

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
August 10, 2015

The Long Range Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Donnay.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Kevin Donnay, Commissioners, Lori Rubin, Bob Ryan, Mark Cross and Council Liaison Todd Holman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rock Ylimeini, Jim Kalkofen and Cathy Clark

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development (CD) Director Josh Doty and Planner Matthew Gindele

OTHERS: Paul Page and Christine Kahler

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Ryan, second by Commissioner Cross to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2015 meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

Comprehensive Plan Update

CD Director Doty stated that in front of the Commission was the long awaited final draft of the Comprehensive Plan. He reminded the Commission of the last meeting that included the Gateway District conversation. That conversation was continued at the Council level and was approved with the exception of a few items; those items are Numbers 4 and 5 on the Commission's agenda this evening for consideration. CD Director Doty stated there were not a lot of changes to the final plan, mostly clean-up, a table of contents, acknowledgement page, a summary, appendix pages were added and state trails were included. CD Director Doty indicated that this is the working plan moving forward. He asked if there were any questions of staff at this point. Chair Donnay asked if Stantec was still involved in the process. CD Director Doty stated that staff is finalizing the raw data with Stantec at this point. That raw data will allow staff to amend the documents as needed in the future.

Land Use Map Amendment-Potlatch property located south of Mapleton Road and along the westerly boundary of the City of Baxter

CD Director Doty stated that this change came up late in the process. Potlatch had requested a different land use guideline for several of their holdings in the city; City Council approved 3 of the 4 properties. The fourth property is the one that the Commission will be discussing tonight. CD Director Doty placed a map of the area on the screen to review with the Commission. The applicant is requesting the land use change to allow industrial uses in this area however currently it is a very rural area, staff and City Council is in favor of leaving it rural at this time as there are no businesses along Mapleton Road. CD Director Doty indicated that the applicant is present and would like to speak on behalf of Potlatch.

Mr. Paul Page, representing Potlatch approached the Commission. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak and noted that his narrative regarding West Baxter was being handed out. Mr. Page spoke of the 80 acres of mining in that area, he stated it may not be active but it is there and is industrial. Potlatch owns land around the subject property. He noted that Mapleton Road is an urban collector and is slated for heavier use in the future. He gave identity to the properties around the Potlatch property and Mapleton Rd. He gave the history of the development of Timberwood Drive between Potlatch and the City of Baxter. Mr. Page stated that currently there is less than 20% vacant industrial land on the east side of the City. There are a few different options on the west side that have been discussed, they are #1-working with Department of

Employment and Economic Development (DEED) with their shovel ready program by investing in more planning and environmental review, #2-being shovel ready on all property north of Mapleton Road and #3-if guided right, is making a shovel ready project for all industrial zone land north of Mapleton Road. They are hearing this would open up a different category for site selection with nationwide exposure and there are technology companies looking for relatively rural sites that are safe, secure, electricity is stable and temperatures are cooler. He stated that is what Potlatch is doing/looking at behind the scenes with marketing. Mr. Page compared Alexandria, MN to the Baxter location and made some comparisons in how they have achieved some successful projects. Mr. Page stated that both parties will have to work together to make this work. He then reviewed the topography of the land with the Commission.

Chair Donnay stated that he was surprised the ACUB buffer wasn't brought up, Mr. Page indicated that it hasn't been brought up as a concern at this point.

Chair Donnay asked CD Director Doty if the Council is looking for a recommendation on this item. CD Director Doty stated that Council would like a recommendation, being it came up late in the process, the land use change from residential to industrial. CD Director Doty stated that City Council asked that this item be placed on the agenda for review by this Commission.

Chair Donnay asked what constitutes "shovel ready", Mr. Page stated that it means the site doesn't have any major hurdles to overcome in order to build on that site. There is a list that DEED maintains on their website that companies can look at for sites that are shovel ready.

Chair Donnay asked if staff had received the information in the applicant's narrative prior to the recommendation made in the staff report. CD Director Doty indicated that he did not have this information prior to the staff report and the report was based on the industrial zoning request.

Commissioner Cross asked for the current location of the lift station. Mr. Page indicated where the lift station and grading were located on the map.

