

Summary Minutes

Joint Planning Commission

September 15, 2008, 11:00 A.M.

Emmett City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Weekly, Lawrence Whitsell, Maria Salazar and Anita Hendrix.

MEMBERS ABSENT WITH PRIOR NOTICE: Debbie Rouwenhorst.

OTHERS PRESENT: Troy Kochner (potential member) and Brad Hawkins-Clark, Planning Director.

Brad Hawkins-Clark – The County Commissioners are on their way to a conference in Idaho Falls but they really wanted to be here and welcome you to the Commission. In their place, I welcome you. From what I can determine, I don't think that any other community in Idaho has set up a separate Planning Commission from the Zoning Commission; I have sent an inquiry to an attorney to find out for sure. If that is the case this is a historic moment.

Rick Weekly - Another historic moment is the fact that we generated a joint community plan.

Brad Hawkins-Clark – This Commission is a great indication of good things to come for our Community. To have a group of citizens just dedicated to thinking about the planning side of things. If zoning is mixed with planning, zoning will always trump. In terms of the Development Services Department, our role is to staff the Commissions. The Zoning Commission for the City, the Zoning Commission for the County, the Design Review Committee (which is not quite formally appointed yet) and this Planning Commission. Our staff includes myself, Jennifer Kharrl, Dena Shaw and Mark Heath. Most of what we do is track zoning. Planning has become a high priority for the elected officials so we are raising that up on our office agenda.

Lawrence Whitsell - Are we going to have minutes generated from your office from these recordings?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - Good question, we haven't thought it all the way through. We will be able to generate summary minutes, probably not verbatim minutes. We will provide you whatever you need. We are here to handle all the logistics.

Lawrence Whitsell – What is CDI? Is this training offered to anybody or just for this type of group?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - It stands for Community Development Institute. It is a joint training venture thing with the State Department of Commerce.

Anita Hendrix – Gem Economic Development Association sponsors up to half of the cost for up to 5 people. There have been about 10 graduates from this Community. There are usually 5 people from this Community that attend every year.

Lawrence Whitsell - Do they pick up the balance themselves?

Anita Hendrix – The Department of Commerce picks up some, GEDA picks up some and Shadow Butte Development pays for some. There are several organizations that help pay.

Lawrence Whitsell– It's a 3 year program?

Anita Hendrix – Yes, and it's a week long.

Lawrence Whitsell - What time of year does it take place?

Anita Hendrix – It is the third week of July.

Lawrence Whitsell- Brad is this a training you would recommend? Do you have any training in mind that would benefit this Commission?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - We do receive information for opportunities on training and we will pass it on to you if any of you are interested. The County has approved money for this Commission that can be used at your discretion.

Maria Salazar – I have considered attending CDI. A week is a little long though. Are there others?

Brad Hawkins-Clark – There is one called the Will and Jerry Show that is put on by two attorneys usually once a year. There are other programs and there is a DVD training program that is geared for Commissions and it is generated by the APA and it is just video based. Does this meeting time, day, and place work for everyone?

Anita Hendrix - Let's try for 10:00 A.M.

Brad Hawkins-Clark – Does the third Monday at 10:00 A.M. work?

Anita Hendrix – Yes, and here at the City Hall works fine.

Brad Hawkins-Clark – Since Debbie isn't here, maybe wait until next meeting for the election of officers.

Anita Hendrix – I would be willing to throw my hat in for the Chairman position.

Lawrence Whitsell – Do you think Debbie would be willing to be Vice Chairman?

Brad Hawkins-Clark – I am not sure, it might be good to hold off on your vote until she is here.

Anita Hendrix – I have lost track of the members on the Zoning Commissions.

Brad Hawkins-Clark - We can get you a list of both commissions.

Lawrence Whitsell – Will we have much interaction with the Zoning Commissions?

Anita Hendrix - What will our relationship be to the Zoning Commissions?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - As a Planning Commission, you have a lot of authority. Who you want to meet with and when you want to meet is up to you. From attending meetings with the elected officials, what I have heard the main desire is to oversee the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. What are the priorities that the Community should focus on in the Comprehensive Plan? Not just the ones already adopted but what new ones and what ones should be amended?

Lawrence Whitsell – The trouble there is there are areas that need amended or a different direction.

Brad Hawkins-Clark – Right.

Rick Weekly – When we began 5 -6 years ago, one of the key issues was the actual implementation of the plan. It gets overlooked a lot. What we found was there was an existing stipulation that said there would be periodic review of the plan, and it never happened. One of my biases would be to set a systematic review of the plan to ensure that it is comprehensive and current. We found that the plan was so outdated and misunderstood that we had to start with a campaign to communicate with the Community. For me, one reason to be here is to make people understand the plan and that it exists and to keep it current and meaningful and from there we can discuss ordinances and interface.

Lawrence Whitsell- One of the biggest complaints that I hear is that people don't feel that they are well informed and they are confused when they leave your office, Brad. I don't know if there is a way to explain processes better.

Anita Hendrix– As we move through these chapters there is definitely a way to let the Community know about them.

Lawrence Whitsell - Sometimes, these ordinances don't make sense. People need help to understand the ordinances and processes better.

Maria Salazar – Your office is mysterious to a lot of people. The complaints I hear are that it has all gotten too complex and too many things to worry about and that we are not welcoming new businesses trying to come into the City.

Brad Hawkins-Clark - That is good feedback. The procedures are more of a zoning thing. What you are referring to are people going through the permitting process. I think your function is to be the umbrella over which these others take place. I believe that is what the elected officials envision.

