

Minutes
Stevenson Planning Commission Meeting
Monday, May 13th, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Planning Commission Members Present: Karen Ashley, Auguste Zettler, Jeff Breckel, Shawn Van Pelt,

Excused Absence: Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel

Staff Present: Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director

Community Members Present: Mary Repar, Matthew Knudsen, Brett Johnson, Rick May

Call to order: 6:03 p.m.

Preliminary Matters

1. Chair Selects Public Comment Option #2
2. Minutes: April 8, 2019

MOTION to approve April 2019 Planning Commission minutes made by **Zettler**, seconded by **Van Pelt**. All members voted in favor. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment Period

Repar offered two comments:

- 1.) Regarding levels of community/public involvement in the Stevenson Downtown Plan, she said she has heard some opposition expressed about direction the plan is taking and suggested more community participation during planning stages.
- 2.) Spoke about aesthetic and environmental value of trees in communities and requested tree management plan be made public.

New Business

4. Downtown plan for Success! Presentation by Crandall Arambula (Agenda item occurred after item #6) Kristen Barrow and Don Arambula introduced themselves and their reason for being at the meeting. Consultants presented a short PowerPoint on the Stevenson Downtown Plan Project Summary. They noted the downtown core is the primary focus. They stressed the 4 key components-Mobility, Parking, Land use and Urban design and the handout's draft goals and objectives of each. Consultants handed out summary and response sheets to Commissioners and public attendees for further data gathering and feedback on the proposed plan. They explained they would offer a second presentation in August 2019, with a final proposal anticipated for October 2019.

The consultants then engaged the Commission and public in a question and answer session devoted to learning more about the Stevenson community.

- Open access to the waterfront for recreation and aesthetic purposes was determined to be critical. The Commission and members of the public pointed out existing access points and key water features to the consultants. It was noted that new homeowners often name the waterfront as an important reason for moving to Stevenson.

- Parking in and around the downtown area was deemed to already be problematic. There are limited parking areas and those available fill quickly with employees of local businesses. Lines of sight are restricted, especially along Russell and Second Street. The steep grades make walking difficult, particularly for elderly residents and visitors. Curbside parking along SR14 can be intimidating due to fast traffic and large trucks, with winter snow banks making it worse. The Commission discussed parking options, including alley parking for businesses, a parking structure, one-way traffic routes, a shuttle system for Sternwheeler visitors, use of the fairgrounds parking lot and more. Safe pedestrian and bicycle access was agreed as important to convey a welcoming atmosphere to a community and important to enticing Skamania Lodge visitors to downtown. Camas was pointed to as an example of a walkable downtown.
- Land use issues were discussed by Commission members. Height limits for buildings, potential parking structures, storefronts versus industrial facilities at the Port of Skamania County to encourage commercial activity, code revision for parking requirements, diverting truck traffic and more were considered. Mixed use of housing and business storefronts was seen as contributing to a friendlier feel to area. Walking trails to natural features such as Rock Creek Falls were mentioned as additional attractions.
- Regarding Urban Design Shumaker pointed out Stevenson does not have many streets following a grid iron pattern. He noted that many of the streets with T-intersections offer opportunities for terminating vistas.
- A question was raised by the consultants about potential incorporation of the county fairgrounds into the downtown plan. It was suggested that the surrounding landscape could be improved. Another discussion followed about the need to entice Lodge guests to come into Stevenson. Updated marketing materials and road signage were considered.

Shumaker asked commission members to fill out response sheets and return. Arambula encouraged responses as well as a way to ensure specific needs are met and concerns are addressed.

5. Zoning Interpretations: Self-Storage Units in the SR Suburban Residential District

The Planning Commission was asked to interpret the current Zoning Code to determine if Self-Storage Units (SSUs) are consistent with the SR Suburban Residential zoning district. Shumaker provided information and guidance to Commission members via a staff report containing approval standards and a draft interpretation which could allow SSUs through the conditional use process (ZON2019-02). Shumaker explained that currently SSU's are not listed in the city's use descriptions.

Shumaker referred Commission members to current SR Zoning Districts map for clarity of the SR Districts under review. The Commission clarified the SSU discussion applies to commercial units for rent to differentiate them from homeowner/residential storage sheds or buildings.

Much of the discussion focused on whether SSUs could be allowed either as conditional uses in SR Districts when compared to the characteristics of these other structures: Garage or Storage Building for the Parking of Commercial Vehicles, Utility or Communication Facility, Hazardous Waste Storage, Cemetery or Mausoleum, Indoor or Outdoor Horticultural Activity or Kennel. There was general agreement that SSUs did not meet the same criteria as these structures and were not in keeping with the purpose of the district.

A further discussion followed about commercial activities in SR Districts and the need to conserve what buildable land there is available for housing purposes. On a motion made by **Zettler** with a second from

Breckel, the Commission voted unanimously against allowing Self-Storage units in Suburban Residential District as inconsistent with the purpose of the district.

Old Business

6. Zoning Changes ZON2019-01 ADU’s and Use Category Clean Up

Commission members considered four documents Shumaker had provided in their packet regarding the draft zoning changes for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). In a memo Shumaker briefly detailed the changes to sections in the ordinance in order to clarify the requested amendments and to verify the ordinance looked as intended. He also explained a letter he drafted to the Stevenson City Council with recommendations from the Planning Commission regarding the reasoning for the proposed changes as well as a provision (#4) to potentially delay portions of the proposed zoning changes in light of recent conflicts at the Council level. Following questions Shumaker explained that in downtown area the concept of ADUs does not apply since a duplex can be built. Finally, a short discussion on utility fees and hook-ups was held. It was noted that a final fee structure will be determined by the Stevenson City Council. The Commission reached consensus and (It was not clear which Commission members made the motion and second) voted unanimously to send the Stevenson City Council the Zoning Code Amendments for ADU’s along with the letter detailing the reasons for the changes minus point # 4.

Discussion

7. Staff and Commission Reports Grant Proposals, Road Diet

Road Diet: At the April meeting the Stevenson City Council decided to require planter strips at a minimum width of 3 feet for new road construction projects.

Grant proposals: Shumaker shared information on two grants submitted to WSDOT. The intent for both is pedestrian enhancements. The first will construct a sidewalk along south side of First Street with cross walks at intersections.

Second grant submitted may be contentious. It is for a paved pathway from Kanaka Creek Road to Del Ray, with a paved pathway to Homeward, then a sidewalk along Homeward to improve access to Stevenson Elementary School. If funds are awarded Stevenson will be notified in July of 2019, with construction set to be completed at the latest by 2021.

8. Thought of the Month: None

Adjournment: At 8:15 p.m. the meeting was declared adjourned.

Approved _____; Approved with revisions _____

Name Date

Minutes submitted by Johanna Roe