

**STEVENSON PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, February 10, 2020**  
**6:00 PM**

**Attending: PC Commissioners:** Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel, Jeff Breckel, Mike Beck, Auguste Zettler, Shawn Van Pelt

**City Staff:** Community Development Director Ben Shumaker

**Audience:** Mary Repar

**Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by PC Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel.**

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**Preliminary Matters**

Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel selected Public Comment Option 2

**2. Minutes**

**Breckel** motioned to approve the January 2020 meeting minutes. **Zettler** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. Public Comment Period** (For items not located elsewhere on the agenda)

Mary Repar provided comments regarding affordable housing. She stated there were too many vacant and neglected houses in Stevenson and she would be suggesting to the City Council they enact a policy to charge the homeowner's utility fees in order to support city services.

**New Business**

(Commission members agreed to address item 5, Zoning Code Amendments before item 4: Public Hearing: Biennial Comp Plan Amendments.)

**4. Public Hearing: Biennial Comp Plan Amendments. Establish a calendar to review requested amendments.**

**Shumaker** described the process to address the Comprehensive Plan amendment. He explained the changes indicated by strike-throughs and underlines in the text. The amendment was requested by City staff to create a Capital Improvement Program in order to preserve or enhance existing facilities and provide new assets that will support service needs and community growth in an efficient manner. He explained the amendments were intended to help City staff align future work and service needs when planning and budgeting. He asked the Commission to determine if the amendments proposed required more public involvement than the system currently in place.

**Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel opened the public hearing at 7:10 p.m.**

Mary Repar commented the public needs to understand what is taking place in order to not feel rushed into anything. She suggested the Commission provide clarity on the issues being discussed. She reminded the Commission it took 18 months to put together the original Comprehensive Plan.

**Breckel** noted it was important for the average person to understand what was included in a Comprehensive Plan-how does it boil down to sidewalks, water, sewer, funding, etc. **Zettler** agreed public input and understanding was important and recalled how monthly workshops helped the public understand the initial Comprehensive Plan. **Shumaker** related he could put information on the City of Stevenson's website to help with public awareness. He noted the deadline for decision-making was

April 30th, 2020, and if the Commission felt it could not adopt they could recommend against adoption. **Beck** stated he felt the timeline presented was achievable.

The Commissioners considered community input options, including holding informative workshops and public hearings. After a broad discussion the Commissioners came to a consensus to discuss some initial proposed changes at the current meeting and to further discuss all the proposed changes at the March 9th regular PC meeting, then hold a public informative workshop on March 11th solely on the Comprehensive Plan changes, and then hold a public hearing on the changes proposed at the April 13th regular PC meeting. **Shumaker** agreed that the Commission's schedule would allow better upfront understanding and facilitate the public's ability to share their information/opinions at the public hearing instead of having it be a Q/A session.

### **Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel closed the public hearing at 7:45 p.m.**

Finally, Commissioners discussed the minor changes in the Comprehensive Plan document staff has suggested to ensure consistency with the proposal. A green light/red light exercise was used to capture their approval to move the change forward for public review or disapproval to have more planning commission discussion. **Shumaker** explained at the March meeting there would be more to consider.

He provided a list of changes beginning with the cover page. The following changes were considered:

- Front cover: **Green**
- Title page: **Green**
- Acknowledgements, two changes requested by Commission, **Green**
- Strategic plan-new dates: **Green**
- Planning goals/sub goals: **Green**
- 1.12 public art plan: **Green**

### **5. Zoning Code Amendment: ZON2020-01 Related to Single Family Detached Dwellings in the C1 Commercial District, Murals, and recent Zoning Interpretations.**

Community Development Director **Shumaker** introduced a potential amendment to the City of Stevenson's Zoning Code as described on page 59 of the current PC meeting packet. The proposed changes would prohibit new Single-Family Detached Dwellings, Manufactured Homes and Modular Homes in the C1 Commercial District; encode conditional use approval for Townhomes in the CR Commercial Recreation District; allow Townhomes as principal uses in the C1 District and allow certain Murals as permitted uses in the C1, CR and M1 Light Industrial districts. A moratorium enacted temporarily by the City Council concerning SFDD in the C1 district is set to expire in Mid-May 2020. The proposed ordinance, if approved, would replace the temporary moratorium with a complete prohibition. The main question before the Planning Commission regarded consideration of and selecting strategies to structure the public involvement process to address the changes presented in the ordinance. A lengthy discussion followed on several of the changes being proposed:

**Murals:** All Commissioners agreed that murals were positive, an enhancement to the community, and should involve a different permitting process. The Commission requested additional options beyond the staff draft reviewed. The options include: 1) reduced fees for non-profit agencies proposing murals, 2) a new special review process which would public notification similar to the Conditional Use process, but decision by the Zoning Administrator, and 3) further consideration of the staff draft. A question over which agency should be accountable when tax dollars are used for murals—the Planning Commission or City Council—remained undecided. **Shumaker** suggested having the City Council re-engage the Stevenson Public Art Committee to handle mural applications. **Zettler and VanPelt** questioned if having another entity involved in the process would lead to public

confusion, and all agreed that if the Committee became active again that would be the time to discuss its role regarding mural approvals. The topic(s) will be reviewed at the March 2020 PC meeting.

