

LA VERKIN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 6:00 pm.

City Council Chambers, 111 South Main Street

La Verkin, Utah 84745

Present: Chair Allen Bice; Commissioners: Hugh Howard, Matt Juluson, Sherman Howard, Richard Howard; Staff: Derek Imlay, Fay Reber, and Nancy Cline; Public: Jacob Ruesch, Ben Ruesch, Dalyon Ruesch, and Kevin Smedley.

A. Call to Order: Chair Allen Bice called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given by Sherman Howard.

B. Approval of Agenda:

The motion was made by Commissioner Hugh Howard to approve the agenda, second by Commissioner Matt Juluson. Sherman Howard-yes, Hugh Howard-yes, Richard Howard-yes, Juluson-yes, Bice-yes. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Presentation:

1. Kevin Smedley

Kevin Smedley from Five County will be doing a General Plan for the city of La Verkin. He wants to put together a survey for the community. They will need a committee to put that together. The last update to the General Plan was in 2018-2019. He will be going over policies and outdated information, setting goals for the future, and putting a plan together for the Topside, which currently has one paragraph in the General plan.

D. Reports:

Director of Operations Derek reported that in a previous meeting they discussed the parking ordinance that needs to be updated. He got an example from Michigan they can look at and pull ideas they like for their own parking code. They discussed a holding pond in Cottonwood Hollow to help settle the river water for irrigation. It will give the city cleaning irrigation water and possibly allow 12 months of irrigation. It might be done in the summer next year. The city will be replacing the irrigation lines from citizens backyards to street access. The Water District will loan the city the money to replace the pipeline and be paid back with water from the city. We send about 750-acre feet of water down the river that we do not use.

He attended a meeting for Mayors and City management water administration. This is the worst year for the drought conditions. They have been working on a water shortage contingency plan. It has four stages; stage one they cut your water consumption by 10 %, stage 2 by 20% stage three by 30%, and stage four you're absolutely shutting down that development. Fire Departments won't be flushing their lines. Stage four would kill our economics here. By cutting out all the construction jobs, we have 70% of citizens working in construction. They approved of us being Stage Two, a 20% reduction in output. Golf courses, car washes, commercial, industrial are going to be the ones that are going to take an immediate hit right up front. Residential, they put more towards the back. They said that the grass accounts for 70% of the water usage here. They discussed the grass in parking lot or commercial buildings. All that grass out in front that does nothing for anybody but looks good. You know, they need to start systematically determining how they can get these guys to come on board with their buyback program where if you take the grass out, they give you \$2 or \$3 a square foot. La Verkin is in a good position with our spring water rights and Virgin River rights.

E. Business:

1. Discussion and possible action to recommend approval of the Condominium Conversion for the Fields Development.

Derek explained The Fields would like to go from one owner to separate tax ID numbers for every unit. They have been working with the staff on CC&R's. They include no residential aspect, current zoning and the permitted use. We don't usually get involved with CC&R's, but we wanted to be part of the approval system, so no businesses go in that are not on the permitted use list. Then we will get our parking ordinance updated so we won't run into problems. They have followed all the provisions the city requires.

Commissioner Hugh Howard agreed there is nothing they can do to stop it, and they are very nice facilities. However, he thought they should be in an industrial park. He disagreed that they won't eventually become residential, but for now they are commercial. He wanted to know how they would even police the units to make sure they are being run commercially and not residential. He was concerned that if they granted individual tax ID numbers then instead of dealing with one owner they are dealing with thirty five. He pointed out they wanted La Verkin to develop into a walkable city and have nice businesses. Now with this and the storage across the street it is going to turn into an industrial park.

Derek asked how they can stop them when he has upheld their zoning and code requirements. He suggested they needed to change the ordinance, zoning, and permitted use so they can make a industrial park because as it is commercial and industrial are the same.

Commissioner Juluson added that he talked to the staff, and the owner knows that he is limited to what type of business can go in. He thinks individual tax IDs are better.

Commissioner Bice commented it would be better served by having individual owners there. They'll have more interest in having their neighbors be what is permitted. Renters don't seem to be invested as much.

