

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
December 13, 2022, 5:30 PM
MINUTES

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Commissioner Ehlers.

Those present were Planning Commissioners; Keith Ehlers, Kimberly Herek, Sandra Weckerly, Shanon Secrest, JB Phillips, and Melanie Duyvejonck.

Also present were Jamie Beard (City Attorney), Felix Landry (Planning Supervisor), Dave Thornton (Principal Planner), Nicole Galehouse (Principal Planner) and Jacob Kaplan (Planning Technician).

There were 11 members of the public in attendance, and 2 virtually.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) from November 8th, 2022.

2. Brookwillow Village Filing Six-Vacation of Public ROW **VAC-2022-673**

Consider a request by Senergy Builders, Darin Carei, to vacate a portion of Brookwillow Drive Right of Way totaling 660 square feet in a PD (Planned Development) zone district.

3. Brookwillow Village Filing Six-Vacation of Easement **VAC-2022-674**

Consider a request by Senergy Builders, Darin Carei, to vacate two sections of multi-purpose easement paralleling Brookwillow Drive totaling 1332 square feet in a PD (Planned Development) zone district.

4. Horizon Cache-Vacation of Slope Easement **VAC-2022-771**

Consider a request by Bray Commercial LLC - Sid Squirrell to vacate a slope easement on 2.4634 acres in a C-1 (Light Commercial) zone district.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Grand Valley Estates Annexation **ANX-2022-478**

Consider a request by Grand Junction Venture LLC to zone 17.42 acres from County Residential Single Family – 4 (RSF-4) to R-12 (Residential – 12 du/ac) located at the northeast corner of 31 Rd and E ½ Rd.

Discussion

Nicole Galehouse, Principal Planner, noted a discrepancy in the proposed zoning between the agendized item and the mailed notices. She proposed continuing the item to the next public hearing.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Duyvejonck made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Zone of Annexation request for the property located at the northeast corner of 31 Rd and E ½ Rd, City file number ANX-2022-478, I move that the Planning Commission reschedule the item to the next public hearing.”

Commissioner Weckerly seconded; motion passed 7-0.

2. Lucky You Rezone RZN-2022-570

Consider a request by Lucky You Properties, LLC, to rezone 2.11 acres from PD (Planned Development) to C-1 (Light Commercial) located at 2992 Patterson Road.

Staff Presentation

Nicole Galehouse, Principal Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Representative Tom Logue was present and available for questions

Questions for staff

Commissioner Ehlers asked if the site conforms to the C-1 zone.

Public Hearing

The public hearing was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

The public hearing was closed at 5:50 p.m. on December 13, 2022

Discussion

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Secrest made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Rezone request for the property located at 2992 Patterson Road, City file number RZN-2022-570, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Weckerly seconded; motion passed 7-0.

3. Zoning & Development Code Amendment-Landscaping Standards ZCA-2022-170

Consider an amendment to the Zoning and Development Code Section 21.06.040 Landscape, Buffering, and Screening Standards; Section 21.10.020 Terms Defined; Section 21.03.030 Measurements; Section 21.03.080 Mixed Use and Industrial Bulk Standards Summary Table; and Section 21.04.030 Use-Specific Standards of the Grand Junction Municipal Code.

Staff Presentation

Felix Landry, Planning Supervisor, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Duyvejonck inquired about the specific requirements for developers seeking to obtain irrigation certification.

Commissioner Weckerly asked what language specifically would be changing with adoption of the proposed code amendment.

Commissioner Ehlers argued that the proposed amendment did not completely align with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. He asked if there were any code requirements for the location of trees in the city. He inquired about how significant trees would impact private homeowners wanting to develop on their property. He asked if the significant trees are specifically required when designing a landscape plan. He remarked on the potential inequity that preserving significant trees posed for developers and wondered if the punitive measures of the amendment should be removed.

Commissioner Secret gave an example of preserving significant trees having a potentially adverse impact on the value of a property, and how landowners might be incentivized to clearcut in order to maximize the space available to a developer. He inquired as to who were the most vocal stakeholders in discussions about the proposed amendment.

Staff responded to commissioner questions and comments.

Public Hearing

The public hearing was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Kamie Long commented that these significant trees mainly grow in high-water areas which are typically seen as undesirable for development. She argued that the ordinance was equitable because there would be a measurable metric instead of evaluating each site on a case-by-case basis.

Kelly Maves argued that the canopy exists because of development. She requested that the commission remove the language on significant trees from the proposed amendment.

Don Pedigro remarked on the increased cost incurred by developers if they need to work around the significant trees.

Ron Abeloe added to the comments about development being the dominant driver of canopy creation in the Valley. He also argued that Cottonwoods were not worth consideration because they require too much water to maintain.

Greg Dahl echoed the concerns about increased cost of development. He commented that there should be incentives for developers who choose to preserve trees.

Kamie Long spoke again on behalf of the Forestry Board and addressed some of the comments made by the other attendants.

The public hearing was closed at 7:22 p.m. on December 13, 2022

Discussion

Staff spoke about the existing incentives for developers who choose to preserve significant trees and noted that the existing regulations protect significant trees, but it is up to the discretion of the Community Development director.

Commissioner Weckerly reiterated that the strike and underline of the existing code was unclear as to the actual proposals of this amendment. She added that the significant tree proposal might be especially detrimental to development in areas with limited water availability and would be counterintuitive to water conservation efforts.

Commissioner Herek voiced her support for keeping the language about significant trees in the amendment.

Commissioner Phillips commented that it would be good to identify who was speaking on behalf of the city prior to opening a public hearing. He wondered if the significant trees would hamper development and who should incur the costs of preserving trees.

Commissioner Duyvejonck argued in favor of preserving existing mature trees and that there should be costs and permits in order to remove trees from a site.

Commissioner Secrest outlined the reasons he both supported and was opposed to the amendment.

Commissioner Ehlers spoke briefly on his own desire to maintain tree canopy. He further argued his opposition to penalties against developers who are removing trees to maximize habitable space.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Weckerly made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the request to amend the Zoning and Development Code Section 21.06.040 Landscape, buffering, and screening standards and related sections of the Grand Junction Municipal Code, file number ZCA-2022-170, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact listed in the staff report, with the elimination of all reference to the proposed significant trees language."

Commissioner Ehlers seconded; motion failed 1-5.

Commissioner Duyvejonck made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, On the request to amend the Zoning and Development Code Section 21.06.040 Landscape, buffering, and screening standards and related sections of the Grand Junction Municipal Code, file number ZCA-2022-170, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Herek seconded; motion failed 3-3.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Weckerly moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Ehlers seconded.
The vote to adjourn was 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.