ms. Miller asks if we have established guidelines on what is an acceptable housing unit, or for example are we ok with kitchenette's. She continues that she knows plenty of people who would love to live here and would be happy even with just a hot plate.

Mr. Blodgett answers we don't define it well. We have a definition for a dwelling unit which mentions a kitchen, but we don't define what that really is.

Ms. Ready shares she knows for a fact there are rentals with kitchenettes in Jerome and she has no problem with that. She says for her it wouldn't work, but for others who maybe work all the time or are just heating something up for dinner it works brilliantly. She wouldn't want to take away that option, it's a perfectly acceptable rental for the right person as long as safety standards are met.

Mr. Blodgett says we want to make the policies accessible so that Barry can approve of things instead of giving them a list of things that have to be done before someone can live there technically. He says this is where when we revise the ordinance, to add more definitions because they are important. He says we don't have to define piece by piece all of the elements of a kitchen, it can be kept fairly simple.

Ms. Riley shares she was told she could put a studio building on her property as long as she didn't include a kitchen, and she was told what defines a kitchen is the presence of an oven.

Mr. Blodgett says yes that is correct. He continues that is where we can make our ordinance a lot more usable for us in Town, because our situations are just different than what you'd find in most towns. He says regarding the boilerplate ordinance language, many are fine, but some make everyone's life more problematic, time consuming and expensive. He says we have a beautiful historic town, and he doesn't think that by relaxing some of the rules a little bit that we would in any way threaten that. He is confident it is a balance that can be maintained.

There was discussion regarding the historic nature of some of the homes in town.

Mr. Blodgett says he would say our own policies pushing towards single family zoning are at odds with historic preservation standards.

Mr. Sharif says he would like to understand why growth is scary? He says if there is conversation about use permits or changing zoning for multifamily then that is growth, but in a positive way to sustain the town for people who live and work here.

Mr. Blodgett says he thinks why it is scary is because growth is associated with expansion, and in some peoples' minds, that leads to Jerome becoming like Cottonwood.

Mr. Sharif furthers he understands a lot of fear is surrounding the short-term rentals.

Mr. Blodgett agrees.

Ms. Riley says from talking to the old timers that brought this town back to life, who are now disappearing, as well as their kids that were born and raised here who share that same fear, she understands that they don't want to see their town change. She says, however having more in-depth conversations they've discussed that you can't stop changing; back then that group of people started the ball rolling, and that ball keeps going and you can't stop it. They don't want to see the change and it scares them.

Mr. Blodgett adds the reason there is so much fear is that there is so much love for the Town. He continues that everyone cares so deeply for this place and wants to make sure it's in good hands, and he thinks we can assure them that we are going to do our best.

Ms. Miller shares that she thinks if we are unsuccessful in creating a larger amount of affordable housing then Jerome is going to lose the character that we all love. She says we need people her age and younger who are willing and able to move here and if we're scared of change so much that we're keeping those people out then Jerome will become the Disneyland that we all on city council, boards and everything swore an oath to protect against.

Ms. Riley adds it's already so expensive because of that same reason, and the only people who can afford to buy housing here right now are people with money through corporate, private or whatever funding who then turn them into Airbnb's, and we need to somehow reverse that a little bit. She says she's a homeowner here so if doing that it caused prices to

come down it would affect her a little bit, but she cares more about the Town. She mentions the League of Cities and Towns article Mr. Blodgett shared earlier, adding that she believes she has heard about it in the news as well. She says there is language regarding allowing casitas to be built on properties, however there is a strict requirement that the owner must live on the property for the accessory dwelling to be used as an Airbnb. She thinks that is a huge deterrent right there.

Mr. Blodgett says he is trying to explore every option available including allowing ADUs (accessory dwelling units), for example could we outright restrict them from being STRs? He says there is talk about residential uses being an accessory to the primary dwelling. He says he needs to seek some further legal advice regarding some ideas.

Mr. Ready says getting back to alleviating this fear of growth she thinks what could be done is have these meetings, public meetings, input from the public and have a system of checks and balances. For example, having a review process for a conditional use permits in place so that it's not just a free for all, to try and develop and rebuild that trust. It would allow us to do our job to protect things while also protecting the town. She says she feels like once it gets going if they're doing their jobs right, then everyone will be happy with the outcome, but it will be rough getting there.

Mr. Schall says we would be remiss to not mention water as a resource. He says when you say growth, how much growth and do we have the water for it. He says for example Flagstaff and Phoenix are always talking about water.

Mr. Blodgett says we aren't talking about the same scale.

Mr. Schall says no we aren't going to double the population in Jerome. He then shares a couple years ago there was a university that came to workshop with the Town, and based on the data for the rest of the State they had they projected the population in Jerome to be twice as much. He says it's interesting if you go back and look at the census data for Jerome even going back 20 years it's been 400 for a long time, Jerome isn't growing.

