

Planning & Zoning Minutes

November 19, 2015



CITY OF
REXBURG
America's Family Community

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Commissioners Attending:

Thaine Robinson-Chairman
Jedd Walker Mark Rudd
Steve Oakey Bruce Sutherland
Rory Kunz Melanie Davenport
Tisha Flora Richard Smith

City Staff and Others:

Mayor Richard Woodland
Brad Wolfe- City Council Liaison
Val Christensen- Community Development Director
Porter Wilkins – Community Development Intern
Elaine McFerrin – P&Z Coordinator

Chairman Thaine Robinson opened the meeting at 7:02 pm. He welcomed those in attendance.

Presentation:

1. Recognition of Service for P&Z Commissioner Cory Sorensen

Mayor Richard Woodland presented Cory Sorensen with a plaque in recognition of his service to the City of Rexburg. He has been a friend since Mayor Woodland became mayor. The Mayor appreciates the work he has done on the Commission. He is a good man who has given his time and served the City well.

Cory Sorensen thanked everyone.

Welcome:

1. Newly Appointed P&Z Commissioner Richard Smith

Chairman Robinson and the **Mayor** welcomed Richard Smith to the Commission.

Richard Smith stated he has lived in Rexburg almost all his life. He served on the P&Z Commission in the past, for seven years. It is good to be here.

The Mayor excused himself because of another commitment.

Chairman Robinson congratulated Tisha Flora who was just elected to the City Council.

Roll Call of Planning and Zoning Commissioners:

Attending: Steve Oakey, Rory Kunz, Richard Smith, Mark Rudd, Bruce Sutherland, Thaine Robinson, Jedd Walker, Tisha Flora, and Melanie Davenport.

Gil Shirley was excused.

Minutes:

1. Planning and Zoning meeting – October 15, 2015

Steve Oakey motioned to approve the Planning & Zoning minutes of October 15, 2015. **Jedd Walker** seconded the motion.

Tisha Flora, Rory Kunz, and Bruce Sutherland abstained for having not been present; Richard Smith was not yet on the Commission. None opposed. **Motion carried.**

Public Hearings: None

Unfinished/Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Sweetwater Housing Planned Unit Development (PUD) –Final Master Plan/Final Plat - Approximately 902 Everett Place

Kurt Roland, Eagle Rock Engineering, 1331 Fremont Ave., Idaho Falls, representing the developer. They are proposing twelve buildings that are 4-plexes. Nine of the buildings are completed. They are very nice looking 4-plexes. The developers want to sell the buildings individually instead of as just one entire property. The PUD preliminary master plan/preliminary plat was before the Commission several months ago. The applicant is asking for Final Master Plan/ Final Plat approval of the Sweetwater Housing PUD.

The plat was shown on the overhead screen.

Tisha Flora asked for clarification of the swell that is near to the roadway on the subject property. Mr. Roland stated it is a storm retention pond that will be landscaped.

Community Development Director Val Christensen stated the PUD Preliminary Master Plan/Preliminary Plat for Sweetwater Housing came before the P&Z Commission and City Council a few months ago and was approved. The Rexburg Development Code requires the applicant to go through the meetings again for final plat approval. The applicant changed to a different use. The development was already in process and met all requirements as a stand-alone project. The PUD is needed in order to sell the buildings individually as the owner wishes. The project did not have the necessary setbacks to sell the buildings separately. That is why a PUD was necessary. It was a technicality.

Tisha Flora agreed that the owners should be able to sell the buildings individually. It is a nice development. The only problem she sees is that it is a kind of precedent. She wondered if there was any way to prevent something like this from happening again. She realizes this is being done because of a technicality.

Val Christensen said it comes back to the City. It would not have changed the project; it only would change how the buildings are sold. If it is not something that is wanted, the Development Code may need to be examined, or the P&Z Commission and City Council could stop it from going forward.

Richard Smith said the PUD ordinance, when it was originally passed, never contemplated this type of project. What changes in the ordinance would be suggested?

Val Christensen said if a project needs something, those issues could be addressed – such as more green space, more space between buildings, buildings not in a row, etc. – and added to the Development Code.

In this case, the applicant wanted to sell the buildings separately after the project had already begun. The City Attorney suggested the PUD process would allow them to do that.

