

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
October 24, 2017 MINUTES
6:07 p.m. 6:31 to p.m.

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:08 p.m. by Vice Chairman Wade. The hearing was held in the City Hall Auditorium located at 250 N. 5th Street, Grand Junction, Colorado.

Also in attendance representing the City Planning Commission were, Kathy Deppe, Keith Ehlers, George Gatseos, Steve Tolle, and Ebe Eslami.

In attendance, representing the Community Development Department – Tamra Allen, (Community Development Director), Kathy Portner, (Community Services Manager), and Kristen Ashbeck, (Senior Planner).

Also present was Jamie Beard (Assistant City Attorney).

Lydia Reynolds was present to record the minutes.

There were 10 citizens in attendance during the hearing.

*****CONSENT CALENDAR*****

1. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Action: Approve the minutes from the September 26, 2017 meeting.

Vice Chairman Wade started the meeting by apologizing for the late start and explained that the Commissioners had just been in a two-hour workshop. Vice Chairman Wade briefly explained the Consent Agenda and noted that the only item on the Consent Agenda was the minutes from the previous meeting. Vice Chairman Wade noted that some of the remarks he made at the end of the last meeting were not reflected in the minutes. After a short discussion, Ms. Allan suggested that staff goes back and re-listen to the proceedings and make adjustments if needed. Vice Chairman Wade replied that since the September 26th minutes was the only item on the agenda, there is no need to make a motion to approve them at this time.

*****INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION*****

2. Levande on 12th Apartments – Rezone [FILE # RZN-2017-465]

Request to rezone 5 parcels from R-8 (Residential 8 du/ac) to R-24+ (Residential 24+ du/ac) to allow construction of an apartment building on a total of 2.1 acres.

Action: Recommendation to City Council

Applicant: Gemini Capital of Grand Junction
Location: 2404, 2412, 2424 & 2432 N 12th St and 1225 Wellington Ave
Staff Presentation: Kristen Ashbeck

Staff Presentation

Kristen Ashbeck, Senior Planner explained that this item is a request to rezone 5 properties located at 2404, 2412, 2424 and 2432 N. 12th Street and 1225 Wellington Avenue. The Applicant is Gemini Capital of Grand Junction.

Ms. Ashbeck displayed a PowerPoint slide depicting the location of the five properties that are on the southeast corner of 12th Street and Wellington Avenue - across the street from the City Market at 12th and Patterson. The parcels have single family homes on them. Ms. Ashbeck explained that the applicant seeks a rezone in order to consolidate the properties into a single parcel and develop a multifamily project.

Ms. Ashbeck stated that it is important to note that the R-24 zone district was changed with adoption of the Zoning and Development Code in 2010 so that there is no longer a density cap in the zone district which is why it is referred to as R-24-plus rather than just R-24. The requested R-24-plus zone district would allow for the proposed type of development and density.

The next slide Ms. Ashbeck displayed was an aerial photo of the area and noted that the adjacent properties have a mix of uses: to the east is a complex of townhomes, properties to the south across the canal are medical offices and apartments; to the west across 12th Street there is a church and an office building; and to the north is the City Market commercial center. Ms. Ashbeck added that with the exception of the townhomes to the east and properties to the southeast, surrounding land uses are non-residential.

Ms. Ashbeck presented a slide showing the Future Land Use Map of the area. The subject properties are all within a Future Land Use category of Business Park Mixed Use within which the R-24 zone district may implement the land use plan.

Ms. Ashbeck went on to say the proposed zone change is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. The category contemplates a mix of business, light industrial, employment-oriented areas with the allowance of multifamily development. With the construction of City Market and a new retail center on the out lot on the north side of Wellington Avenue, Ms. Ashbeck noted that the area is starting to change character.

