Town of Bluff

Planning and Zoning Commission

Minutes for September 12, 2019 at 7:00 pm
at the Bluff Community Center
190 North 3rd East, Bluff, Utah 84512
APPROVED

7:00 Roll Call
Commission: Sarah Burak, Malyssa Egge, Michael Haviken, Robin Cantrell, and Amanda Podmore.
Advisory Council: Deborah Westfall

Approval of meeting minutes from meeting 9/5 - Haviken motions to approve minutes from 9/5, Cantrell seconds. Motions passes with 4 yays, Egge abstains.

Public Citizens to Be Heard - Marcia Hadenfeldt said thank you for the good work and recommended not putting times on the agenda.

New Business

1. Review building permits and site plan applications - Podmore gave an update that the Town Council was notified by the County on Thursday, September 5th that it received a commercial building permit for Bluff and approved it without first sending it to the Town, as is required in the Interlocal Agreement. The Town's lawyer is working with the county lawyers to resolve the issue.

2. Dark Sky preservation presentation by Burak. The first part of her presentation was the "why" of dark skies and the second part was the "what."Burak included photos that show the unshielded glare of the town. Burak showed how addressing light pollution can easier than addressing other types of pollution. She further explained several definitions. Light trespass, which is light that crosses boundaries or property lines, will be a big issue for Bluff to address. Cluttering is when too many lights are used in a space. Sky glow is the atmosphere being lit by the town itself. The reasons to promote dark skies include energy (money) savings, property values, astro-tourism, preventing circadian disruption, safety, natural ecosystems and health of species like birds, and preserving rural character. Burak demonstrated how glare can cause safety hazards. Astro-tourism can translate into Utah jobs, increased night stays, additional meals for stays, and increased off-season activity. One of the big leaders in astro-tourism is Bryce National Park, where visitation has "astronomically" increased. Burak suggested it could create an additional winter festival for Bluff. Ten towns and parks in Utah have a dark sky designation and at least 10 other parks are seeking a dark sky designation.

   Kyna Mallery has worked in dark skies and astronomy. She said winter tourism at Bluff's elevation is too cold.

The prerequisites for becoming a dark sky town include developing a vision and working with stakeholders and decision-makers. Stakeholders include business owners, residents, community groups, elected officials, and inter-departments. Ordinances should be clear, concise, easy to administer and easy to enforce.

How to light appropriately: consider the three-legged stool of shielding, lighting levels, and colors. Direct artificial light is light seen directly from a lightbulb or light reflected off a surface intended to reflect it. Direct artificial light is not any piece that is not reflecting, refracting or diffusing the light.

Burak shared graphics explaining unshielded and shielded lights. Fully shielded is also known as full-cut off. For colors, you want to stay away from whites and blues, that are more detrimental to wildlife and circadian rhythms. Up to 3,000K is the safe range. Burak shared an example of good neighborhood lighting, which is not in the draft ordinance but still important to consider.

Lights under an eave, porch or gas station canopy are not considered shielded unless they are recessed. The draft ordinances has limits for lumens for residential and commercial properties. The ordinance also has a clause about turning off lights when a business is closed. Burak explained how parking lots should be lit appropriately, from their businesses, and not spilling onto adjacent properties. Recreation Activity Areas should also consider dark skies. Burak shared examples of lit signs.

Exemptions include holiday lighting, motion sensor lights, safety or security lighting, temporary lighting, tower lighting (FAA), traffic control devices, and flags. Jared Barrett asked whether a personal flag can be lit. Compliance questions to address include the time for compliance, building expansion triggering compliance. Burak said it was also important to praise those who help towns comply.

3. Questions about Dark Sky preservation - Westfall asked if electric power companies can be considered stakeholders. She mentioned a yellow light that shines onto the cliffs that would need to be replaced by Rocky Mountain Power with a cherry-picker. She was hopeful that RMP would be willing to support the town's efforts and provide assistance. Marcia Hadenfeldt and Linda Sosa suggested talking to Debra Dull of Rocky Mountain Power, who has offered her support. Mallery said mercury lights in town are problematic because they emit in multispectrum. She said it is expensive to replace mercury lights, like are in the state yards. Mallery said dark sky towns that are serious about things like telescopes, like Flagstaff, require yellow sodium lights.
4. Discussion of the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance - The Commission went through the draft ordinance and suggested changes. The Commission added a lumens definition. The Commission decided to think on a compliance timeline and discussed a range of 1-3 years. The Commission discussed enforcement and they will look into what other towns do. Podmore suggested that a big mechanism of enforcement will be social pressure. Burak will think about whether to use the term "full cut off" or "fully shielded." The Commission discussed the exemptions to full cutoff fixtures, which primarily applies to things like porch lights. Jared Barrett had a question about the exemption and whether a, b, and c all had to be met. The Commission will research other examples of the total

amount of outdoor lighting, in lumens, per acre. The Commission will also think about whether motion-sensor lights would be included in that total amount of lighting.

5. Additional Items to be added to the next meeting's agenda - Finish discussion of ordinance, community discussion on dark skies, discussion of two-page summary of zoning ordinance. The meeting on the 26th will discuss future ordinances like animals.

   Podmore will post latest edition of the draft dark skies ordinance on the town website.

   Barrett gave a public comment, saying that his business values dark skies and spent a lot of money to make sure their light is respectful. He said that the enforcement piece is essential to bringing the community together, instead of tearing it apart. Haviken and Cantrell agreed. A committee may be better than having one enforcement individual who could become hated by the town. He said there is a significant cost to businesses. Barrett said dark-sky compliant lights can be more expensive because of the need for shielding. Barrett spent about $60,000 on his outdoor fixtures alone, which he approximated were twice the cost of noncompliant fixtures. Cantrell asked if Barrett would be willing to share his fixture sources with the community. He suggested searching for "dark sky" and "shielded."

8:30 Adjourn - Haviken motions to adjourn, Cantrell second. Motion passes unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:39.