Rick Weekly – Believe it or not, 4 to 5 years ago it was much worse. There have been two great successes in the process we began, the first is the City and County becoming closer and the fact that we had around 100 citizens involved.

Lawrence Whitsell – Brad, did your budget get cut?

Brad Hawkins-Clark – It did. Most of it was related to planning projects.

Lawrence Whitsell – Are you fully staffed?

Brad Hawkins-Clark – Yes.

Lawrence Whitsell – Theoretically then, to implement what we are speaking about it, we would need a liaison. Someone at your office maybe. Does that make sense?

Rick Weekly – There are other support organizations that can provide communication in some of the chapters. I am very concerned with implementation. I hope that we wouldn't bypass these other resources that are already in the Community. I would think Brad's office will be involved in the Land Use Chapter and the other organizations could be involved in the others.

Anita Hendrix – Once the Community finds out who is on a commission, they may stop you in the store for questions. Maybe in the future we may need another person.

Maria Salazar - As the economy goes so does education. We don't have economic development and we are struggling to move forward.

Rick Weekly – I was having coffee one day and I asked Sharon Pratt what the County's energy plan was, and she said there isn't one. We need to plan for future reliability for energy. I would hope that we look at the Comprehensive Plan as a whole not just the separate chapters.

Lawrence Whitsell – Education is a pivotal thing. Families won't come into the Community if a school system isn't desirable as well as economic growth.

Rick Weekly – As we go through this plan we need to define who we are as a Community.

Lawrence Whitsell – I agree, we need to determine who we are before we can change.

Brad Hawkins-Clark - It sounds like you are asking what you need to be asking as a Commission.

Lawrence Whitsell - Do we want to set priorities?

Maria Salazar– In the duties listed in the Ordinance, it says we will review and recommend amendments to existing ordinances. Does that imply that we will have to review all existing ordinances? It also says review and recommends new ordinances. Isn't that a charge to zoning?

Brad Hawkins-Clark – I think that is speaking of the procedures. Those are mostly zoning.

Lawrence Whitsell – I see us a more visionary Commission looking at the big picture.

Rick Weekly – I think that is the beauty of this Commission.

Lawrence Whitsell – How do we get started? Do we do prioritizing?

Anita Hendrix – I think if we do prioritize, we need to determine what is the most important for the Community.

Maria Salazar – I keep thinking of the duties we have been charged with. Priorities need to be part of it.

Rick Weekly – We have a little time to meet with people and maybe learn what the Community feels are the priorities.

Lawrence Whitsell – Are our meetings going to be formal or more of a discussion?

Maria Salazar – I like more formal.

Rick Weekly– I would prefer an agenda.

Anita Hendrix – I do like the roundtable discussion, though.

Maria Salazar - I think the elected officials would like us to be formal.

Rick Weekly – Agendas serve as communication for the Community.

Lawrence Whitsell – Do these meetings have to be noticed?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - Yes, the notifications won't be site specific of course. Since you are policy based we can put the agendas at more places, if you would like.

Lawrence Whitsell – There won't be any exparte issues will there? We can speak to anyone and visit any sites we wish.

Brad Hawkins-Clark - Correct.

Rick Weekly – My understanding from the Commissioners is we as a Planning Commission are the custodians of the Comprehensive Plan on behalf of the Community.

Lawrence Whitsell – We are an advisory Commission.

Anita Hendrix – Are we an advisory board to the Zoning Commission?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - I don't personally see that. You will make recommendations to the elected officials. It would be a great idea to meet with the Zoning Commissions maybe twice a year or something similar to discuss issues, though.

Lawrence Whitsell – Is there a good working relationship between the City Council and County Commissioners?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - There is now.

Rick Weekly - These two are much closer now.

Brad Hawkins-Clark- They meet on the second Monday of every month and there is pretty good participation.

Rick Weekly – It seems as though the view of the Community has changed.

Lawrence Whitsell – We all benefit jointly.

Rick Weekly – I would like to suggest for our next meeting, getting to know our documents and then maybe having a member of the elected officials to let us know their expectations.

Brad Hawkins-Clark – Next meeting you need to make motions on the by-laws and election of officers. Do you have any comments regarding the by-laws?

Anita Hendrix – The way I read the by-laws, we need another member from the County.

Rick Weekly – The State Statute says the same as the by-laws.

Brad Hawkins-Clark - The City Council felt it should be an even number of members from the City and County. That needs to be removed from the by-laws.

Rick Weekly – Will we be in violation of the State Statute then?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - I will get clarification from the City and County attorneys.

Lawrence Whitsell - It looks like the Chairman is a voting member. Who will break the ties?

Maria Salazar - Was the even number considered for tie votes?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - I think that is a great question and maybe at your next meeting bring that up to the elected officials.

Anita Hendrix – As chairman, I would like to vote.

Rick Weekly – What is required to change the by-laws?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - We can update them and you will vote on them.

Rick Weekly – The by-laws need to reflect the Ordinance and Statute, correct?

Brad Hawkins-Clark - For the next meeting, staff will get you some training information, we will check on the date of the Comprehensive Plan Map, get you a list of the Zoning Commission members, ask the attorneys about the membership according to the State Statute and we will set up the meeting for 10:00 A.M. on the third Monday in October. Anita are you going to speak with the elected officials about attending?

Anita Hendrix – Yes.

Brad Hawkins-Clark – It looks like October 20th will be the next meeting.