Ms. Ashbeck observed that the area has continued to trend toward the mix and intensity of uses supported in the Business Park Mixed Use land use category in the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. Changes have occurred in the area such that the proposed zoning on these five properties is more consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Ashbeck explained that the original zoning premise that this property should be lower density residential has been superseded with the development of this area as mixed use. As such, a higher density zoning category is more appropriate and has therefore invalidated the original premise of zoning for lower density residential in this area.

The next slide showed the area with the existing Zoning Map. Ms. Ashbeck pointed out that adjacent properties to the east are zoned Planned Development; properties to the south across the canal are zoned R-O and R-24; and to the west across 12th Street and to the north across Wellington Avenue, properties are zoned B-1 (Neighborhood Business).

Ms. Ashbeck stated that only one percent of zoned acres within the City are zoned R-24. This results in there being very little land available upon which higher density residential projects can be developed, especially as an infill project. Higher density residential projects are supported by the Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Plan supports infill, creation of housing options and higher densities within the City Center where adequate infrastructure already exists. Consequently, where opportunities exist that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan goals and Future Land Use Map, zoning changes to R-24 should be implemented.

Ms. Ashbeck displayed a photo looking east across the site, and commented that this is an infill area where adequate public and community facilities and services are available and are sufficient to serve the future use of these properties. The nearby major streets (12th Street and Patterson Road) have been improved with recent development such as City Market and will be further improved with this proposed development. In addition, this infill site is adequately served by other public and community facilities.

The next photo displayed was of the site looking south with Wellington Avenue in the foreground and the canal towards the top. Ms. Ashbeck explained that the proposed R-24 zone district would create an opportunity for construction of a multifamily development that complements the surrounding land uses as well as creates a buffer between medium density residential development to the east and the more intense, non-residential uses in the vicinity of the 12th Street and Patterson Road intersection. Ms. Ashbeck added that the community will benefit by the ability of the owner to provide a residential product that provides a greater variety of housing choice community-wide within this area of the City.

The next slide was a photo with a view of site at the corner of 12th Street and Wellington Avenue looking southeast. Ms. Ashbeck noted that you can see the existing homes and the condition of the existing streets. Development of the site will include improving both 12th Street and Wellington Avenue.

Ms. Ashbeck's next slide was a photo taken of the site looking generally straight across 12th Street with the canal to the right and Wellington Avenue to the left. The overhead utilities will be required to be placed underground with development of the site.

Ms. Ashbeck displayed a slide with the following “Criteria for Rezone” information;

Section 21.02.140 “the City may rezone property if the proposed changes are consistent with the vision, goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and must meet one or more of the following criteria:”

- (1) Subsequent events have invalidated the original premise and findings;*
- (2) The character and/or condition of the area has changed such that the amendment is consistent with the Plan;*
- (3) Public and community facilities are adequate to serve the type and scope of land use proposed;*
- (4) An inadequate supply of suitably designated land is available in the community, as defined by the presiding body, to accommodate the proposed land use; and/or*
- (5) The community or area, as defined by the presiding body, will derive benefits from the proposed amendment.*

Ms. Ashbeck explained that the Zoning and Development Code states that requests for rezones must meet one or more of the review criteria. As mentioned in this summary, it was determined that all of these criterion have been met.

Staff recommended approval of the proposed amendment based on the following findings:

- 1) The request is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 2) One or more of the review criteria in subsections 1 through 5 in Section 21.02.140 of the Grand Junction Municipal Code have been met.

Questions for Staff

Commissioner Ehlers asked Ms. Ashbeck to confirm that although the rezone to R-24+ has no maximum density, bulk and performance standards exist that may limit how many units a developer could get on there in terms of parking and landscaping requirements, and setbacks. Ms. Ashbeck agreed with Commissioner Ehlers and added that there is a height limit as well.

Vice Chairman Wade asked Ms. Allan if he was correct in assuming that the development plan would be done administratively. Ms. Allan confirmed that it would be a major site plan and would be processed administratively.

