

# MINUTES of the Vernal City PLANNING COMMISSION

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

May 12, 2020

7:00 pm

**Members Present:** Samantha Scott, Nick Porter, Darcy McMickell, Troy Allred

**Members Excused:** Jim Linschoten, Joni Crane

**Alternates Present:** Ben McMickell

**Alternates Excused:** Corey Foley

**Staff Present:** Allen Parker, Assistant City Manager; Matt Tate, Building Official; and Gay Lee Jeffs, Administrative Secretary.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM March 10, 2020:** Chair Samantha Scott asked if there were any changes to the minutes from March 10, 2020. There being no corrections, Nick Porter *moved to approve the minutes of March 10, 2020 as presented. Eric Hunting seconded the motion. The motion passed with Darcy McMickell, Troy Allred, Ben McMickell, Samantha Scott and Nick Porter voting in favor.*

**PUBLIC HEARING – REQUEST FOR RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER A MINOR SUBDIVISION REQUEST FROM TYLER AND MARILEE SHINER FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 261 WEST 500 SOUTH, VERNAL, UTAH - ALLEN PARKER:** Allen Parker introduced the request to the Commission. It is located at 261 West 500 South. It is a long narrow lot that extends back down the side of the Recreation District's property between the Recreation District and Marcella Meadows. There is a house on the property right now and the rest of the property is vacant. The proposal is to split the house off of the remaining land with the remaining land becoming a flag lot with the stem down the East side connecting flag lot to the public roadway. The areas of the new proposed lots will be Lot 1 at .8 acres and Lot 2 at 4.2 acres. Lot 1 has the house on it and Lot 2 will become a flag lot. The stem is 24 feet wide that extends out to the road providing the required minimum access to the flag lot. There are no violations of setback requirements. There are a couple of extra easements to allow for irrigation and access to Lot 2 across Lot 1. There are a few existing structures on the remnant lot, none of the structures are impacted by the division of land. The property is the full length of the Marcella Meadows property. Chair Samantha Scott opened the public hearing to receive comment from the public. There was no public comment. Ms. Scott closed the public hearing. Eric Hunting asked about the corrections that were mentioned in the staff report. Mr. Parker explained that he had given the corrections to the surveyor but had not heard back yet. Mr. Parker needs clarification if it is the intent of the applicant to dedicate the portion that extends out into the public road or if it is the intent to retain. There were also some other minor details about the way the plat is put together. Mr. Parker noted that all corrections would be worked out

before it goes to City Council. Samantha Scott asked why the applicant was subdividing the lot. The applicant, Tyler Shiner, 595 South 300 West, Vernal, Utah, explained that originally they were going to keep the land in tack and use the house for short term rental property. When travel was reduced due to Covid 19 and because the housing market is still good, they decided to subdivide the property and sell the house and keep the land. Mr. Shiner stated that the land butts up to his home and he uses the land as a hobby farm. *Darcy McMickell moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to consider a minor subdivision request from Tyler and Marilee Shiner for the property located at 261 west 500 south, Vernal, Utah Nick Porter seconded the motion. The motion passed with Samantha Scott, Eric Hunting, Troy Allred, Ben McMickell, Nick Porter and Darcy McMickell voting in favor.*

**GENERAL PLAN – ALLEN PARKER:** Allen Parker introduced Mike Hansen, from Rural Community Consultants. Mr. Parker stated that most of the remainder of the meeting would be spent on complete streets and how to do them. Concepts also need to be finalized; they need to be attached to certain categories of streets and figure out if there are some special streets like South Vernal Avenue that could use some special treatments that is a little bit different than what is prescribed for all the other categories of streets. Mr. Parker said that the Commission will work on it hard through the last part of May and give recommendations for the City Council to work on for the first part of June and have it closed out by the end of June.