Ms. Riley adds if anything we're declining a little bit because a lot of the properties are being bought by people out of town and used for different purposes instead of residential.

Mr. Schall says sometimes residential but very often it's a second home. He continues that it's not so much corporate ownership like in some places but more often it's someone who comes from somewhere else with a lot of money, or someone dies, and the house is inherited. He says that's not sustainable either because just because you inherit a house doesn't mean you can afford the remodel or maintenance.

Ms. Riley says another issue she sees is that some houses are in such disrepair and the only people who can afford to buy them and save them are people with money, and that drives prices up because they're putting in the money for a new foundation or new plumbing or electrical. Not all locals here can afford that.

Mr. Blodgett shares that there are fewer options available than he would like. He was hoping to tap into a few when he was hired but most have been gutted in the past decade. He shares there are some HUD programs being explored and some movement in the private sector hopefully to step in and help some people out. He adds that Habitat for Humanity has changed their mission statement, they are no longer just building new houses they are now also doing repair and maintenance on existing structures, so we are also trying to have talks with them. He says the demographics of Jerome are skewed because we have some wealthy people that have moved in, and we have people who have inherited properties who are not wealthy. Those people are not able to get certain government loans, benefits, or grants because the overall income of the town is too high and knocks us out of some of those programs. He says we are trying to problem solve and find ways around that, but the first step is to explore our policy and brainstorm to find some good pathways into allow greater utilization of our housing stock.

Mr. Sharif adds he knows some people in town who do not have cars, so as we go down this path it is another aspect to take into consideration. He says we likely all know someone in town who doesn't have a car, and in this economy, it seems like nowadays you choose a place to live or a car to drive but not everyone can have both.

Mr. Blodgett shares it might be worth an experiment with a multifamily place, for example what if there was a variance for the parking. He shares it's like when he lived in LA he had to park a couple blocks away from his apartment sometimes.

Mr. Sharif asks if the shuttle van runs every day or only on the weekend, adding he should probably know that already.

Mr. Blodgett shares it runs on the weekends and Wednesday during the day for locals. He says the Council voted to end the experiment with CAT with the goal to reinvest the money from the CAT program into our own shuttle. He says he agrees and thinks the shuttle is an invaluable resource for the people that live here.

Ms. Riley asks about the Jerome Hotel. She asks if it's slowed down because of parking or a money thing.

Mr. Blodgett answers we are waiting to sell some of the land around the old cemetery down in Clarkdale. He says it's in the process right now making sure no one has any other claims or right to be buried anywhere outside of the cemetery area we have now. He says we should be nearing the end of the process.

Ms. Riley asks where the cemetery is.

Mr. Krmpotich answers it's on Minerich road.

Mr. Blodgett continues the land around it we aren't using, so the plan is to unload it and invest the money into the Hotel Jerome as well as put aside some of funds will go toward maintenance and repair of the cemetery.

Ms. Riley says she has one other question, commenting that the mine company owns a lot of land around here. She asks if there is any possibility of purchasing or leasing land from them to put in a tiny home village that looks like miner's shacks. She says she's tired of the new homes being built here that are too modern.

Mr. Blodgett shares the mining companies are not likely interested in selling their property, but they might be interested in developing it, or so he's heard through some conversations. He says one of the mining companies was looking at plans

for housing from 1919, which would fit in pretty well here. He says he needs to have more discussions with them, he is optimistic, but he can't speak for them.

Ms. Riley says she was thinking about on the other side of Sunshine Hill, could we put something in over there.

Mr. Blodgett shares there are EPA and environmental concerns over there. There is a lot of remediation that would need to be done and it's more problematic than helpful. He asks if there are any other thoughts or questions.

Mr. Schall confirms their homework is to read the articles.

Mr. Blodgett says yes read it digest it and send any ideas to him.

6:47PM (45:05) 5. NEXT MEETING ITEMS

Mr. Schall introduces next meeting items.

Mr. Blodgett shares there is nothing in concrete yet. He is waiting for the process and procedures for Zoning Ordinance revisions including the creation of a steering committee.

Mr. Schall asks if there are any applicants with new building projects coming up.

Mr. Blodgett answers he anticipates projects nearing readiness so there is a possibility to have one or two projects.

6:48PM (45:44) 6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Schall introduces the item and moves to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Ready seconds the motion.

Mr. Schall calls the question, and the meeting is adjourned at 6:48p.m.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:48p.m.

BOARD MEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
MILLER			X			
READY		X	X			
RILEY			X			
SCHALL	X		X			
SHARIF			X			

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Lance Schall, Planning & Zoning Commission Chair

Attest: _____ Date: _____

Kristen Muenz, Deputy Town Clerk