Applicants Comments

Mark Austin with Austin Civil Group, 123 N. 7th St. Suite 300, stated that he is the representative for Gemini Capital. Mr. Austin stated that he feels staff has done a great job presenting the material and he is available for questions.

Vice Chairman Wade asked Mr. Austin what is the estimated timeframe for this project. Mr. Austin replied that they are looking to move forward with the site plan review process and they are running concurrent. Assuming they are successful with the rezone, the applicant is already working through design drawings for structures. Mr. Austin indicated that the applicant anticipates going forward with the project within a year.

Public Comment

Rick Disco, stated he owned property in the area at 12th and Bookcliff. Mr. Disco asked if this is a public hearing regarding the project itself, or strictly the rezone matter. Vice Chairman Wade responded that this meeting strictly is dealing with the rezone. Mr. Disco replied that if that was the case, he does not have any negative comments.

Ms. Allan added that this hearing is to contemplate the rezone and provide a review and recommendation to the City Council, however as part of the administrative process for the major site plan, should anybody from the public want to submit any comments to the Community Development office about that site plan, they certainly are receptive and will review each and every one of the comments that come in.

MOTION: (Commissioner Deppe) “Vice Chairman Wade, on the Rezone request RZN-2017-465, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval for the Levande on 12th Apartments Rezone of parcels located at 2404, 2412, 2424 and 2432 N. 12th Street and 1225 Wellington Avenue from an R-8 (Residential 8 dwelling units per acre) to R-24 (Residential 24+ dwelling units per acre) zone district with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Ehlers seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously 6-0

Other Business

Vice Chairman explained that because of term limits, it is the end of the time that Commissioner Eslami can serve on the Commission. Ms. Portner displayed a slide of all of the Planning Commissioners that Commissioner Eslami has served with. The next slide was a picture of some of the staff Commissioner Eslami has worked with. Ms. Portner displayed a slide of seven different plans that were adopted while Commissioner Eslami served on the Commission.

In addition to City Plans, the next slide illustrated community plans such as St. Mary’s and CMUs Master Plan that were adopted during his tenure. Ms. Portner showed slides that noted that there were over 60 CUPs and 85 Rezones, miles of vacations, and over 30 subdivisions before the 2010 code was adopted. In addition, Commissioner Eslami worked on 40 zoning code amendments, 25 grown/comp plan amendments, over 50 zoning of annexations and 12 appeals. Mr. Portner thanked Commissioner Eslami for his dedicated service.

Commissioner Eslami stated that he was glad for the term limits and joked about the disappearing benefits of Pepsi, Christmas gifts and that his pay was cut in half so he'll need to get a second job. On a serious note, Commissioner Eslami thanked the staff for everything.

Commissioner Deppe stated that she has known Commissioner Eslami for a long time and commented that he has been an instrumental person with the Planning Commission and that he has done a great job.

Commissioner Toole noted that Commissioner Eslami brings a lot of common sense to the Commission and he has a lot of respect for him.

Commissioner Gatseos stated that as an alternate becoming a Commissioner, he now has some big shoes to fill. He added that if you are going to go through a mine field, it's good to follow someone who has gone through one.

Commissioner Ehlers stated that he has worked with Commissioner Eslami on both sides of project reviews referring to when he worked as an applicant and later as a fellow Commissioner. Commissioner Ehlers commented on Commissioner Eslami's attention and reason throughout, and he has been very effective to what the Commission does and he respects him for that.

Vice Chairman Wade recalled a workshop when he was about to say something and Commissioner Eslami reached over to him and said "Bill don't let your mouth run off, let the staff do their report." Vice Chairman Wade stated that it was good advice and he has been grateful for it for the past 8 years.

Vice Chairman Wade presented Commissioner Eslami with a plaque honoring his dedication and service on the Planning Commission from 2008-2017. Commissioner Eslami joked he had hoped for a gold watch and thanked everyone for his recognition.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:31 PM