

MINUTES of the Vernal City PLANNING COMMISSION

Held in the Vernal City Council Chambers – 447 East Main Street, Vernal, Utah, on

May 5, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Glenn Spencer, Vernie Heeney, David Brinkerhoff, Sonja Norton and Eric Olsen.

Excused Members: Troy Allred

Staff Present: Allen Parker, Assistant City Manager; and Roxanne Behunin, Deputy Recorder.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT & APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING: *Sonja Norton moved, seconded by Vernie Heeney, to acknowledge and approve this special meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous vote with Spencer, Heeney, Brinkerhoff, Norton and Olsen voting in favor.*

WELCOME AND DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS: Eric Olsen welcomed everyone present and noted that all member present would be voting members.

DRAFT GENERAL PLAN REVIEW & RECOMMENDATION: Allen Parker explained that Mr. Mark Vlastic, with Landmark Design, will be presenting the final draft of the general plan to both the Planning Commission and City Council tonight during the public hearing which has been scheduled for the City Council meeting. Tonight will be the final chance for the Planning Commission to review the plan and make any adjustments before recommending approval. Eric Olsen asked if the density changes discussed at the last presentation had been incorporated along 500 North and 500 West allowing medium density as a transition. Mark Vlastic stated that those changes have not been made, however, he will go over those suggestions at the end of his presentation tonight and will incorporate any changes into the final document. Allen Parker reminded the Commission that there are two large portions of vacant property that is currently shown as high density, and are in fact zoned R-4 allowing multi-family, high density development. One area is close to the Silver Pines development and the other is next to Escalante Drive. He suggested that the future land use map reduce the density to allow other residential zones to be developed in these areas if desired by the property owner. Sonja Norton clarified if the high density is not changed, the zoning could not be “down zoned.” Allen Parker agreed that the zoning would have to remain R-4, and the chances that the developer will want to change the zoning is slim. Sonja Norton noted that a large portion of the 500 East area has already been built as high density housing. Glen Spencer asked if there are other areas that would allow high density. Mark Vlastic stated that they have calculated how much land is available to meet the needs for next 20 years and there is enough high density.

Eric Olsen asked if the transportation portion of the plan is now compatible with Uintah County’s plan. Allen Parker stated that they have coordinated this plan with the County.

David Brinkerhoff stated that the concern of the community seems to be the availability of green space, parks or walking trails. Sonja Norton stated that there is not a lot of space within the city limits for additional parks, however, there is a lot of space in the County. Mark Vlasic stated that they completed an analysis of the amount of recreation space needed to meet the projected population growth, and a few more acres are needed unless the adjoining County open space is considered. He stated that the plan can be modified to recommend a higher level for parks and green space, but will need to balance the need with the cost. Vernie Heeney agreed that more smaller parks are needed to accommodate neighborhoods. Mark noted that regional and community parks are defined in the plan. One of the overwhelming comment from the public was to preserve the land along Ashley Creek as open space and possibly the City will need to look to the outlying areas to provide recreational services.

After further discussion, the Planning Commission members determined that it would be in the best interest of the City to recommend a change in density in four areas shown by the consultant to meet the 20 year plan. Mark Vlasic stated the economic boom and bust cycle has a major impact on the growth and needs of the community so the general plan will need to be updated more often than other communities.

ADJOURN: There being no further business, *David Brinkerhoff moved to adjourn. Glen Spencer seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.*

The Planning Commission members attended, voiced their comments, and voted to recommend the general plan be adopted with the noted changes during the public hearing commenced during the Vernal City Council meeting held May 5, 2010. Refer to the Vernal City Council minutes of May 5, 2010 for further information.

Eric Olsen, Planning Commission Chair