

DRAFT Minutes
Stevenson Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, March 11, 2024
6:00 PM

WELCOME

Planning Commission Chair Jeff Breckel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

PC Chair Jeff Breckel; Commissioner Anne Keesee, Commissioner Charles Hales

STAFF PRESENT

Community Development Director Ben Shumaker, Planning & Public Works Assistant Tiffany Anderson

GUESTS PRESENT

Anthony Lawson

PUBLIC PRESENT

Mary Repar, Kristi McCaskell, Dave Cox

A. Preliminary Matters

1.Public Comment Expectations

Shumaker explained use of tools for remote participants: *6 to mute/unmute & *9 to raise hand. Commenters must raise their hand and be acknowledged by the Chair. Individual comments may be limited to 3 minutes. Disruptive individuals may be required to leave the meeting. Persistent disruptions may result in the meeting being recessed and continued at a later date.

2.Public Comment Period

(For items not located elsewhere on the agenda)

Mary Repar requested the annual Planning Commission work plan include a map of all public access/public easement locations. She has filed an appeal regarding a recent Shoreline permit.

Commissioner Breckel asked if the current parks plan considered public access sites. Shumaker replied they were only included in the recent shoreline public access planning process. There is an inventory and map of access points and easements within 200' of the shoreline areas.

During the process of amending the Comprehensive Plan in 2022, the Planning Commission added an objective to include an inventory of citywide Rights of Ways and easements. It is still a work in progress.

3. February 12th, 2024 Minutes

The Planning Commission meeting minutes from February 12th, 2024 were approved unanimously following a motion by Commissioner Keesee, seconded by Commissioner Hales.

(This item was moved up in the agenda order without objection.)

6. Planning Commission Vacancy

Anthony Lawson submitted a statement of interest in filling the current vacancy. Community Development Director Shumaker explained the interview process, and provided examples of question that could be asked. Mr. Lawson responded to questions regarding his reasons in wanting to serve on the Planning

Commission, key issues he sees coming before the Commission, any time constraints he may have and if he had any conflicts of interest.

MOTION to recommend the Stevenson City Council appoint Anthony Lawson to serve on the Stevenson Planning Commission was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Keesee.

Voting aye: Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Keesee.

B. New Business

No new business was presented.

C. Old Business

4. Zoning Text Amendment

Q/A Workshop with Public about Street Side Setback Amendments in the R2 and R3 Districts

Community Development Director Shumaker provided an update on the purpose of the workshop. He described the public outreach conducted to alert affected property owners of the changes under discussion. No comments were received, and no affected lot owners were present at the workshop.

The changes being considered would reduce the setbacks of corner lots with side yards bordered by a street. Currently, the City of Stevenson Zoning Code requires buildings on a street corner property to be set back at least 15 feet along the street side of corner lots. The proposed change would reduce that requirement to 10 feet. It would increase the buildable area on a property. The change acknowledges that development on many of the lots in Stevenson's residential core do not meet the current requirement. The proposed flexibility on these lots would not come at the expense of pedestrian or vehicular safety.

>Mary Repar asked for an explanation of changes and what it would look like.

Shumaker provided a map of properties and explained consequences of making the change. The intent is to align regulations across residential districts. Approximately 78 parcels would be affected.

>Mary Repar questioned how many vacant lots exist, and do they meet the setbacks in order to allow building. It was determined that information was not needed for a decision.

MOTION: Commissioner Hales motioned to recommend the proposed zoning setback changes to the City Council for adoption. Commissioner Keesee seconded the motion.

Voting aye: Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Keesee.

5. Floodplain Management

Public Hearing on a Necessary Amendment to SMC 15.24 – Floodplain Management Regulations

No public hearing was able to be scheduled as the notice was not published.

Following a discussion on the information provided, it was determined to be in the interest of the affected property owners to adopt the amendment, as it would allow them to access flood insurance. The City Council will hold a public hearing on the amendment.

MOTION to recommend the amendment to the City Council was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Keesee.

Voting aye: Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Keesee.

7. Parks Plan Review

Reviewing full draft of Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan

A brief discussion was held on the Parks plan. The Commissioners complimented the work put into the plan. Planning Commission Chair Breckel commented that building a collaborative process with multiple agencies would be a challenge. He would like to see the energy continue, and to leverage resources across agencies. Commissioner Hales suggested the process of building the plan with involvement by different entities highlighted the cooperation that established community priorities.

MOTION to recommend the Stevenson City Council adopt the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan was made by Commissioner Keesee, seconded by Commissioner Hales.

>Mary Repar provided comments on the Courthouse Plaza and Walnut Park.

Voting aye: Commissioners Breckel, Hales, Keesee.

D. Discussion

8. Thought of the Month

Shumaker led a short discussion on housing affordability and the affect of mortgage markets on housing prices.

-Housing Affordability/Financial Marke Incentives:
<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2024/3/4/how-fannie-mae-puts-a-chokehold-on-local-home-financing-solutions>

-Housing Affordability/Mortgage Interest Deductions:
<https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/2020/5/priced-out-whyfederal-tax-deductions-miss-the-mark-on-family-affordability>

Planning Commission Chair Breckel commented on all the factors that go into the housing supply-demand, lenders, builders, and financial incentives. He pointed out even with high density zoning in place in Stevenson, nothing has happened. Land trusts and more are possible options to provide affordable housing.

9. Staff & Commission Reports: Septic/Sewer Discussion

Moving into next phase, City Council is reviewing options about issuing a public release draft or holding off to schedule a workshop prior to developing a document.

Trees

The city applied for several grants, one has been awarded through Washington State Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry program. It will advance goals for undergrounding utilities through a Utility Conflict/Canopy preservation plan. With power companies facing increasing liability from wildfires caused by faulty equipment, they are cutting more trees down. Options will be explored. The plan may include where tree canopies can be preserved by undergrounding overhead utilities.

Shoreline Permit

The permit has been appealed, the decision timelines are in flux. A hearing is to be scheduled sometime in middle to late May. A decision is to follow within 180 days.

Parking

Commissioner Keesee spoke briefly about a questionnaire that Ben Shumaker distributed. He has been working on creating a decision making framework for the committee. Specific improvement projects concerning adding ADA parking sites are being considered.

Ben Shumaker acknowledged and highlighted Public Works/Planning Commission Assistant Tiffany Andersen's effort and involvement in putting together the Parks Plan.

E. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m. following a motion by Commissioner Keesee, seconded by Commissioner Hales. There were no objections.

Minutes recorded by Johanna Roe