

City of Colville

PLANNING COMMISSION

April 28, 2010

7:00 P.M. – City Hall

MINUTES

The Colville Planning Commission met for a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 28, 2010, in the Council Room at City Hall. Chairperson Jody Hoffman called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. with a quorum present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Russ Larsen, Trudy Lundy, Jody Hoffman, Dee Hokom, and Alan Bedford. MEMBERS ABSENT: Two vacancies exist. STAFF PRESENT: Assistant Planner Melinda Lee and Recording Secretary Susan Davis.

Melinda Lee reported that Tracy Ferrell submitted her resignation from the Planning Commission. Two vacancies currently exist.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of January 27, 2010 had been distributed to each member prior to the meeting. Motion by Russ Larsen and seconded by Alan Bedford to approve the minutes as written. Voice vote passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Review revised draft Transportation Element for Comprehensive Plan update.

A revised draft Transportation Element for the Comprehensive Plan update had been distributed to each member prior to the meeting (copy on file). Assistant Planner Melinda Lee explained that corrections and additions were made to the draft based on previous discussion. Upon acceptance by the Planning Commission and prior to Council adoption, the Transportation Element needs to be submitted to the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) to review for consistency with their plans.

Review of the revised draft followed and comments and corrections were suggested for accuracy and clarification.

Pages 9 & 10, Section 6, Air Transportation - Jody Hoffman requested that some research be done on the capabilities of the Chewelah Airport in terms of critical emergency and disaster services. She felt it might be appropriate to include a reference to the proximity of the Chewelah Airport, which has a longer runway, as an alternate location for emergency services.

Page 10, paragraph 1 - Dee Hokom requested that the second to the last sentence be changed to reflect both sides of the issue of airport expansion/relocation. It was noted at the August 12, 2009 meeting it was a consensus of the Commission to change that sentence to read "The state transportation plan and some of the business community have expressed the desire and need to accommodate commercial and commuter flights, however very significant public comment indicates many in the community seek to retain the current airport without such expansion." Melinda will make the change as recommended on August 12th.

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Relative to utilization of the airport, Dee Hokom stated a representative of management at Mount Carmel Hospital indicated to her that their new on-site helipad meets their needs. It was a consensus, upon verification, to strike "MedStar medical transport services" in paragraph 1, Page 10.

Page 16, Table 5.10 - Russ Larsen pointed out there is a stop sign at the intersection of Oak Street & 3rd Avenue (SR 20) and a traffic signal at Main Street (US 395) & 1st Avenue. Section D., paragraph 3 - Melinda advised that the sentence that states "It appears that the highest increase, 53%, was actually east of Aladdin Road on SR 20, indicating potential commuter traffic leaving Colville to rural residences" needs to be changed to reflect the probable increase in traffic resulting from the construction of the Colville High School adjacent to SR 20 in 1994.

Page 17, paragraph 1 - Melinda advised that the 2010 population projection figures will be inserted when they become available from the Office of Financial Management later this year. As referenced on Page 17, she distributed Figure 5.1, which reflected street classification and recommended roadway improvements (copy on file). Figure 5.2, Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan, was also distributed (copy on file). The Commissioners requested that consideration be given to enlarging Figure 5.2 to make it easier to read. Melinda indicated that she would work with Engineering Technician Ron Frostad about possibly enlarging some of the maps for the Comprehensive Plan.

Dee Hokom expressed concern regarding the maintenance of existing streets, trails, and sidewalks and felt a stronger goal should be included. She felt Goal 1 was too broad because it does not reflect a commitment to make improvements. Melinda pointed out the City currently has no fund in place for pavement preservation. Policy 15, Page 19, has been added to "Establish and regularly contribute to a fund for a pavement preservation program to regularly maintain the roadway surfaces within the city." Acknowledging that the existing streets are in poor condition, it was felt that it is important for the City to continue to seek funding for street, trail, and sidewalk maintenance.

