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AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING COLUMBIA FALLS CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD AND ZONING COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 12, 2016 - Beginning at 6:30 PM

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

a. Roll Call

b. Pledge of Allegiance

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Minutes of the November 10, 2015 Regular Board Meeting

C. VISITOR OR PUBLIC COMMENT: (An opportunity for the Public to comment on any items not on tonight's agenda)

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

E. NEW BUSINESS: Board Training with Mayor and City Council members

F. REPORTS:

1. Planning Board

a. Board Reorganization – Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

2. Planning Staff

G. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting – to be determined



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MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING COLUMBIA FALLS CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD AND ZONING COMMISSION

Tuesday, November 10, 2015 - Beginning at 6:30 PM

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Vukonich called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. PRESENT: Vukonich, Shepard, Duffy, Haverfield, Schlesinger, Hughes and Stene. ABSENT: Nolan

Also present were City Planner Eric Mulcahy, City Manager Nicosia and City Clerk Staaland.

Pledge of Allegiance

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Duffy made motion to approve the Minutes of the October 13, 2015 Planning Board Meeting, second by Hughes. Motion carried with Nolan absent.

C. VISITOR OR PUBLIC COMMENT: (An opportunity for the Public to comment on any items not on tonight's agenda)

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Columbia Falls Zoning Regulations - Title 18 (Zoning Text Amendment): A request by the City of Columbia Falls to amend certain portions of the text of the Columbia Falls Zoning Regulations (Title 18 of the Columbia Falls Municipal Code). The City proposes changes to 18.410.030.A(G) (Accessory Building Height in the CR zoning) and increase the building height for a detached garage from 15-feet to 22-feet. Amend Chapters 18.322.040(D), 18.324.040(H) and 18.326.040(D) - Building Height increasing the existing 30-feet to 35-feet height to match all of the other residential zoning districts. Adding a new provision for Clustering in the SAG zones enabling a property owner to use the density provisions of the zone to create smaller lots in exchange for open space or agriculture easements. Explore the possibilities of creating off-premise signage and other sign provisions for the downtown CB-4 (Central Business District). Propose other amendments to the Sign Chapter 18.438 to comply with recent US Supreme Court decisions.

City Planner Mulcahy presented staff report CZTA-15-02, discussing all three sections: Cluster Unit Development, Building and Accessory Building Height and Sign Regulations. City Manager Nicosia reported that Cluster Development was proposed in 2008 but the text amendment had been considered with the River Road Neighborhood Plan that was met with considerable opposition; consequently the Cluster Development text was not adopted. Chairman Vukonich asked the Board if they had any questions for staff.

Schlesinger asked for clarification on the change in political signs. City Planner Mulcahy said the recommended changes are in response to the recent Supreme Court ruling; the changes include striking the time limit and amend the size to be equal to other similar signage, 20 feet instead of 12 feet.

Duffy asked if the new Cluster Development provisions could be applied to an existing PUD. Mulcahy said the PUD's that have not been developed are expired so a new application would have to be approved. Duffy asked if clustering development is mostly homes in the mid-range. Mulcahy said not exactly, there are some high-end Cluster Developments.

Stene asked if at least 50% of the gross area is what the other cities use. Mulcahy replied other cities use the PUD and they do not have a donut area like Columbia Falls. Stene said if the density is not to exceed 50% if that is increased does that effect open space. Mulcahy said you need to maintain the 50%.

Hughes asked if the Cluster Development is all Single Family Residences. Mulcahy said it could also be multifamily which would absorb most of the density. Vukonich said when we addressed clustering before it was for specific projects. Nicosia said we need to have the text in place so it can be considered on specific projects. Vukonich asked what was driving the change now. Mulcahy said the Columbia Falls Board of Adjustment granted a variance on Rogers Road that could have been handled under the cluster development provisions.

Duffy asked for clarification on page 3, line 72 in the Cluster Unit Development. Mulcahy said it should read shall not be used as parking nor storage.

Shepard said some of the communities are realizing the value of open space and believes this is the time to put something in place.

Stene asked if the 50 feet setback from the high water mark of a stream fell in line with the County. Mulcahy said that would be unique, Whitefish has a 100 foot buffer and Kalispell has 100 or 125.

With no further comments Vukonich opened and closed the Public Hearing at 7:19 p.m.

Shepard motioned to approve Staff Report CZTA-15-02 as findings of fact with the two minor typing corrections (political sign size and Cluster development noted above) second by Duffy with voting as follows. YES: Shepard, Haverfield, Hughes, Schlesinger, Duffy, Stene and Vukonich. NOES: None. ABSENT: Nolan.

Schlesinger motioned to approve the Zone text amendments, second by Shepard.

