

**MINUTES FOR THE NORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD WORKING GROUP**  
**Thursday, May 21, 2015**  
**Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way**

Chair Pam Marsh called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way.

Mike Morris, Michael Dawkins, Rich Kaplan, Mayor John Stromberg, Brandon Goldman and Bill Molnar were present.

**1. Consent Agenda**

**Dawkins/ Kaplan M/S to approve the minutes of May 7, 2014. Voice Vote; All Ayes. Motion passes.**

**2. Discussion**

Group reviewed the changes recommended at the last meeting:

1. Providing for a minor plan amendment process to allow the reduction of open space areas associated with designated wetlands to correspond with current State approved wetland delineation. Group questioned whether this change goes against the Planning Commission recommendation. They agreed that it does, but as they are keeping the open space unchanged from the original plan recommendation, it's not fully against the PC's desired outcome. Also, this recommendation reflects the group's concern that portions of the map are based on old information while other portions have access to new information. It was felt that keeping the open space delineated the same, but allowing changes keeps the playing field even for developers.
2. State within the plan framework that the city would consider entering into a developer agreement to participate in the establishment of an advanced financing district for off-site public facility improvements in order to achieve a positive impact for the community. The group agreed that, as shown in the frameworks amendments on page two of the memo for this meeting, this reflected their past discussions and approved it with no alterations.
3. Maintain the applicability of existing affordable housing ordinance requirements, and exception allowances, for annexations. Goldman stated that no new code language would be required, as it's already in the code. Group agreed this change to the final plan was acceptable.
4. Address the expectation that the neighborhood be a fire-adapted community through a separate wildfire overlay ordinance amendment that would apply city wide. Group determined this update would be part of a separate, long-range planning amendment for entire city, and doesn't necessarily need to be addressed in the plan.
5. Provide examples of preferred neighborhood modules for developers to consider while planning future developments. Goldman stated that this would be an update to the land use code, similar to the Pedestrian Places provisions. Stromberg stated he and Marsh had collaborated on the neighborhood module concept in the meeting packet. This was an attempt to match Council goals with annexation/neighborhood proposals in order to give developers more surety in the

process. He wanted to make it clear that these were not requirements, but rather preferences as to style. Group discussed whether these preferences need to be reflected in the master plan as standards. Goldman noted that he also added a second example of a neighborhood layout and that additional concept illustrations could be added to give developers a sense of what would be preferred.

Morris noted that he is concerned that as things change, we will be locked-in to neighborhood or housing styles which may not age well.

Molnar state that many find picture examples helpful as text-only can be too involved. The four areas of focus of the Stromberg/Marsh concepts (family-friendly, energy efficient, water efficient and inclusive of micro-agriculture) are already in the Comprehensive Plan, so any changes to the Normal Plan would really require broader changes.

Group discussed the use of concept plans and agreed they should be about starting a conversation with developers, not strict requirements. Group agreed they expect additional concept plans will be gained during the Planning Commission's approval process. Group asked Goldman to come up with language regarding desire to remain flexible in order to incorporate evolving technologies and community desires.

Morris reiterated his concern that these requirements are Normal area specific and not city-wide design standards. He's concerned there are too many extra requirements only on Normal, which may make development unsuccessful or impossible. He's overall okay with including concept plans, so long as they don't become requirements or hard and fast rules.

Group agreed that energy and water efficiency are already demanded by market forces, and believe those requirements would not be burdensome. The agriculture requirement is new but in keeping with Ashland ideals. Helping make the community family-friendly is something everyone wants to make progress on, even if everyone has a different idea of how that can be accomplished. Group agreed that keeping these the focus is acceptable, so long as it's clear these are goals not requirements.

Group discussed the Transportation Commission recommendations from last meeting. They decided that for clarity purposes the mobility section should be split into 'phasing' and 'development agreement.' They also want to add in the transportation analysis triggers to phasing Faught mentioned in the last meeting. Goldman and Molnar agreed to work with Faught on appropriate language.

### **3. Public Forum**

*Randy Jones* – brought an example of a plan for a different area which has similar concepts to the recommended plan of this group. The density would be different but it's not far from what he hopes to do with the Normal neighborhood. He thinks this group has made great progress and allows for good flexibility. He still thinks Faught's cost estimates are high, but would rather them be too high than too low. He was waiting for this process to be done before doing estimates himself.

*Howdy Miller* – He stated that the group has brought up the possibility of agriculture before and hopes that this idea is coming back. He wonders if we know the soil type and grade as they are important. This area is an important agricultural area and wonders what in-code protections there are regarding preserving unique agricultural features.

*Debbie Miller* – Hopes the group realizes that they have the fate of future residents in their hands. A lot of areas around town will feel the impact of any decisions. She believes there are still unresolved issues regarding the amount and funding sources for external transportation. Either this project is happening now or many years down the road and she wonders how would advanced financing would work if the project is phased. Clay Street access would mean more vehicular trips on Clay but that has not been talked about. She is concerned about open space and how wetlands can be diminished through minor amendments. She wondered if the group was interested in open space or not.

*Julie Matthews* – Believes that as a thought process and vision for Ashland this process is good. It seems that something was decided at the last meeting regarding riparian zones and changes but she doesn't understand the changes. She thinks it is good the group is working to establish intent and that they referred to the future but this is can't just a list of good ideas. If nothing is required then how do those intentions get carried forward? In order for the group's principles to be upheld they need to be set forth in a sort of "prime directive." This doesn't need to be dictatorial, but it does need to be recognized and acknowledged by developers. She lives in the area and sees flooding, believes that we can't designate wetlands without recognizing the liability.

At group's request, Goldman gave details of open space and riparian decisions from last meeting. No changes to the open space laid out in the plan, but wetlands delineation can be changes with a minor amendment. It would be a separate hearing process for that approval and must prove that any changes are equal or better than the approved plan.

*Nancy Boyer* – Thanked Goldman for the e-mail about this meeting. Stated that there was none for the last meeting which likely affected the public attendance. She found it unfortunate that so many decisions were made at that meeting.

#### **4. Next Steps**

Goldman outlined the process: Scheduling the plan for review by the Planning Commission, which will likely not happen until July based on other current planning actions. Then it will go before Council, but probably not until September. The Planning Department will send postcards about these dates to all neighbors and interested parties.

Marsh thanked the group for their participation.

Meeting adjourned at 5: 11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diana Shiplet  
Executive Secretary