Following discussion, Dee Hokom moved and Russ Larsen seconded the motion to add Goal 9 to state "Improve and maintain the condition of streets, trails, and sidewalks as expeditiously as funding becomes available." Voice vote passed unanimously.

Alan Bedford questioned whether the City would allow snowmobiles on bike paths during periods of heavy snowfall. Melinda offered to research the question and report her findings at a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Election of Officers (Bylaws, Article III.2).

Russ Larsen moved and Dee Hokom seconded the motion retain Jody Hoffman as Chairperson and Alan Bedford as Vice-Chairperson for the following year. Voice vote showed all in favor.

B. Discuss possible amendment to fence standards.

Melinda Lee explained that staff annually receives complaints from residents about restrictions on fence height. The residents want to build higher fences to protect their yards and gardens from deer. Staff has taken these complaints under consideration and has suggested two different options to address permanent

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and temporary fencing for vegetable gardens. Information was distributed to each member prior to the meeting which outlined the current standards as well as proposed text amendments (copy on file).

Melinda explained that in Proposal #1 staff suggests that fences, walls, and hedges located within a required side or rear yard shall not exceed six feet in height, ***but may have a maximum height of eight feet if constructed with open link or other equally transparent design features.*** Fences located behind the required front, side, or rear yard shall not be more than 10 feet high. Melinda noted that the “transparency” design would eliminate the need to amend the definition of “fence” which currently includes “walls” and “barriers”. A wall or barrier could eliminate or severely hamper visibility needed for motorists at street corners, residence identification during emergencies, and maintenance of acceptable community aesthetics and/or neighborhood character.

In Proposal #2 staff suggests adding a new ***Item E*** to state ***Fences enclosing temporary, seasonal garden areas must be constructed with open link or other equally transparent material, may not exceed 10 feet in height, and must be located outside of the front yard setback.*** Melinda explained that a temporary option would allow the additional fence height for seasonal gardens that would involve a smaller area within the lot and could be removed during the remainder of the year. This would alleviate the year-round presence of tall fencing that may detract from the neighborhood character. It could also be a more affordable option for those that desire to have the additional height only temporarily.

In the discussion which followed Alan Bedford expressed concerns regarding fencing and vegetation obstructing visibility at intersections. He indicated he could support open link or transparent fencing material if visibility is required to be maintained at intersections. He felt that the open link or transparent fencing material should also be kept free of vegetation. Melinda advised that the City currently regulates the site visibility triangle and explained how the triangle is measured, noting that the height of fences and vegetation is restricted within that space. Commission members pointed out obstructions at intersections are abundant in town. Melinda advised that the Building & Planning Department enforces violations only on private property. Violations in the public right-of-way are enforced by another department. Alan requested that staff get clarification on the enforcement authority for violations.

Melinda advised that staff researched many other communities with similar characteristics and found that their standards for fence height are very consistent with our current standards. Those communities have not developed special standards for deer fences.

Dee Hokom pointed out that deer are common in town. She stated she has chosen plantings that are more tolerant and less desirable to deer. It was her opinion that the current standards are sufficient and that changes are unnecessary. She and others felt that realistically people are not going to want to remove temporary fencing every year and then there will be another enforcement problem.

In conclusion, the majority of the Commissioners felt that the proposed options could be acceptable solutions but that they should be presented to the public at a future meeting for input.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: There were no public comments.

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REPORTS

Melinda reported that Alan Bedford was selected at the City's 2009 Volunteer of the Year. Everyone was invited to attend a potluck luncheon at City Hall on Thursday, May 13th, from 12:00-1:30 p.m. to honor Al and other award recipients.

Relative to the current vacancies on the Commission, Melinda advised that interested candidates should be encouraged to contact the Building & Planning staff for more information on the role of the Planning Commissioner and the City Clerk for an application for membership.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Alan Bedford moved and Russ Larsen seconded the motion to adjourn. Voice vote showed all in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 P.M.