Mike Hansen stated that he needed input from the Commission on a complete street design, on where there would be a priority investment, and update the demographics of the General Plan. The current transportation section of the General Plan is vague and needs to be updated. There will not be enough funds to make every street in town a complete street so think about which streets should be made a complete street. What are the priority areas? The General Plan states that there will be one foot of landscaping, five feet of sidewalk, two and a half of curb and gutter and then for a local road, the drive area, is twenty-one and a half feet with no median, same thing on the other side. Mr. Hansen asked the Commission if they would change anything about the current standards for a local road. Most local roads are neighborhood type of roads, but Vernal City has residential areas right next to commercial areas and those roads could be candidates for complete streets. Mr. Parker explained that most of the City's existing roads are sixty-six feet right-of-ways. Some are wider, most of them are not. The City's General Plan is not trying to change the existing roads it is giving guidance on how to build new roads. A sixty-six feet right-of-way limits what can be done. The right-of-way widths will not necessarily change on the surface streets which are the local roads. Snow storage can become an issue and road shoulders, a lot of times, are used to store the snow in the winter. Mr. Parker continued to say that the City has steered away from planting strips with new roads. Part of the problem is that a lot of the current planting strips in the City are pretty narrow. People do not like to maintain the planting strips and they can end up looking bad. There is a reason for some of the design changes. The mandate is to incorporate all of the complete street concepts into what the City has and what the City is proposing to build in the future. Eric Hunting expressed his concern about the American Disabilities Act (ADA) sidewalk approaches in residential areas and how some are not ADA compliant. Mr. Parker agreed and stated that any future ADA sidewalk approaches will have to be built to the City's standards. The City's Streets Department goes through the city and makes repairs every year to the existing infrastructure. The Federal Government understands that a City cannot make all of the changes at once and gives the City time to make the repairs. Mr. Hansen

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moved on the collector roads from local roads. A collector road is two travel lanes usually with on street parking. Mr. Parker asked Mr. Hansen to show the Commission what the City needs for a complete street. Mr. Hansen said there would be a good sized bike lane, pretty good sized sidewalks, quite a bit of landscaping, two drive lanes with a median and a turning lane. Mr. Hansen suggested staying with twelve feet or larger drive lanes to help with truck traffic. Mr. Parker asked Mr. Hansen to explain why these things make it a complete street. Mr. Hansen explained that to him it is the green spaces and pedestrian spaces, they go together, high speed rail and bus pull outs, lighting would also make it a more complete street. Mr. Parker noted that these things are similar to what is already on Aggie Boulevard and the Main Street extension. Mr. Parker asked the Commission to imagine that in a city block with two long planting strips and at each end of it a turn lane cut out for left turns and in the center a break to be able to make a U turn in the center of a block. Mr. Parker stated that there are a lot of ways to accomplish that scene. It does not necessarily have to have trees in it. It could have a rock treatment in the center instead. One of the concepts that has been discussed for South Vernal Avenue would look like this except there would not be a ten feet planting strip on the outside, there would be a buffer down the center and each one of the centers would have a couple trees and a couple street lights that look like the downtown street lights, just enough to add a decorative component to the center of the street. Then there would be on street parking, bicycle lanes, curb and gutter would be up against the sidewalk, sidewalks would be five feet. Ben McMickell liked the ideas. His only reservation was about the center landscaping; if there was rock it would be fine, but if there were trees it is hard to upkeep. Mr. Parker explained that if it was done on very select streets, it is manageable, but if it is done throughout town it is too much of a work load. The only place that would work currently would be on South Vernal Avenue between Downtown and the Recreation Center. Mr. Parker asked the Commission if that was something they would like to see in Vernal and if so what category of street would they apply it to. There might not be a significant change from the roads that are already established in the City's plan. It might just be adding a pedestrian and lighting component to it. Mr. Parker stated that the entire annexation plan area of the Transportation plan includes a lot of collector roads that are designed to bear a certain amount of traffic, so they will need to be a certain minimum width when they are built. There are a lot of arterial roads that will have to bear a different traffic load at designed capacity so they will have to have a different width to them. Mr. Parker asked how does the City treat them effectively, should there be a center turn lane or not worry about a center turn lane and sacrifice that for more amenities along the curb for pedestrians and bicyclists. Is on street parking more important or is a center turn lane more important? On a limited access parkway there is no reason for a center turn lane. On a residential street, depending on the traffic load, if it is a really busy street, a center turn lane allows you to get out of traffic in order to make a turn. That would make sense on a collector street but not on a surface street within town. Aggie Boulevard is a limited access road. The parkway component is the green space along the edges, in the roundabout, the decorative component with the statue. Mr. Hansen asked how well roundabouts work in the City. There is a way to design a roundabout that is more pedestrian friendly and complete. Mr. Parker suggested it could be considered with the right application and the right location. There was discussion on whether or not to implement center medians. Mr. Parker suggested it should only be considered as a special application for a select location. Troy Allred suggested adding a bicycle lane on some existing roads. Mr. Hansen explained that the City has already adopted a Trails master plan. The Trails master plan will give a lot of information on where to implement pedestrian and bicycle lanes. Mr. Parker stated that there are two different environments in

