



TOWN OF BEAUX ARTS VILLAGE

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

January 21, 2016

Dix

Present: Commissioners Paula Dix, Jan Johnston, Hans Juhle, Jeff Kendall and Chairperson Bennet Yen

Excused: None

Staff: Planner Mona Green, Deputy Clerk Angela Kulp.

Guests: Water District Supervisor Bob Durr

Commissioner Kendall called the meeting to order at 7:08pm.

MINUTES: Commissioner Kendall moved to approve the November 15, 2015 minutes as written. Commissioner Dix seconded. Vote: 5 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

New Commissioner – The Planning Commission welcomed its newest Commissioner, Hans Juhle, as confirmed by the Town Council at their January meeting.

New Chairperson and By-Laws – Deputy Clerk Kulp reminded the Commissioners that since outgoing Commissioner Jochums was the Chairperson, a new Chairperson was needed. She distributed copies of the current By-Laws, in case it would impact their Chairperson choice, or in case they wanted to make any changes to the 2011 By-Laws. Commissioner Dix suggested they take the next month to read the By-Laws and wait on any potential changes to them, and the Commission agreed. Commissioner Johnston commented on her appreciation for Commissioner Dix's hard work and extra time spent on the CLG. So as not to overwhelm Commissioner Dix, and due to the Chairperson's extra required responsibilities, she nominated Commissioner Yen. Commissioner Yen accepted, but noted Commissioner Dix's recent work has demonstrated her leadership capabilities and nominated Commissioner Dix for the role of Chairperson as well. She also accepted, and asked the matter be resolved by a ballot vote. Deputy Clerk Kulp collected the Commissioner's ballot votes, which Planner Green tallied and announced, Bennet Yen as the new Chairperson with a vote of 3-2.

Meeting Calendar – Deputy Clerk Kulp distributed a draft of the 2016 Meeting Calendar. The Commissioners agreed February's meeting needed to move out a week to secure a quorum, and promised to review their work travel schedules and advise Ms. Kulp of any changes needed.

Open Government Training – Deputy Clerk Kulp reminded Commissioners Juhle and Kendall of the Open Government Training requirement they must complete soon (Juhle as new, Kendall as past due) Planner Green explained the requirement in detail for them.

REPORTS: There were no reports at this time.

OLD BUSINESS: Zoning Code

Commissioner Johnston introduced special guest Water District Supervisor Bob Durr. Out of respect for Mr. Durr's schedule, the Commission agreed to hear his comments first before moving onto other business. Mr. Durr is a lifelong villager, and runs the residential Luxury Homes division for Burnstead Construction and Development. He explained how he thought this experience has given him a unique perspective on our Zoning code. Commissioner Johnston, an architect, wondered if bringing down the height requirement in Beaux Arts from 30 feet to 25 feet might be a good place to start to keep structures smaller. She also had examples of residential structures she thought the village would not want. Mr. Durr explained that 25 feet in height limits a structure to one story, or a two story with a flat roof. He continued that rather than focusing on what the zoning should prohibit, he felt focusing on what the zoning should achieve would be more constructive.

Mr. Durr said one way to address what a jurisdiction is trying to achieve would be to define examples of what is good architecture, as he thought was evidenced by examples of his development work on Harrison Street in the Issaquah Highlands. He explained while developments begin from the ground up, in this case focused on encouraging specific architectural features, an Architectural Review Board and a variety of architectural styles, it does not avoid contention but does minimize it. He contrasted this new neighborhood to our older, existing town.

Mr. Durr explained another way to address what a jurisdiction is trying to achieve would be to have a theme and encourage just one type of architectural style, like Leavenworth has done. However, he noted that after the fact, incentives would be needed for meeting criteria that drive or encourage the end result, and he gave several examples of architectural features and incentives that could be used and would work well here. Commissioners agreed that Beaux Arts is known for a century of different architectural styles, so a Craftsman theme for example was great for the beach and the roads as the original structures are, but should not be required for new structures or it would detract from our uniqueness of that variety, over time.

Mr. Durr suggested establishing standards first of what we do want to achieve, and then figuring out how to incentivize the code to encourage those standards. Planner Green suggested enforcing or tweaking previous materials allowed, and reminded the Commission the zoning code must define voluntary measures, and be respectful of property owner rights.

Discussion ensued, with Commissioner Juhle wondering if there are enough incentives we could ever have to prevent what we don't want. Commissioner Kendall wondered if a percentage of lot coverage should be changed. Planner Green offered that a sliding scale of percentage for lot coverage allowing more GFAR for meeting the majority of encouraged suggestions based on lot size, would be one way to incentivize, and noted

the only real incentive is to allow ways to maximize square footage. Chairperson Yen inquired if lowering or restricting percentages might encourage a nicer home. Commissioner Johnston suggested façade modulation of small architectural features and elements would be a great place to start but we must be careful with subjective requirements.

Chairperson Yen summarized that the Commissioners should return to February's meeting each with a wish list of standards to discuss further. Commissioner Johnston inquired about reviewing a copy of zoning criteria for Mr. Durr's Harrison Street project she thought would be helpful and Deputy Clerk Kulp promised to get the Commissioners copies soon. Planner Green reminded the Commissioners to also revisit the MRSC Design Review Guidelines for an Architectural Review Board, she thought would be helpful.

OLD BUSINESS: Historic Preservation- Certified Local Governments (CLG's)

Now getting short on time, Deputy Clerk Kulp noted the importance of getting resident questions answered soon from responses to the CLG letter sent out by the Commission to residents in November. Being the most knowledgeable about the CLG program, Commissioner Dix agreed to work on a draft of consolidating all answers needed along with the recent answers from DAHP (Dept. of Archeology and Historic Preservation). She agreed to bring the document for review to the February meeting.

Commissioner Juhle expressed his concerns about the CLG program not only as a new commissioner, but as an owner of a centennial home, and as a resident that replied in great detail to the CLG letter, with concerns were both emotional and practical. He worried any regulation may lead to limits of property rights and feared it may become a slippery slope of how far limits might go. Unfamiliar with the CLG specifically, he wondered if that program was the best way to proceed. The Commission thanked Commissioner Juhle for his comments. Commissioner Dix also reminded him that there were many options to consider for voluntary historic preservation, but the CLG program appears to be a win-win for both the town and property owners. She noted that resident education is a big component of anything adopted here.

NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business at this time.

Adjourn: Chairperson Yen moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Johnston seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:28pm. Vote: 5 For, 0 Against. Motion carried.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be at Commissioner Kendall's home on Thursday, February 25, 2016, 7:00pm, one week later than usual to accommodate a quorum.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Kulp, Deputy Town Clerk