

Boulder Town
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2022

Commission quorum: Matt Cochran, Elena Hughes, Tina Karlsson, John Veranth and Shelley Price-Gipson (alt). Colleen Thompson was excused. Also present: Planning Commission Clerk Peg Smith.

Members of the public: Tessa Barkan, Ashley Coombs, Jeanne Zeigler, Donna Owen, Pete Benson, Nancy Tosta, Jen Bach, Mark Nelson, Bill and Judith Geil, Stephanie Love, Susan Kelly, Dan Pence and Jennifer Geerlings.

Matt called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He moved to approve the July agenda; Tina seconded; no discussion; all approved. Matt moved to approve the June minutes; Tina seconded. No discussion; all approved.

Matt started discussion on preparatory information for conducting a community housing forum.

He said the General Plan lays out in its vision statement reference to affordable housing amenable to small scale enterprises and families. John noted that any action the Planning Commission takes likely creates winners and losers. Current land policy is inconsistent with our stated goals, but what are the unintended consequences of any actions we take? Matt agreed that current policy will lead toward encouraging second home ownership and the infilling the ag areas. He also said any discussion of affordable housing needs to be kept in scale. "We're not talking about tons of housing."

The Commission discussed how current zoning and sensitive lands ordinances encourage chopping level, open, agricultural areas into five-acre lots. Plus, there are different types of housing to be considered. They discussed surveying the community to help determine how much affordable housing is needed. This would include housing for seasonal workers as well as affordable options for community members such as our teachers, firefighters, service providers, etc. who work here but can't find a place to live.

Veranth Housing Memo

Discussion moved to John's housing memo: Moderate income housing is usually defined as less than 80 percent of median income which in Garfield County is less than \$330,000 or \$600 to \$1000/mo rent. Having anything lower priced than "moderate-income" housing in Boulder would likely require some sort of outside funding

Also, how do we or do we create higher density or open space development with deed restrictions, to keep ownership local? It would be valuable for the Planning Commission to present a variety of research options to the public.

Tina had the 2018 housing group's report, which provided different examples of using clustering to provide housing as well as make an affordable development economically feasible. Fourplexes can be designed to look like a single residence but provide multiple dwellings.

Matt wondered about establishing performance standards for housing; some zones might be more appropriate than others for certain types of housing. He also noted the number of vacant dwellings in Boulder: in 2019, there are 238 registered residences here, of which 44 percent were uninhabited full-time. We should look at incentives for making use of the housing that's already here, he said.

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John suggested locating resources who can present information about actual projects, such as those in Tropic and Escalante. What is possible? And what concerns do residents have? We'll need to be able to show people that there are options that would fit in Boulder.

Matt summarized the highlights so far: develop performance standards; funding options; resident (or nearby) experts; incentives for using existing dwellings; developing density, clustering, deed restriction options; learn about community land trusts (Tina).

Lee Nellis should be asked to discuss how deed restrictions work as well as examples of successful projects, and what performance standards would look like. John said he preferred the term "locally accessible housing," regarding either rental or ownership.

Veranth White Paper on Fire Protection Options

The Planning Commission discussed John's white paper on fire protection options applicable to land use ordinances. He laid out three options, which included 1) taking no action, 2) short-term action of mandating the 500-foot proximity to a hydrant (and removing the "where feasible" wording, or 3) detailing significant infrastructure affecting road access, water connection and availability, etc.

Matt said Option 3 would make subdivision developments even more costly, possibly eliminating the affordable housing there.

Elena asked about Option 2 and the "feasible" wording. Does this apply only to subdivisions that are required to create streets? John said the question is for the town council is the level of protection (and requirements) the town wants--- how safe do we want to be and what burden do we want to put on developers/homebuilders. There are different levels of protection --- one is an initial attack that allows enough time to enable evacuation and maybe put out a small brush fire; it's another level to extinguish a house fire. Other communities, such as in Wasatch County, provide models for fire provisions that address remote, inhabited areas far removed from regular fire protection.

Pete Benson said the fire code doesn't address lots and hydrants, it refers to buildings. Depending on which paragraph you look at, the Boulder ordinance says 400 feet from a *lot*, not the house. Tina asked if the change would mean Boulder Farmstead is the only source of water/hydrants for fire protection in the town. Are we eliminating all other options, such as a tank or other source of water. Using alternative building materials? John noted the fire protection on Black Boulder Mesa. It provides a tank storage suitable for initial attack on fires. The standard for assessing alternative water sources would need to be developed.

John will be presenting his options at the next Town Council meeting to determine the Council's attitude toward the matter. In summary, he said, any fire protection standard will affect the cost of subdivision development and future construction. Are we requiring connection to BFS or will we allow other options? Will we recognize fire protection within the house and/or construction materials compliant with Wildlands/Urban Interface code? Can we provide development credits for alternate protection means?

Tina wanted to ensure that no formal decision is expected from the TC without hard documentation to provide them. The Planning Commission only needs an indication of their thinking. John will make a presentation at the August Town Council meeting to get their feedback on desired direction regarding fire protection.

Schedule Housing Forum and Identify Organizers

Back to the subject of the Community Housing Forum, the Planning Commission settled on November 17 for the gathering. Matt saw this meeting as a place to introduce the different possible pathways of housing development and get a feel for what the community would support. Ideally, the community will receive initial information on the forum at least a month ahead. John and Tina both offered to work on the coordination effort, assuming assistance from all the Commissioners. John

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said we're not starting from scratch, we're building on ideas brought out 4-5 years ago. He also sees the forum as mostly community education and Planning Commission listening. More geared toward discussing what's possible than drilling into specific ordinance changes.

Matt wants the Planning Commission to next work out the timeline for setting up and preparing for the forum. He asked Commissioners to reach out to people around here for information on real projects or real world knowledge.

Final Public Comments

Peg Smith brought up the community forums conducted in 2017-18; preparation involved several Planning Commission work sessions. The community groups themselves met 2 to 5 times over that winter. Just consider work meetings outside regular Planning Commission time. Also keep in mind that you've been talking about putting off major SD or Zoning Ordinance changes until the conclusions can be drawn from the community forum(s), so this is really pushing things out. The holidays are busy, people travel during the winter. There's never a perfect time. Get started sooner than later with work meetings.

Jennifer Geerlings: Thanks for prioritizing this topic. If we can help, we're happy to participate.

Jen Bach: The documents being discussed, such as the white paper/memo, need to be on the website so we can be aware of the topic. Peg said yes, the Meeting Materials on the website didn't include the Fire memo and it should have been uploaded.

Donna Owen: I'm taking over Deer Ranch SD process. We are having trouble getting things signed off on the application to get it to where the Planning Commission will look at. The process seems chicken and egg.

Review Action Items and Upcoming Business for August 11

Tentative August topics:

- Two possible subdivision preliminary applications: Deer Ranch would also require a public hearing; Fogel/Full app has held their hearing unless significant changes have been made.
- John's report on Town Council Fire Protection discussion
- Lee Nellis: can we get more details on performance standards related to housing development, deed restrictions, other housing projects and funding sources?
- Housing Forum action item report: Everyone's brainstorm of a speaker/expert "dream team" to invite; work on organizing the forum; plan for schedule and objective of work meetings

Matt moved to adjourn, Tina seconded. All voted 'aye.' Matt adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.



(Clerk)

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Approved: 8/11/2022