

# MINUTES of the Vernal City PLANNING COMMISSION

Vernal City Council Chambers - 374 East Main Street, Vernal, Utah

January 8, 2019

7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Joni Crane, Darcy McMickell, Eric Hunting

**Members Excused:** Adam Ray, Jim Linschoten, Samantha Scott

**Alternates Present:** Ben McMickell

**Alternates Excused:** Kimball Glazier

**Staff Present:** Allen Parker, Assistant City Manager; and Gay Lee Jeffs, Administrative Clerk.

**WELCOME AND DESIGNATION OF CHAIR AND MEMBERS:** Chair Joni Crane welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

**CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR ELECTIONS:** Joni Crane opened up the nominations for the 2019 Chair of the Planning Commission. *Eric Hunting nominated Joni Crane. Ben McMickell seconded the motion. Ms. Crane nominated Darcy McMickell. Mr. McMickell nominated Joni Crane. Mr. Hunting moved that nominations cease. Ms. McMickell seconded the motion.* Ms. Crane closed the nominations for the 2019 Chair of the Planning Commission and written ballots were submitted. *Allen Parker read the results and confirmed that Joni Crane will be the 2019 Chair of the Planning Commission.*

Ms. Crane opened up the nominations for the 2019 Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission. *Mr. Hunting nominated Darcy McMickell. Ms. Crane seconded the nomination. Mr. McMickell nominated Jim Linschoten. Mr. Hunting seconded the nomination. Mr. Hunting moved that nominations cease. Mr. McMickell seconded the motion.* Ms. Crane closed the nominations for the 2019 Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission and written ballots were submitted. *Allen Parker read the results and confirmed that Jim Linschoten will be the 2019 Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 11, 2018:** Chair Joni Crane asked if there were any changes to the minutes from December 11, 2018. Eric Hunting asked to change line 321 to read “far east lot as R-2 . . . .” from “far east lot as R-3 . . . .”, *Darcy McMickell moved to approve the minutes of December 11, 2018 with the changes as stated. Eric Hunting seconded the motion. The motion passed with Darcy McMickell, Ben McMickell, Eric Hunting and Joni Crane voting in favor.*

**RECOMMENDATION FOR 2019 MEETING SCHEDULE – RESOLUTION 2019-01:** Allen Parker stated that the resolution that will be presented to the City Council for the 2019 Planning Commission meetings reads exactly the way it did last year. The meetings will be the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Parker suggested that if any changes need to be

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made to the resolution to do so at this time. Eric Hunting asked if special meetings needed to be included in the resolution. Mr. Parker explained that special meetings are addressed in the Planning Commission By-laws and do not need to be included in the resolution. *Eric Hunting moved to send a positive recommendation to the City Council for Resolution 2019-01 as presented. Ben McMickell seconded the motion. The motion passed with Darcy McMickell, Ben McMickell, Eric Hunting and Joni Crane voting in favor.*

**DISCUSSION OF THE GENERAL PLAN:** Allen Parker stated that a hard copy of the General Plan is being printed for each Commissioner to use while working on the General Plan for the next few months. Mr. Parker explained that the first item of the General Plan he would like to address is Appendix E “Affordable Housing”. There is not a lot to talk about outside of a work session at this time. There are updates that are required by State law that need to be addressed in this section. Mr. Parker indicated that he would present the required updates to the Commission at a work session. Ben McMickell stated that there is a lot of talk in the current General Plan about housing and that the city was going to purchase land for housing. Mr. McMickell asked if the City ever followed through and purchase any land for affordable housing within the last ten years. Mr. Parker explained that the City did not purchase any land. The City works in partnership with the Housing Authority and with Uintah Basin Applied Technology College in facilitating housing programs. There have been no critical situations arise from growth that would constitute enforcing that part of the General Plan. There has been sufficient affordable housing stock in the Basin that has not required significant expenditure on the part of the City. It is part of the plan and is something the City can do if growth increases. Eric Hunting asked who applies for the grants that are available. Mr. Parker explained that in some cases the City will apply in others it could be the Housing Authority or the County. It will depend on the grant itself and every grant program is unique. Mr. Hunting asked if the City has a grant writer. Mr. Parker explained that the City does not currently have an exclusive grant writer because of the experience of existing staff and the experience of Quinn Bennion, City Manager. Joni Crane stated that several years ago, during the boom, as a landlord she was approached, in conjunction with other landlords, to form a coalition of landlords for affordable housing. At that time there was a need for affordable housing and the coalition was approached to apply for different grants to help with the housing shortage, but the landlords were not able to make the investment that was required to meet the standards for the grants. The landlords also did not have enough liquid assets at the time to take advantage of the grants. Ms. Crane suggested that the City be prepared for a boom again in the future where the City might have those needs. There might be a future where the City might look at assisting those people who could provide affordable housing with the means or low interest loans. Mr. Parker indicated that he appreciated the information and that he and the City Manager, Quinn Bennion, would discuss the scenario and would watch the market.

