

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 9, 2019
6:00 PM
Stevenson City Hall

Attending: Commission members Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel, Shawn Van Pelt, Mike Beck, Auguste Zettler, Jeff Breckel

Staff in attendance: Community Development Director Ben Shumaker, City Administrator Leana Kinley

Audience: Mary Repar, Dave Bennett, Curt Esch, Sherry Esch, Matthew Knudsen

Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Preliminary Matters

1. **Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel selected Public Comment Option 2:** Any member of the public may participate in discussion throughout the meeting, provided that the Chair acknowledges them prior to their contribution.
2. **Minutes**
Breckel moved to approve the minutes as presented from November 11th, 2019. **Zettler** seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
3. **Public Comment Period** (For items not located elsewhere on the agenda)
Mary Repar commented on road conditions by the old Nazarene Church. She welcomed a Planning Commission discussion on driveway standards. Sherry and Curt Esch also spoke in appreciation of the Commission's work.

New Business

None.

Old Business

4. **Engineering Standards Update**
City Development Director Shumaker presented information on potential revisions to the Stevenson Engineering Standards (SES). Amendments include establishing specific public involvement procedures when amendments to the standards are considered and modifying the section of the engineering standards dealing with driveways.
Shumaker noted there had been three letters received from community members asking the Commission to delay the discussion, and he asked if the Commission was willing to hold off or move forward with the agenda as prepared.
Following general discussion Commission members determined that further delays would be inefficient and ample time had been provided for public participation. The Commission opted to continue discussion of the topic.

Sherry Esch, audience member, noted her appreciation on the need to make decisions in a timely manner. She expressed concerns over her understanding that driveways would need to be 20' wide, as it could reduce buildable area in small lots.

It was explained that the perception of a 20' driveway width requirement from street to garage was in error. **City Administrator Kinley** pointed to page 30 of the packet, in which the requirement for a driveway for a single-family residence is spelled out. The approach is to be 20', but the driveway itself has a maximum width of 10'.

Kinley also cleared up confusion over which version of the International Fire Code the City has in place. 2012 was the last version of the IFC adopted. The newest version from 2018-19 is still under review and is not automatically approved. The earliest the City of Stevenson could adopt the newest version of the IFC would be mid-2020.

It was further explained none of the width standards have changed, just the formatting of tables within the documents. **Shumaker** referred to the table on page 29 showing maximum driveway width standards for single-family homes. The 20' x 30' approach standards apply to portions of the driveway within private road easements and/or public rights-of-way. Once the approach is cleared 20' width is not required. **Van Pelt** also noted the amended standards would not require a retroactive change to existing properties.

Dave Bennett suggested creating an 8' minimum driveway width after the initial access point for guidance.

Matthew Knudsen received clarification regarding minimum and maximum widths for a shared driveway between two homes.

Mary Repar spoke on the need for less technical language, suggested including an explanatory paragraph regarding access points and recommended pictures or drawings to help clarify understanding for the public.

Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel advised the Commission there was a decision point to address. She observed there had been increased public input and transparency and asked Planning Commission members for direction on continuing the review. The consensus was to carry on.

Shumaker recommended further discussion on driveways and referred to multiple attachments in the meeting packet. Attachment 6 had one change in it, changing *homes* to *lots*.

A draft proposal to remove language regarding cross-references to the IFC was not endorsed, and Commission members asked for the wording to be maintained to avoid confusion for applicants in the cases where the IFC still applies. Incorporating a figure to help define the distinction between a driveway approach and beyond and a table or text to clarify intent was also acknowledged by **Shumaker** as a further decision point.

A proposal regarding surfacing of driveway sections was next taken up by the Commission. Mary Repar asked the Commission to encourage the use of permeable pavers or surface materials when possible to increase recharge of surface waters rather than contributing to run-off. Following a brief discussion it was agreed to maintain the surfacing requirements as written except the word *concrete* would be removed from the new section 8 concerning pavement alternatives.

The Commission then returned to the matter of reviewing the draft change to Stevenson Engineering Standards regarding public input into the amendment process. Commissioners were uncertain if the changes suggested may result in them being tasked with addressing matters that aren't relevant to their work, e.g., advances in plumbing fittings. Rick May's letter (page 22, attachment 4 in the packet) initiated a conversation on how to guide what would come before the Planning Commission. Concerns about delayed decision-making and time constraints of the Commission and City staff were expressed. Commission members considered separate approaches to ensuring public engagement opportunities while maintaining the focus on land-use issues. **Beck** proposed a uniform process that all changes coming before the Commission be reviewed and then referred to City Council. **Breckel and Zettler** also spoke in favor of ensuring adequate public comment. **Van Pelt** suggested reviewing the City procedure of approving and adopting standards through an ordinance process as one way to streamline decision-making.

After an extensive discussion, Commission members agreed to initiate having the City Council hold public hearings on proposed changes to the engineering standards and increase public involvement by publishing adequate advance public notice. A provision for the City Council to refer specific items of those proposed code revisions to the Planning Commission for review and/or recommendations was included.

The PC expressed a desire to be excluded from the review of updates to the International Mechanical Codes, International Building Codes, etc.

MOTION: Zettler moved and Breckel seconded to 1) have Shumaker develop language for presentation to the City Council on the amendment procedures for the engineering standards which would establish specific public involvement expectations and the Council's ability to refer matters to the PC and 2) recommend modifying the section of the standards dealing with driveways as discussed. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion

5. Staff & Commission Reports

Shumaker reported he was anxious to continue working on various projects including the downtown plan.

6. Thought of the Month

Everyone was wished a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chair Hoy-Rhodehamel adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Johanna Roe