



Planning Commission Minutes

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note the public testimony may be limited by the Chair.

March 26, 2024

STUDY SESSION

Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Verner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Development and Engineering Services Building at 51 Winburn Way. She noted that the meeting was available to be viewed and attended via Zoom.

Commissioners Present:

Lisa Verner
Doug Knauer
Kerry KenCairn
Russell Phillips
Gregory Perkinson

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director
Derek Severson, Planning Manager
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant

Absent Members:

Susan MacCracken Jain
Eric Herron

Council Liaison:

Paula Hyatt (absent)

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community Development Director Brandon Goldman made the following announcements:

- All Commissioners should receive a Notice of Economic Interest from the City Recorder's Office.
- The City had applied for a technical assistance grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) for the development of a manufactured home park zone. This grant was received and the City will be moving forward with an ordinance.

Commissioner Knauer asked how manufactured homes are defined. Mr. Goldman responded that they are typically homes that are pre-fabricated and placed on-site fully intact and inspected at the factory in which they are created.

III. PUBLIC FORUM – None

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Senate Bill 1537 Legislative Update





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Mr. Goldman provided a brief update on Senate Bill 1537, which was recently approved by the State Legislature, and is intended to be a comprehensive approach to housing policy reform. Its main goals are to streamline the housing development process, support affordable housing projects, and more effectively enforce affordable housing laws.

Mr. Goldman related how SB1537 would affect land use regulations in a number of ways, including:

- Amendments to the Oregon Goal Post Rule – These changes would allow applicants of permits, limited land use decisions, or zone changes to request that their project be processed by the standards that are currently in place when the request is made, not the standards in place when their application was first submitted.
- Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Expansions – This would allow cities to engage in a one-time expansion of their UGB depending on their size. With a population under 25,000 the City would be eligible to expand its UGB by up to 50 acres.
- Housing Land Use Adjustments – This would mandate that jurisdictions approve requested “adjustments” or deviations from existing land use regulations, for the purpose for facilitating the development of housing projects.
- Limited Land Use decision – Includes approval or denial of applications for replats, property line adjustments, and extension alterations or expansions of a nonconforming use in the definition of “limited land use decision.” This would direct cities to only apply procedures specified in ORS 197.195 to limited land use decisions, and would therefore not be subject to land use proceedings or appeal to the Commission.

Chair Verner asked who the deciding body would be if staff denied an application that was considered limited land use decision. Mr. Goldman responded that appeals would be reviewed by an independent judge who could not be a City employee or a member of the Commission.

The Commission discussed how this legislative update could affect land use in the City. Mr. Goldman described how the Grandview Terrace Annexation was remanded to the City from the Land Use Board of Appeals because it was determined that the City had erred in approving the application based on Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) guidelines that went into effect after the application was submitted, but were in effect when the application was approved. He related how the changes to the Goal Post Rule could impact similar planning actions in the future.

The Commission discussed the Housing Land Use Adjustments and their impact on development in the City, particularly with regards to building height increases or their potentially deleterious effect on the Historic District. Chair Verner asked if these adjustments would require the City to make code changes. Mr. Severson responded that the City could adopt changes or implement the guidelines from state rules.





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B. Ashland Climate Friendly Areas Adoption Grant (2024) - Update

Planning Manager Derek Severson outlined the timeline for the Climate Friendly Areas (CFAs) rulemaking and implementation process. The areas identified for potential CFA designation included the Railroad property, the Transit Triangle, the Croman Mill District, and the downtown. The City Council approved Ashland's CFA study in September, 2023. The City applied for and received a grant for technical assistance from the DLCD, and will utilize the services of 3J Consulting, ECONorthwest, and the Rogue Valley Council of Governments to assist with development and implementation. Mr. Severson related how the creation of CFAs would require code changes, some of which are already in effect, such as the removal of parking requirements for new developments and the removal of density requirements in the Transit Triangle. The Commission discussed the impact of CFAs in the City, particularly with regard to density, mixed-use developments, and building height limitations.

C. Conditional Use Permits, Variances, and Conditions of Approval

Mr. Goldman outlined the various ways in which the Commission could apply conditions and suggest changes to projects under their review. He stated that when assessing an application with a variance request, the Commission has the prerogative to suggest modifications to the proposal to ensure it aligns more closely with established City standards. Mr. Goldman described how the Commission could continue a Public Hearing with a directive to the applicant to make required changes to a project to meet existing standards, as was the case with PA-T2-2022-00037, 165 Water Street, which was ultimately denied by the Commission when the application failed to make sufficiently significant changes. Mr. Goldman related how the Commission could also apply conditions of approval to an application to better align it to established standards. The Commission discussed how these different methods could be applied to future applications, emphasizing that the preferred method would be imposing conditions or working with the applicant to make necessary changes to an application rather than resorting to denial of a project.

V. OPEN DISCUSSION – None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

*Submitted by,
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant*