The Commission began discussion on Section 7 “Transportation”. Joni Crane mentioned that she had read Section 7 and noticed that the 2010 projects have changed dramatically. What is the relationship between in the City and the Transportation Special Service District (S.S.D.)? Allen Parker explained that the City and the Transportation S.S.D. are neighbors. The Transportation S.S.D. does not incorporate or involve any of the municipalities. It is only active within the unincorporated areas of the Basin. The Transportation S.S.D. has chosen some projects within the City limits, but Vernal City has no one on the board and the City has no

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controlling interest or any say in what projects they complete. The City has a good relationship with the Transportation S.S.D., but it is a relationship without any legal ties. Ms. Crane mentioned that she had worked in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area where the municipalities all had to work together because their projects impacted each other. Is there not a network for the Cities, County and Transportation S.S.D. to work together? Mr. Parker answered that the Transportation S.S.D. does not have a say in the County's or the City's General Plan. The Transportation S.S.D. will do special projects in the County and the City, but there is no planning or administrative component. The planning component of the County's roads, the City's roads and Naples' roads are worked out together amongst the staff. Meetings are held and roads are coordinated between these entities. Mr. Parker explained the handouts in the Commission's packets. The first two pages show the cross sections from the General Plan. Code has not been adapted very effectively to match the General Plan requirements. It is something that will have to be addressed at a later date. These two pages show bike lanes and sidewalks but they do not go into detail about the multi-module usage of the right-of-ways within the City. The third page shows the City's current streets master plan which needs to be readdressed. This page shows principal arterials, minor arterials, and collector roads. They need to be designated so that there can be an understanding of target widths and traffic capacities within the City. Mr. Parker stated that he would produce a metrics and analysis so that the Commission can be effective in addressing the needs of the streets master plan. Mr. Parker explained that another item missing from the streets master plan is the grid system. The General Plan needs to specify some structure and patterns within certain areas of the town so there is connectivity and appropriate block widths. Eric Hunting asked if there would be a way to get a developer to follow suggestions from the City on how the roads should be implemented. Mr. Parker explained that the only way to do so is to make sure it is codified and in the General Plan. Mr. Parker clarified that the lines on the streets master plan outside the incorporated City boundary into the impacted areas of the County reflect what the County requirements are as well.

Allen Parker directed the Commission to the next page, page four, in the packet. This page shows a concept behind a complete street. An incomplete street is only designed to move traffic. It does not allow school kids to move safely and easily on the street. It does not allow cyclists to move safely or easily on the street. In a large urbanized area, it does not allow mass transit. It only moves cars. A complete streets program addresses every mode of transportation or at least allows the City to designate modes of transportation. Certain agencies specify that at least four modes of transportation should be addressed. That is typically bicycle, pedestrian, vehicle and mass transit. A complete street can also accommodate bus stops and rail systems. When thinking about a complete street most people think about active sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, active roadways, safe crosswalks, planning strips, and green spaces. Mr. Parker reminded the Commission that the General Plan is a thirty year plan and at the end of thirty years, the City will not necessarily see any of it implemented if there is no growth or money that goes along with it. The General Plan enables the Council to build the City the way the Council would like to when the opportunity arises. Several examples were given of a complete street. Mr. Parker stated that the majority of users on almost any road are vehicles; there are very few roads that are in any city that the majority of users are pedestrians or cyclists. The most dangerous thing on the road is the vehicle, especially with pedestrians or cyclists. When streets are designed people have to remember what the biggest risk component of a street is as well as what looks the best. Joni Crane recounted her experience in Washington D.C. when she and a committee tried to revitalize

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the roads there and alleviate traffic with different methods for traffic. Mr. Parker discussed one-way roads. Ms. Crane stated that sometimes a City does it without designating one direction of the road and designating that road as a collector road and then as a City begins developing the undeveloped portions or redeveloping old buildings a City can ask that a business provide a back door entrance and provide parking in the rear of the building. It can happen slowly and ends up eventually taking the traffic and the pressure off the main road, but it does not happen all at once. Mr. Parker stated that the City's main street is a road that needs to be discussed. Ms. Crane also suggested parking garages downtown. Darcy McMickell asked if the City's main goal was to improve the surrounding roads. Mr. Parker confirmed that the City's main goal was to improve the surrounding roads that are not governed by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT). Mr. Parker stated that UDOT has a complete street program and the City's main street is governed by UDOT. Ms. McMickell stated that the City might be limited a little by the return on the City's investment. There should be smaller goals like putting in a bike lane where the City can get it or build a sidewalk and so forth. Mr. Parker explained that UDOT will use the City's guidance; if it is in the General Plan, UDOT will try to implement the City's plan. Mr. Parker stated that the General Plan is designed to give the City the tools that the City needs for the incremental components so there is a guide to how it will be implemented and will be consistent throughout the City. It also gives the City the tools in a high growth scenario so that the City can ask developers to do certain things. There was discussion on how portions of the examples displayed might be able to be implemented within Vernal City. Ms. Crane stated that when a City looks at a blank slate road, not a main artery, the City is basically trying to alleviate the main street pressure on a main artery and trying to get the locals on local roads and off of interstates. People will start getting used to moving within their neighborhoods in a different pattern, therefore, it will alleviate the Highway traffic. Ms. Crane explained that the training the Commission is receiving is basically giving a menu with possibilities and things to consider and gives ways to solve problems through roads and transportation. Mr. Parker explained that the reason he was presenting the complete street concept this way with the examples was so the Commission could see the big picture concept of what a complete streets program consists of, not because it will necessarily be done in Vernal City. Ms. McMickell agreed that it is good to have Mr. Parker provide the guidance and the system that will be used to build out the streets and what will be required of a developer which might not be the whole plan, but can give suggestions to them. Mr. Parker stated that a new road would be required to be a complete street road according to the new General Plan that will be put into place. Ms. Crane asked if the City adopts a new complete streets program, what would the burden be for a developer to create a road. Mr. Parker explained that the City would not be able to ask a developer to build more infrastructure than their impact would require. Ms. Crane asked if there was someone within the City streets department that had the knowledge and training for complete streets. Mr. Parker answered that there was no one within the City streets department that had the complete streets knowledge or training. Glade Allred, streets supervisor, has commented that complete streets can create issues for snow plowing and snow storage

Mr. Parker stated that this meeting was intended to be mostly training for the Commission. There will be more discussion in future work sessions.

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**ADJOURN:** There being no further business, *Ben McMickell moved to adjourn. Darcy McMickell seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned.*

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Joni Crane, Planning Commission Chair