MOTION by Commissioner Ryan, second by Commissioner Cross to agree with staff's recommendation in the staff report to leave the 240 acres south of Mapleton Road as rural residential, as indicated in the current land use plan.

Chair Donnay asked for discussion. Cross stated that if there were utilities on Mapleton Road then that may lead him in another direction, but at this point he can't see anything other than residential.

Motion carried unanimously.

CD Director Doty indicated that this would most likely be on the August 18, 2015, City Council agenda. Mr. Page asked if he could receive further feedback on what made the Commission vote as they did. Commissioner Ryan stated that if Mr. Page would have approached ACUB and had sound backing that may have changed things as well as he pitched the technology companies, however there is not reliable power out there and back-up power would be very expensive. Commissioner Ryan stated that he has been on Commissions a long time and people come in with great ideas and the Commission rezones a parcel and the outcome is not what was originally proposed. Mr. Page stated that he does not understand what risk the City would have. Commissioner Ryan stated that the infrastructure is not in place and that would potentially put the City at risk for the cost of the infrastructure being the land use was guided that way in the plan.

Comprehensive Plan Goal/Policy Amendment-Private multi-purpose community center use

CD Director Doty stated that in the packet is proposed language to add a community center use in Chapter 2 of the comprehensive plan. Adding this language would help support grant funding for a project of this type. Miss. Christine Kahler has been working on this for some time, it did come up late in the process, however there are several different agencies that could help get this project off the ground if there is verbiage in the comprehensive plan showing the City supports this type of project. CD Director Doty read the language to the Commission and indicated that the word “private” was not a word the applicant wished to have in there, however, the wording could be viewed differently by others if it doesn’t say “private”. The concern is that the City doesn’t want someone to come in and say “why hasn’t Baxter built the community center yet”. That is the reason for “private”, so it is not misunderstood or expected at a later date.

MOTION by Commissioner Ryan, second by Commissioner Cross to approve staff’s recommendation to amend Chapter 2-Managing Growth and Development, Goal 3 of the comprehensive plan by adding a fourth policy regarding a private community center use to read “The City supports the concept of a multi-purpose private community center use.”

Commissioner Rubin asked if the word “private” would affect the grant approval process. Miss Kahler stated that by omitting the word “private” it could open more doors/funding for the project. Chair Donnay stated that he has been involved in grants, public and private support is important. Commissioner Rubin stated that the word “concept” says you are not obligating yourself/City to build the community center as is a conceptual plan. Commissioner Cross stated that maybe it does need to say a private or joint funded concept and suggested the following verbiage: “The City supports the concept of a multi-purpose community center use whether it be public, private or a combination thereof.”

Chair Donnay asked if there is a revised motion with additional language. Commissioner Ryan stated that he will amend his motion but does agree with CD Director Doty that the City cannot afford to run a community center. He stated that building one is cheap but maintaining/running it is expensive, such as the Hallet Center that is barely staying open.

MOTION by Commissioner Ryan, second by Commissioner Cross to amend staff’s recommendation of amending Chapter 2-Managing Growth and Development, Goal 3 of the comprehensive plan to include the amended language regarding a private community center use to read, “The City supports the concept of a multi-purpose community center use whether it be public, private or a combination thereof”. Motion carried unanimously.

Review of Long Range Planning Commission Duties-Post Comprehensive Plan Update

Chair Donnay noted the policy in the packet and asked CD Director Doty to explain the policy. CD Director Doty explained that several areas of the zoning ordinance in the past couple of years. He explained that the Commission was reinstated in 2013 when the comprehensive plan was in need of a revision. CD Director Doty stated that now that the comprehensive plan is nearing completion it’s time to review other Commission duties. The Commission is needed to review rezoning of properties, amendments to land use or text in the comprehensive plan and implementations. Chair Donnay thanked CD Director Doty for the explanation of moving forward.

Council Liaison Holman stated that he just wanted to add that this Commission was made up of each Commission to keep it diverse and it has worked. Chair Donnay agreed and thanked everyone involved.

Other Business

The next meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Holman, second by Commissioner Cross to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Approved By:

Chair Kevin Donnay

Submitted By:

Shanna Newman
CD Administrative Assistant