Stene opened discussion on the 50' of the high water of a stream provision in the Cluster development. Stene asked what the zoning is for Loeffler Estates on River Road. Nicosia replied that is a SAG5. Stene asked on the area headed up to Columbia Heights, if we want

to preserve as much space as possible. Do we feel 50% is enough open space? Shepard said the developer will likely have a buffer. Stene said so you think 50% is enough. Shepard said he is looking at it from both sides. Vukonich said his understanding was we are voting for consistency. Mulcahy said he was comfortable with the 50%, or open to any changes. Vukonich asked what will happen later down the road if there is an annexation, how will the boundaries be adjusted. Nicosia said there are guidelines that will apply, and we can extend our jurisdiction. Stene made a motion to amend Cluster Development report line 115 to 100' feet of the high water, second by Hughes. Mulcahy noted that this requirement is only applied to cluster development. Amendment passed with voting as follows: YES: Haverfield, Hughes, Duffy, and Stene. NOES: Shepard, Schlesinger and Vukonich. ABSENT: Nolan. Motion passed 4 to 3.

Schlesinger withdrew his original motion to approve the text amendment, Shepard concurred. Stene motioned to approve the proposed text amendments as amended and move forward to the December 7th, 2015 Council Meeting, second by Hughes with the board voting as follows. YES: Hughes, Schlesinger, Duffy, Stene, Shepard, Haverfield and Vukonich. NOES: None. ABSENT: Nolan.

E. NEW BUSINESS: CB-4 Signage Discussion/Work Session

City Manager Nicosia said the intent of tonight's work session was to get input from the public on CB4 signage. Nicosia said off premise signs are not allowed and the sandwich signs located on the corner of Nucleus and 9th are not permitted. Mulcahy added what could come out of the workshop this evening are suggestions for change. Shepard said one thing to remember is the restriction on signage could be restricting businesses on Nucleus.

Chairman Vukonich asked for public comment.

Kim Sova has a new store front in the old shoe repair shop. Sova has been in the interior designing business for approximately 30 years. Sova believes there is a need for proper signage to get people up Nucleus Avenue. Sova feels the ambience is not appealing on Nucleus and would like to see proper signage to help. Sova thinks signage can enhance a building, and would like to see about having off premise signage for the uptown businesses. Shepard asked Sova if she thought a sign on Hwy 2 would help her business. Ms. Sova said she thought it would. Vukonich said he thinks signage on the highway would be helpful. Schlesinger asked if little signs on the highway would help. Sova said she did not think the little signs are attractive but may in a certain area. Shepard asked if the sign ordinance was too complex. Mulcahy said other towns are more restrictive and believes the structure in the CB4 is a good start. Mulcahy said a problem he sees is if you are not familiar with Columbia Falls you would not know that there were businesses up there. Mulcahy said in Whitefish they came up with signs that describe the types of businesses without advertising, such as "shopping" or "groceries." Nicosia said the City is waiting on MDOT to put in writing their verbal agreement that the City can control the right of ways along Nucleus and the highway at Glacier Bank.

Vukonich suggested a 5 minute break at 8:23 p.m. Meeting back in session at 8:28 p.m.

Carmen Wyman helps with the volunteer book store behind the old bank building. They have an on premise sign and are only open two days a week. Ms. Wyman said they put out bookmarks with maps for directions. They would like to have an off premise sign to advertise their location.

Stene thinks there are things the Chamber of Commerce could help with. Stene believes well-lit streets are more inviting. Stene said if the businesses got together to add additional decorative lighting would they pay for the lights. Nicosia said yes they would pay for the light installation and the street lighting assessment. Nicosia noted that there is a street light on every corner of Nucleus Ave.

Nicosia reported that the City plans on adding signs at the new Welcome Park with city maps, noting parks, paths and other landmarks. Similar signage would be added to Marantette Park at the opposite end of town.

Cory Hill, owner of 406 Northern Pines, said he and his wife have a 1300 square foot building with 7 employees. Mr. Hill said Columbia Falls' shuts down at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Hill said if there are no signs on the highway nobody sees your business. Hill said he has placed an A-frame sign on the highway, with it he can have a \$500 day without it could be a \$40 day. Mr. Hill said he has 1,000 followers on Facebook and they often call to ask where they are located.

Stene asked what a business organization would need to bring to the City in order to move forward. Nicosia said we have the tools to work with businesses already. Stene asked Nicosia when the City will see TIF monies. Nicosia said if the plans are approved by MT DOR this year, the City should receive some funding during the 2016-17 fiscal year. Mulcahy said Whitefish and Kalispell have unified groups for the downtown area. Duffy said he believes there is a need for creative thinking on this. Nicosia said we could qualify to be a main street affiliate; one of the first things we would have to do is have the program director present the program to our community. Stene asked what we need to do to generate more revenue in the City, noting the disparity between the City of Columbia Falls budget and the City of Whitefish budget. Nicosia said the City of Columbia Falls has just completed the creation of the Urban TIF and the Industrial TEDD that will generate funding for economic development; the City uses every funding tool available. Nicosia noted that until the City has a stronger commercial tax base, the resort tax does not generate enough funding.

F. OLD BUSINESS: None

G. REPORTS:

1. Planning Board – One opening for the City and one on the County
2. Planning Staff – Next meeting will not be until after December.

H. ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting duly adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Chairman

City Clerk