If someone wants to explore the possibilities in the future, it is a question of whether or not staff should send them forward.

Kurt Roland said the landscape plan has been put in place as was requested during the preliminary process. He clarified that the project has more green space than is required.

Melanie Davenport thought the landscaping issue was addressed very well. She noted for the record that the developer went the extra effort for the landscaping.

Kurt Roland stated that a landscaping architect was hired for the project.

Chairman Robinson said the issue before the Commission is whether the Commission should recommend to City Council to approve the Sweetwater Housing Final Master Plan/Final Plat.

Rory Kunz motioned to recommend to the City Council approval of the Final Master Plan/Final Plat for the Sweetwater Housing Planned Unit Development (PUD). **Mark Rudd** seconded the motion.

None opposed. **Motion carried.**

2. Alternative Housing Design Standards - Discussion

Chairman Robinson said this discussion item was requested by Steve Oakey at the last P&Z meeting.

Steve Oakey stated there is a movement in the country that is trying to get ahead of building costs which are skyrocketing in many cities. One of the big causes is building construction regulation. In several big metropolitan areas across the country, the stronger the planning and the regulations, the more the additional cost to construction of homes and businesses.

There is a movement afoot attempting to downsize – micro and mini homes, shipping container homes, and other types of alternatives that people are experimenting with. Rather than waiting for someone to come and ask, Rexburg should be prepared. In a rezone several months ago, applicant Jared Sommer had an old building on his property that some citizens had wanted to demolish. It is quite a valuable building and could be put to a good use.

There are multiple examples of structures or building materials in Rexburg. The City should create some flexibility.

Val Christensen stated there is a really gray area on what would be allowed, without more clarification. It is not a cut and dried issue. The City has not addressed these kinds of structures. The issue is being looked at across the state and in the state legislature. One type being examined is the Park Model, which is a kind of small trailer. The shipping container is also being looked at. The Park Model does not meet manufactured home requirements at this time as per the state. There are building codes on one end; the manufactured home regulations on the other end have a clear set of rules.

Chairman Robinson said the Commission would have to look at what zones would allow these kinds of alternative housing. He has spoken with a couple financial institutions; because these structures are non-traditional types of structures, some institutions are unwilling to lend. There is also the issue of life safety.

Rory Kunz said most of these alternative buildings are brought in as an existing structure and converted to a home.

Steve Oakey stated there are two homes made out of pressed straw in Plano. He is not only talking about housing alternatives and structures; he is also talking about development projects.

A PUD is a really good model that allows for greater opportunity to fashion a community. He is trying to be creative and think of housing options that allow a wide variety for a wide economic base.

Chairman Robinson asked if there is a community close to Rexburg that has these types of homes. **Val Christensen** said there are some in Salt Lake. **Steve Oakey** said St George also has these. Val Christensen said another movement toward something such as mini homes is the millennials, who want to spend more of their money on experience rather than on assets. He is not opposed to these ideas; he is just saying Rexburg is not ready for it. He applauds Mr. Oakey for bringing the issue up.

Mr. Christensen stated that as a next step in regard to this discussion, there is the existing city Zoning Task Force committee which could address this issue further.

Steve Oakey thought the PUD could be a springboard for the alternative housing concept. Another zone is not necessary. The PUD lends itself to modification.

Val Christensen agreed that the PUD may be the right vehicle.

There was Commission consensus that the city's Zoning Task Force would be asked to examine the issue of alternative housing. Val Christensen will inform the task force of the Commission's request.

Compliance: None

Non-controversial Items Added to the Agenda: None

Report on Projects: None

Tabled Requests: None

Building Permit Application Report: None

Heads Up:

December 3, and December 17 2015 P & Z meetings:

Chairman Robinson said no items are scheduled for December 3rd, and traditionally, the second meeting in December (December 17th) is not held because of the proximity to the holidays. He proposed that they cancel both meetings, unless there is an urgent issue from the community that comes up that needs the Commission to meet.

Bruce Sutherland motioned that the December 3rd P&Z meeting is cancelled and the December 17th P&Z meeting is cancelled, unless there is an urgent issue that needs the Commission to meet.

Richard Smith seconded the motion. None opposed. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 pm.