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which to apply complete streets. One is residential and the other is commercial. A commercial area concept could include bulb outs at the ends of the roads that help define the parking area. In some areas there could be back in diagonal parking. Back in diagonal parking is much safer. Mr. Parker suggested the Mr. Hansen email some commercial area street concept cross sections to each Commission member, for a narrow commercial street and a wider one, then a couple for a residential street, and a specialty one. Then the Commission can decide which concepts they would like for the City. Mr. Parker noted that Mr. Hansen has enough guidance from the Commission to know that the City will not be implementing parking strips or center medians, but the Commission likes street furniture in the commercial areas and maybe some decorative lighting on certain categories of roads. Once the Commission gets the information from Mr. Hansen there could be a week turn around to get back to Mr. Hansen. Mr. Hansen could then get a completed concept that could be presented to the Commission. Mr. Hansen agreed to email the Commission some concepts to explore. Mr. Parker indicated that certain concepts could be considered for more usable bicycle and pedestrian lanes. Mr. Parker reminded the Commission that the General Plan is guidance for the long term. New construction would need to meet the complete street standards within the General Plan. Mr. Hansen said that he would email the ideas by the end of the week.

Mr. Hansen stated that the current General Plan has ten year old census data which is out of date. Mr. Hansen noted that he would like to take the framework of the report, and update and condense the information. Make it tell a story about Vernal City. Mr. Hansen explained the charts on his power point. There was discussion about the property tax base, accommodations economy, population and the complete range of services that Vernal provides to the community. Mr. Hansen noted that Vernal is becoming more Urbanized and is a full service community.

Mr. Hansen introduced the Housing component of the General Plan. There was discussion on House and Apartment values and rental fees. The Commission thought the fees that Mr. Hansen showed might be a little inflated.

Mr. Hansen talked about household income. The 2020 Census will not be completed in time to include in the General Plan update at this time, but the update will be kept simple to accommodate any changes or future updates. There was discussion on the median income per household. The Commission thought that it depended on the location and the economy.

Mr. Hansen noted that the United States economy grew by 31% since 1990. Vernal City and the surrounding area grew by 59% since 1990. The growth rate fluctuates up and down quite a bit compared to the State or the Country. Samantha Scott thought the growth fluctuations depended on the oil and gas industry and how well or poorly they do; that there might be a correlation. There was discussion on the growth rate in Vernal City. Mr. Hansen suggested that a story for the plan could be that there is a primary economy and a secondary economy.

Mr. Hansen stated that he would get a draft form of the General Plan to the Commission soon. It will show the original with mark ups and with the changes.

Allen Parker informed the Commission that Joni Crane has resigned due to health issues effective immediately. Commission vacancies will need to be filled.

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Allen Parker informed the Commission that the meeting was being broadcast on You Tube live.

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

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Samantha Scott, Planning Commission Chair