**Cultural Attractions/Townhome/Single Family Detached Dwellings:** Commission members next discussed the proposed changes to the Stevenson Zoning Code regarding Cultural Attractions, Townhomes and Single Family Detached Dwellings. **Shumaker** provided decisions made by the Administrator in 2019 and 2020. He advised the Commission that the current temporary moratorium on SFDD in the C1 (Commercial District) would be expiring in Mid-May of 2020. The proposed ordinance would create an outright prohibition on SFDD, Manufactured Homes and Modular Homes in the C1 District.

A substantial discussion on balancing the need for affordable housing with nearby access to local services against commercial development to support the local economy was held. Commissioners shared other issues they had regarding SFDD occupying space that could be used for business or commercial ventures.

**Van Pelt** pointed out the cost to remove a SFDD by a business seeking to build a commercial entity is prohibitive and makes it hard to attract businesses to the downtown area. Mary Repar commented that mixed use contributes to a more rural feel to the community.

Costs of providing services to residences vs. the positive returns businesses provide were highlighted by **Beck**. Buildings switching back and forth from businesses to residences (and vice-versa) were also viewed as a concern. **Shumaker** noted code enforcement and Certificates of Occupancy as methods to address when buildings change use. **Beck** suggested a 12-month limit for vacant buildings results in a discontinued use determination with a requirement to recertify.

**Shumaker** was asked by **Breckel** what the intent of the Downtown Plan was. **Shumaker** related the recommendations were to have separate districts and avoid SFDD in all of them in the downtown core. Having an area devoted to places of creativity is also a proposed. The method by which the current moratorium was enacted was discussed. There was general agreement the criticism of the moratorium was due to the perception there was no opportunity for public input in the decision-making.

**Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel** reminded the Commission of the question regarding public involvement strategy. She asked if there were any additions to the required sections as detailed in the meeting packet memo. Members requested Shumaker individually contact all vacant and single-family dwelling owners to discuss the proposal and to put short notice or article in the Skamania County Pioneer.

## **Old Business**

### **6. Property Line Alteration Code: SUB2019-01 Ongoing Discussion. Plat Alterations, Plat Vacations, and “M” through “P” Definitions.**

**Shumaker** referred the Commissioners to a memo in their packet concerning several proposed changes to SMC Title 16 and 17. Under consideration was a continuation of the review of definitions regarding the Land Division Code for letters M through Q and others referenced, and a change to record approved boundary line adjustments as an official plat of the property.

Commissioners were asked to determine if the benefits of recording the BLA as proposed would outweigh some initial extra expenses in the short term. **Shumaker** noted there would be a cost savings to property owners by reducing the number of pages having to be recorded (with a cost associated with each page.) It will be cheaper to transfer property and be easier to understand. Easements will also be included on the plat. **Shumaker** pointed to page 82 of the packet to demonstrate the change with the legal description associated with the property map.

**Beck** recommended checking with the state subdivision act for consistency and legality. He cautioned against creating extra burdens or complications in general, and supported adding the title report and survey with the property descriptions in this case. A short exchange followed on how the platting process is handled in neighboring jurisdictions. Survey requirements and title searches were also briefly discussed.

## **Discussion**

### **7. Staff & Commission Reports Russell Street Construction, Downtown Plan, Tree Plan, Housing Needs Analysis, Expected Applications.**

**Shumaker** reported the bids for the Russell Street project came in at ~\$115,000 less than expected. The project will run from Second Street southward. There will be street trees, wider sidewalks with patterned scoring, and decorative lamps included. Jim Joseph, a local realtor is leading a fundraising campaign to pay for the decorative lamps. Existing overhead utility lines will be placed underground. The Downtown Plan draft is out, and has been put on the city website. A series of meetings are planned for a broader look. The City Council will get a presentation from the consultants at their next meeting. A Chamber Break on March 10<sup>th</sup> will also provide an opportunity to have the public review the plan.

There was no decision yet on the tree plan grant. If received it will allow the City to inventory and update the city trees and provide for a management plan.

The Housing and Buildable Lands assessment has been provided to the Economic Development Council. The public roll out will require lots of action, with possible joint meetings of the EDC/PC and City Council. Recommendations include multi-family housing, with 30% meeting affordable definitions.

Applications expected include a 5-lot subdivision. Also substantial shoreline development permit is anticipated for review in May 2020. Location is along Rock Cove.

### **8. Thought of the Month None**

Shumaker asked the Commission to consider how items get placed on the agenda. No changes were requested.

## **Adjournment**

Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel declared the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Johanna Roe