Commissioner Richard Howard asked if it would have an HOA. He understands they have met all the requirements, but he was hoping for a walkable downtown and is concerned it will be an industrial park. His concern is who will police it without an HOA. He has the same concerns about having thirty-five owners instead of one. He can see the benefit but also the possibility of trouble with owners doing things they shouldn't.

Derek explained he has the best interest of La Verkin at heart. He really does want what is best, but he has to do what the ordinances allow. If the individual is obeying the permitted uses, how do they refuse them? It's their property and they are not breaking any code. He encouraged them to change the ordinances, so they don't have to let industrial businesses on the main street. He pointed out that they would have to have a business license, and they can go inspect those businesses before they give their business license every year.

Commissioner Richard Howard commented how St. George downtown has changed in a remarkable way. Its walkable and looks inviting with the living space above the businesses. He doesn't want to drive down La Verkin and think it's an industrial park.

Derek commented that he thought they had done a great job with the architectural standards of his buildings. He wants to meet with other city planners to discuss how La Verkin can do the mixed use and have the tax base of retail business with the residential mixed in. He pointed out the cities around them have been able to start doing the mixed use. He agrees that the primary purpose needs to be commercial and retail tax base.

Commissioner Bice pointed out with their limited property for commercial that they cannot have an industrial zone. Unless the Topside has zoning for it. He does believe people have the right to do what they want with their property as long as it follows the zone and codes for the city.

Commissioner Sherman Howard commented that he likes the discussion that has occurred, and change is hard, but he thought tonight's questions and perspectives have helped.

Commissioner Richard Howard quoted a builder that said, "make it look good" He thought the property was very nice looking and hopes the future owners of the buildings will keep it up.

The motion was made by Commissioner Matt Juluson to approve the Condominium Conversion for the Fields Development, second by Commissioner Bice. Sherman Howard-yes, Hugh Howard-no, Richard Howard-no, Juluson-yes, Bice-yes. The motion passed.

2. Discussion and possible action to recommend approval for the Ruesch Precise plan. A development on SR-9, 254 South State Street.

Derek pointed out this is the first time they have done the architectural standards application. He sent them the check list and monitored his plans. He thinks it will be nice looking building.

Jacob Ruesch explained their plans for their property. They will be updating the existing building into a hotel with 13 rooms. They will also build a new building which will be two stories with an additional 14 rooms. They believe with the Hot Springs coming in that they will benefit from it. They are looking for approval of their architectural standards for both buildings. They plan on the same color pallet as the Dwellings. They will have a parking lot for both hotels to use and plan on a retail store in the new building. He showed them the floor plan for the converted building. They will be taking it down to the studs.

Commissioner Richard Howard was concerned it would look like the Zions Inn which is not appealing at all.

Jacob assured them the new and old buildings would be of the same design and look appealing.

Commissioner Richard Howard asked about a stop light being put at that intersection.

Derek answered that there have been two different traffic studies done and they still don't qualify for a light. Even though the thorough traffic is 250,000 to 350,000 people a year, even though most of those people are going to be ones that are already passing through to Zion. That's still quite a bit of traffic on that one little corner that was already horrible before any of this development. But it would take the city almost a million dollars a light, so for the four lights, it costs us \$4 million to put it in if we wanted to do it ourselves.

Commissioner Bice likes the design.

Commissioner Sherman Howard asked about the parking lot.

Derek explained that the state is only allowing them one entrance onto SR-9. He asked Ben to explain the parking lot.

Ben Ruesch explained they used storm bricks that are wrapped in felt then you bury them under the parking lot. The water drains into it and evaporates. You don't have to have a big drainage spot on the land.

The motion was made by Commissioner Hugh Howard to approve the Ruesch Precise plan. A development on SR-9, 254 South State Street , second by Commissioner Sherman Howard-yes, Hugh Howard-yes, Richard Howard-yes, Juluson-yes, Bice-yes. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn:

The motion was made by Commissioner Hugh Howard to adjourn, second by Commissioner Sherman Howard. Hugh Howard-yes, Bice-yes, Spendlove-yes, Juluson-yes, Sherman Howard-yes. The motion was carried unanimously at 7:10 pm.

11 Jun 25

Date Approved

Allen Bice

Planning Commission Chair