

ROUTT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

FINAL MINUTES

May 5, 2022

The regular meeting of the Routt County Planning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Greg Jaeger, Ren Martyn, Andrew Benjamin, Paul Weese, and Linda Miller. Commissioners Steve Warnke, Brian Kelly, Bill Norris and Jim DeFrancia were absent. Planning Director Kristy Winser and staff planners Chris Brookshire and Alan Goldich also attended. Sarah Katherman prepared the minutes.

In the absence of both Chair and Vice-chair, Planning Commission selected Greg Jaeger to serve as Acting Chair.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

MINUTES - April 7, 2022

Ms. Brookshire corrected an incorrect activity number.

Commissioner Benjamin moved to approve the above cited minutes, as amended. Commissioner Martyn seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

MINUTES - April 21, 2022

Commissioner Benjamin moved to approve the above cited minutes, as written. Commissioner Weese seconded the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

CONSENT AGENDA

ACTIVITY: PL20220012

PETITIONER: Jeffery Bucharadt and Lisa Burchardt

PETITION: 1) Consolidation of six lots and a portion of a common area
2) Rezone from Low Density Residential (LDR) to Mountain Residential Estates (MRE)
3) Vacation of Utility and Trail easement along interior lot lines

LOCATION: Lots 174, 175,176,177,188,189 & Part of Common Area 2, Horseback at Stagecoach. Located between Tlingit Way & Seneca Trail

MOTION

Commissioner Weese moved to approve the consent agenda, as presented. Commissioner Martyn seconded. **The motion carried 5 - 0, with the Chair voting yes.**

ACTIVITY: PL20220019

PETITIONER: Todd Pedersen

PETITION: Zone Change from Agriculture/Forestry to Low Density Residential of Lot 1 Pielstick-Friesell Ex empt Subdivision

LOCATION: 100 Huckleberry Lane, immediately north of the intersection of Fish Creek Falls Rd.

Mr. Goldich said that the petitioner has asked that this item be tabled to allow him to amend the application. Ms. Winser added that because the petition will have to be re-advertised in any case, and has not been rescheduled, it should be tabled indefinitely.

MOTION

Commissioner Benjamin moved to table the above cited petition indefinitely at the request of the petitioner. Commissioner Weese seconded the motion. **The motion carried 5 - 0, with the Chair voting yes.**

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Ms. Winser reported that she had met with the Executive Team (Commissioner Warnke, County Commissioner Melton and County Manager Jay Harrington) and had provided them with an update on the current status of the Master Plan project. She said that the consultants, in conjunction with staff, are currently drafting the plan, which would be made available to Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners two weeks prior to a joint meeting to be held in early June. Ms. Winser discussed the review process and public comment period that will culminate in the adoption of the plan, adding that following adoption, the Master Plan will be presented to the public in a series of outreach meetings, similar to the meetings that were held to gather input for the plan update. She said that implementation of the plan would occur through an update of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. She offered that in the amendment of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations the details of the plan will be brought into focus. Ms. Winser added that a consultant would be engaged to assist with the update of the regulations. No timeline has been determined for that process.

Mr. Dave Dixon, of Cushing and Terrell, reviewed all the elements of the public engagement process. He said that the recent short, targeted survey had been open for only two weeks and had received 832 responses. He reviewed the responses to the eight questions, noting that both quantitative and qualitative responses had been solicited. The following is a summary of the Planning Commission discussion of the survey results.

Short-term Rentals (STRs)

There was discussion of the locations that had been suggested as possible areas where STRs might be appropriate, and whether the residents of those places want them. Ms. Winser noted that many of the STRs advertised on VRBO or Airbnb are actually B&Bs or Guest Ranches that operate under County permits.

She suggested that with the exception of a few areas very near Steamboat (e.g. Tree Haus) there are not currently many STRs in unincorporated Routt County. She added that the County is not hearing a desire to allow STRs.

House size limitations

Mr. Goldich stated that in the open-ended comments, many respondents has suggested changes to the energy code, building material requirements, and other ways to reduce energy use as alternatives to focusing on the size of the home. Ms. Winser said that this question was asked to test the waters of an issue that is being discussed in a variety of places. She acknowledged that more research is needed, but that the specifics of energy reduction measures would be part of the update to the regulations and not appropriate for the Master Plan. Commissioner Benjamin expressed support for incentivizing people to build smaller houses rather than penalizing those who build large homes. There was a discussion of the size of the home in relation to the lot size and whether the very large homes being built on large ranches has a negative impact on the rural character of the County. Ms. Winser said that limits on the size of accessory structures could also be considered. Commissioner Martyn offered that the number of respondents was very small and that more input was needed on this controversial issue from ALL of Routt County. He noted the large percentage of property owners in Routt County that have mailing addresses outside of the County and offered that their voices also need to be heard. Mr. Goldich reviewed the demographics of the respondents to the first survey. There was a discussion of the difficulty of getting input from certain segments of the population and the efforts that had been made to do so.

Maximum size of Secondary Dwelling Units (SDUs)

Mr. Goldich stated that the County has had requests for larger SDUs. He offered that allowing large, family-sized SDUs would increase density in rural Routt County rather than in growth centers. Commissioner Weese offered that on parcels of 35 acres or more, larger SDUs would not have a negative impacts. There was a discussion of the impact on roads, water, emergency services, etc. of increased density in rural areas. There was discussion of how the existing SDUs are used and whether they are effective in increasing housing stock. Ms. Winser reported that at the Board of County Commissioners discussion, there had been a discussion of what goal would be served by increasing the maximum size of SDUs. She discussed the increased demand for multi-generational housing on a single property. Commissioner Martyn asked how many SDUs had been built since the regulations allowing them had been relaxed in 2017.

Mobility

There was a discussion of the feasibility of a trail that would extend all the way through the County. Ms. Winser noted that the takeaway from the input was that people are focused on multi-modal transportation and not only on roads. She noted that the bike and pedestrian infrastructure is important to many not just for recreation but also for commuting.

Special Uses to supplement ranching operations

Ms. Winser noted that there is strong support for continuing to allow agricultural operators to supplement their incomes with additional uses. She added that there is also an appetite for verifying that agriculture is the primary use of the property if additional income-producing uses are allowed. There was a discussion of how to determine what the primary use of a property is. Ms. Winser stated that more research and information is needed on how to evaluate the primary use.

Conservation

In response to a question from Commissioner Benjamin regarding the relatively low rank of agricultural lands in the quantitative survey results, Ms. Katherman stated that the general consensus was to preserve the most pristine places and ecosystems. She also noted that many responded “all of the above” to the question of which areas are most important.

ADMINISTRATOR 'S REPORT

Ms. Winser stated that there would be no meeting on May 19th. She said that she would inform Planning Commission regarding the regularly scheduled meeting on June 2nd and the date for the joint meeting with the Board of County Commissioners.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.