

ROUTT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

APRIL 1, 2021

The regular meeting of the Routt County Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present: Chairman Steve Warnke and Billy Mitzelfeld, Bill Norris, Roberta Marshall, Troy Brookshire, Peter Flint, Greg Jaeger and Linda Miller. Andrew Benjamin was absent. County Commissioners Tim Redmond, Beth Melton and Tim Corrigan were also present. Planning Director Kristy Winser and staff planners Alan Goldich and Chris Brookshire also attended, as did Interim County Manager Mark Collins, and Public Engagement Officer Robin Schepper. Sarah Katherman prepared the minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

MASTER PLAN PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Ms. Winser outlined the goals of the meeting: confirming the conclusions described in the Master Plan Update Outreach Summary and approving the scope of services for the Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional services. She reviewed the outreach process that has been completed thus far and the discussions with Planning Commission that had resulted in the summary document. She noted that the summary document, along with Master Plan Update Overview document and the Phase I Engagement Report would be attached to the RFP.

Ms. Winser presented the Routt County Land Use Story, a cloud-based storymap developed by Planning and GIS staff, with assistance from other County staff members. The storymap includes interactive charts, graphs and maps and contains information about the historical and projected demographics, land use, transportation, water, and community plans in Routt County. She noted that Erin Light of the Division of Water Resources had been consulted regarding the section on water availability. Through the storymap, Ms. Winser offered that the primary goal (preservation of the western rural character of Routt County) and the planning tool of directing new growth to designated growth centers included in the existing Master Plan are still valid. Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners confirmed that conclusion.

Ms. Winser presented the list of 12 topics included in the Outreach Summary identifying areas to focus on in the Master Plan Update. She asked if there were other topics that should be included. County Commissioner Melton asked about resiliency from natural disasters, citing wildfire in particular. Ms. Winser confirmed that this issue is included in the broader topic of climate change. She added that one of the tasks of the consultant would be to determine the best way of referencing existing plans, such as the Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Climate Action Plan, in the Master Plan. County Commissioner Redmond suggested that it might be appropriate to include the issue of a changing/evolving economy. County Commissioner Corrigan offered that economic development is generally not included in a Master Plan, which is specific to land use issues. County Commissioner Melton suggested that this issue will have impacts on transportation, demographics, development patterns, etc. Ms. Winser agreed and offered that how to incorporate the issue of a changing economy into the Master Plan could be a question for the consultant.

Commissioner Kelly offered that grants may become available for transportation improvements and the expansion of broadband. He noted that the availability of broadband will have a significant impact on economic diversification and development as more people are able to work remotely.

Ms. Winser reviewed the proposed RFP. There was consensus on the elements of the RFP from Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. County Commissioner Melton suggested that even if the update of the regulations following the Master Plan is not specifically included in the scope of work for the consultant, it would be appropriate to reference that as the step that will follow. Ms. Winser agreed. Commissioner Marshall said that even if the consultant were not involved in the revision of the regulations, he/she could be very helpful in identifying which regulations need to be updated in the future.

Commissioner Brookshire suggested that the consultant could be helpful in exploring a new form of transfer of development rights (TDR) program to incentivize development in the West of Steamboat Springs Area. Ms. Winser said that developing incentives to direct growth would be discussed with the consultant. County Commissioner Corrigan offered that the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat should be a focus point of the Master Plan.

Ms. Winser reviewed the proposed timeline for the update process, with the target of a May 2022 adoption of the Master Plan.

In response to a question from Chairman Warnke, Ms. Winser said that in addition to publishing the RFP widely, she would be sending it directly to a list of select consultants with whom she is familiar. County Commissioner Redmond asked about the consultant selection committee that would make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. Ms. Winser said that the committee had not yet been formed, but would include representatives of the Board, Planning Commission, Planning staff, and members of different departments. She said the selection process would take approximately 60 days, with the consultant to begin work in late June.

Public Comment

Mr. Ben Beall commended staff on the presentation and the direction of the Master Plan update process. He suggested that the goals of the Master Plan should include the maintenance and improvement of the quality of life for the County's residents. He stated that not just open spaces, but public spaces need to be addressed. Mr. Beall stated that the areas immediately outside of the growth centers should include opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the rural outdoors. He offered that employing destination management strategies to direct recreation activities to specific areas would serve several goals of the Master Plan. He added that the former policy of Routt County "not being in the recreation business" should be changed in order to ensure a continuing high quality of life for the citizens of the municipalities. In response to a question from County Commissioner Redmond, Mr. Beall acknowledged that access to public lands is an important element, and provided some examples of parcels in the vicinity of Hayden that could provide excellent recreational opportunities.

Mr. Ren Martyn offered that the existing Master Plan was developed in reaction to the growth of Steamboat Springs. He asked what, other than general public comment, would be done to engage and collaborate with the outlying communities. Ms. Winser reviewed the public meetings that had been held in each community of the County and stated that future meetings would also be held

throughout Routt County. She also discussed the importance of updating the Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan (SSACP) and of establishing better collaboration with the City to address the West of Steamboat Springs Area.

Ms. Winser said that the next phase of public engagement would include topic-specific meetings. In response to Mr. Beall's comments, she offered that quality of life could be included in several of the targeted topics. She stated that these meetings would build on the community input received thus far, and that Planning Commission would be involved in prioritizing the topics for community outreach.

Commissioner Brookshire noted that the public surveys included many comments regarding the preservation of open lands. He offered that there was not actually a definition of, or agreement, about what "open lands" means. County Commissioner Corrigan suggested that the people of Routt County would define what open lands means to them.

Noting that there was not an action item with which to conclude the discussion, Chairman Warnke commended staff on the presentation and offered that Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners had reached consensus on the path forward for the Master Plan update.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Ms. Winser reviewed the upcoming agendas, noting that applications continue to pour in.

Ms. Winser said the newly hired Planner Tech would begin work on May 1st. She said that they had not yet advertised for Ronee's position, but that they would soon. She reported that in response to the high level of interest and time involved in interviewing candidates for Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment, the Board of County Commissioners had tabled their decision on appointments until next Tuesday.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.