

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 27, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Scranton called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with Commissioners Emilson, Hines, Wasser, Chairperson Scranton, Mayor Pro Tem Clark and Mayor Willits in attendance. Commissioner Liske was absent.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

1. Report from Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership

AmeriCorps-Vista Volunteer Matthew Jurjonas gave a brief history of the organization to bring awareness to the Land Use Task Force and the community regarding Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership's (UWP) efforts with the Uncompahgre River watershed issues. Mr. Jurjonas explained UWP provides educational and outreach forums to the public, compiles data for the Uncompahgre River assessment and the water quality report, and makes recommendations for recreation priorities, remediation projects and mining issues. He reported the watershed plan draft report will be ready for review at the end of October. Stakeholder meetings will also be held for input for modifications to the plan, which will then be finalized in December.

Mayor Willits entered the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. Application for Conditional Use Permit for a Pre-School/School; Location: Lots 6-10, Block 33; Address: 534 Charles Street; Zone: Historic Residential (HR); Property Owner: Russell L. Fay Revocable Trust; Applicant; Gail Jensen

Letter regarding plans to meet Conditional Use requirements from the applicant; Phase I, 2 and 3 Site Plans, Phase I West Elevation Site Plan, Final Phase Site Plan from the Applicant; Staff Report dated September 27, 2011 from the Town Manager/Planner.

Town Manager Jen Coates reported the application is for a conditional use permit to construct a pre-school/school in two phases on five historic residential lots. She explained the applicant must demonstrate that the criteria for a conditional use have been met, and noted parking orientation along the alley must be corrected.

Applicant Gail Jensen explained the facility will be a Montessori pre-school/school and that she previously established this type of school in 1975, operating it until 1997. She explained her daughter has a master's degree in Montessori education and will operate the Ridgway school with her. Approximately forty children and five staff members would attend the facility in Phase 1, with a maximum of fifty children and six staff members in the final phase. She stated the proposed location is ideal because of the close proximity to the library, park, and the large trees on the property provide a great context when working with children outdoors. Ms. Jensen reviewed the site and traffic flow plans noting 145 feet of sidewalk and curbing will be provided for parents to drop students off on Cora Street. The west elevation site plan depicts the structure will have a residential appearance, wrapping around to the north, providing for an enclosed playground.

She further noted parking shown in the site plan would be revised to meet the conditions in the staff report. Construction of the first phase should be completed between January and June of 2012.

Chairperson Scranton opened the public hearing.

Public comments expressed in opposition of the Conditional Use Permit were from Krista and Tim Stewart, Dan Zaugg, and Gary Redmond.

Krista and Tim Stewart expressed concerns regarding possible zone changes from residential to commercial; the possibility of a large empty building should the business fail; traffic congestion; parking; impacts on unknown declining property values and unclear visual delineation between commercial and residential districts.

Dan Zaugg expressed concerns regarding parking, unsafe traffic conditions, visual impacts and unused empty buildings in Town that may also function in the same capacity.

Gary Redmond also expressed concerns regarding traffic congestion, noting there is already considerable congestion from use located in the immediate vicinity.

Public comments expressed in favor of the application were from Larry Faulk and Abigail Seaver.

Larry Faulk favored the Conditional Use Permit sighting increased employment for locals during the construction phases, and that new construction occurring from the core of Town out comports to the Comprehensive Plan.

Abigail Seaver was in favor of the Permit suggesting increased commerce for the inner core and other services in Town, as well as pedestrian mobility to and from school due to the location.

The Chairperson closed the public comment portion of the hearing. There was discussion between the Commission and the applicant. The Commission discussed the impacts on local residents, posting fifteen minute parking signage in the drop off zone for enhanced safety, traffic flow and parking issues, as well as appropriate business growth in the community.

ACTION:

Mayor Pro Tem Clark motioned to approve the Conditional Use Permit for a Pre-School located at 534 Charles Street, Block 33, Lots 6-10 with the conditions that the parking on Cora Street abutting the property be marked fifteen minute parking, and that the conditions in the staff report be met as well. Commissioner Hines seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Mayor Willits excused himself at 6:35 p.m.

POLICY MATTERS

3. Land Use Plan Update

The Town Manager reported the Task Force for the Land Use Plan Update reviewed the revised land use goals, and SE Group is formulating policies. The policies will be submitted to the Task Force next week, and they will review the revised policies and goals with the respective focus groups. Revisions will be submitted back to the planning consultant and a public meeting will be scheduled.

STAFF UPDATE

4. Town Council Updates

Manager Coates reported on actions from the recent meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

5. Minutes from the Regular Meeting of July 26, 2011

ACTION:

Mayor Pro Tem Clark moved with Chairperson Scranton seconding the motion to approve the minutes from July 26, 2011. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Christian
Deputy Clerk