

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: September 23, 2013

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairperson Porter, Commissioners Boettcher, Ballard, Davis and English

ABSENT: Commissioners Buelow, Hahn and Olson

STAFF PRESENT: City Planner, Mark Moeller and Assistant City Planner, Carlos Espinosa

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairman Porter.

Approval of Minutes – August 26, 2013

The minutes from the meeting of August 26, 2013 were reviewed and, upon motion by Commissioner Boettcher and second by Commissioner Davis, were unanimously approved as submitted.

Update: Air Quality Monitoring

Chairman Porter called on Carlos Espinosa, Assistant City Planner, to provide a summary of this item.

Mr. Espinosa stated that following the Planning Commission's last meeting, staff has been in contact with the MPCA and has requested a representative to attend a Commission meeting to discuss questions about air quality and help provide options for moving forward. He further noted that Citizen's Environmental Quality Committee recommendations had also been forwarded to MPCA representatives for response.

In response to these communications, the MPCA is currently working on responses to the Environmental Quality recommendations. Further, MPCA representatives had stated desire to wait to release information or attend a Commission meeting until after October 1st at which time the Environmental Quality Board was proposing to release draft model standards and criteria for silica sand operations. Mr. Espinosa noted that a copy of draft standards had been included in the Commission's agenda package. As draft, input by various public, local governments, and state agencies would be solicited. Mr. Espinosa explained that the EQB staff report also states that "the model standards and criteria are being developed for use by local governments at their discretion." As such, the standards will serve as a reference for City staff to help determine if additional changes to City Code are appropriate.

On a separate but related topic, Mr. Espinosa noted that the MPCA currently has an open comment period for silica sand rulemaking. Given this agency's notice, included as an attachment to the agenda, comments on this process were being accepted until September 30th.

He concluded by noting that staff will continue to work with the MPCA on securing a staff person from that agency to attend a Commission meeting. He hoped that this could be accomplished during one of the Commission's October meetings.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 23, 2013
PAGE 2

Commissioner Boettcher stated that although some are a bit anxious that the Commission has not moved forward as quickly as they would like in addressing Environmental Quality Committee recommendations, he felt the Commission was undertaking its due diligence in attempting to completely understand the issue before providing recommendations to Council. He stressed that if this effort is not made at this time, Council may have to struggle with solutions in the future.

Chairman Porter agreed with Commissioner Boettcher's statement by emphasizing that the Commission is simply trying to provide fully thought out recommendations to Council regarding Air Quality. Although the City could certainly do its own thing in this matter, it was apparent that a number of state agencies are attempting to work through the process of defining standards in recommendations relative to the Silica Sand industry. Given that these actions are key to the basis of future Commission discussions, he felt this meeting needed to be held before the Commission can actually move ahead on anything.

Following further discussion, the consensus of those present was to request that staff continue to work with the MPCA on attempting to solicit a future joint meeting. It was also hoped that this meeting could be held as quickly as possible. Again, Mr. Espinosa stated that the effort would be made to pull this meeting in October.

Other Business

Commissioner Davis stated that during recent discussion pertaining to upgrades to the B-2.5 Zoning District, a number of "housekeeping measures" had been proposed by the Commission. Of these, one related to a requirement, pertaining to rooming and lodging houses, that currently permits parking facilities for these uses to be located not more than 300 feet from the building that they are required to serve. Given concerns with this provision, it had been proposed to that lodging and boarding establishments be treated the same as multiple dwellings requiring that required parking be located on the same lot as but not more than 200 feet from the building they are required to serve.

Although certain changes to the B-2.5 District were ultimately made by Council, no changes were made to proposed housekeeping changes, including the off street parking proposal for boarding and lodging houses had. Given the previous, Commissioner Davis asked that the Boarding/Lodging House off street parking proposal be brought back to the Commission's next meeting for discussion. It was noted that this would be done.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.



Mark Moeller
City Planner