



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETING

LIBRARY PROGRAM ROOM
808 S 7th AVENUE, SAFFORD
THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2019
5:30 PM

MINUTE RECORD

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Gene Fowler, Chairman; Diane Junion, Vice-Chair; E.C. “Buff” Cunningham III, Commissioner; Tracey O’Donnal, Commissioner; Jerry Hancock, Commissioner

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: James F. Moser, Commissioner; John Q. Figueroa, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT: Susan Anderson, Planning & Community Development Director; Amber Hogle, Administrative Events Liaison; Matt Platt, IT Specialist; John Cassella, Assistant City Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: David Sowders, Dr. JA Phelps

1. **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Fowler called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Roll call of those present.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA:** None
4. **MINUTES:** It was motioned by Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Vice-Chair Junion and carried unanimously to approve minutes of the May 16, 2019 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting. **MOTION ADOPTED**
5. **PROJECT UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The following are updates on current projects. No action will be taken.

Ms. Anderson introduced John Casella as the City’s new Assistant City Manager. Mr. Casella gave a brief history of his background and shared his love for rural communities.

Ms. Anderson presented an update on current and upcoming projects in the works for Safford (see attached PowerPoint presentation) which included the following topics:

- Park Projects
 - La Tierra Park – Funding was received for this project through the 2018 FMI grant cycle (\$25,000) and United Way of Graham and Greenlee Counties (\$50,000).
 - El Paso Park – \$78,000 has been granted through the 2019 FMI grant cycle.

- 3rd & Central Avenue Park – This was included with the El Paso Park funding request from FMI, but the City did not receive the additional \$22,000 in funding requested, however there is funding in the City budget to complete this park.
 - Phase II of Multi Use Path Lighting – A grant request has been submitted to Tohono O’Odham Tribe to continue installing lights along the multi use path. Will find out in September if grant has been received.
 - Development Projects
 - Mt Graham Shopping Center: Proposing to add two new buildings, including a confirmed Jack in the Box restaurant. There is not a confirmed tenant for the other building at this time.
 - Mt Graham Regional Medical Center: OB unit entry and parking lot (next to existing helipad)
 - True Hope Fellowship: 4,830 sq ft addition
 - Owens Manor Subdivision: 16 lot subdivision at 12th Avenue and 16th Street
 - Walmart Remodel: major interior remodel valued at \$500,000
 - New police station: will be located next door to existing police station
 - SDA Monument Signage: to help direct people to downtown for better exposure of businesses there
 - Other Projects
 - Fee waivers for new single family/duplex homes
 - Entertainment District
 - A future workshop will be held with the Planning & Zoning Commission to review the zoning code to consider including shelter facilities within a zoning district. City Council directed staff to have a workshop with the Commission and invite the public and Gila Valley Ministerial Association for input.

Commissioner Hancock inquired if the Gila Valley Ministerial Association is looking at any other places for their shelter, or if they are looking at selling the donated property in the C-2 zone to put money towards purchase of a new property? Ms. Anderson replied that would be a question for the Gila Valley Ministerial Association.

- Planning and Zoning Commission Vacancy Update: 7 applications were received. The Mayor directed Ms. Anderson to conduct interviews and give him the top 4 candidates. Per City Code, the Mayor makes the recommendation and the City Council approves for appointment of Planning and Zoning Commissioners.

6. **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:** Dr JA Phelps, Veterinarian from Sonoita, AZ: Dr. Phelps stated he purchased the old mini golf course with the intention of building a mixed animal practice. The property purchased is currently zoned C-2 which allows small animal hospitals as a permitted use. Dr. Phelps went on to state the City’s Zoning Administrator disagrees that what he is requesting to do is a like use so he would like to appeal the decision. Dr. Phelps passed out his plans to the Commissioners. Chairman Fowler responded to Dr. Phelps that he needs to work through Director Anderson. Dr. Phelps replied he cannot due to heated conversations in the past, and added the new Assistant City Manager would not look at his proposal either. Dr. Phelps stated he wants to hear his proposal is a like use and that he can proceed, or he will post the property for sale and

not bring his business to Safford. Chairman Fowler said he needs to mend his fences with the Planning Director as the Commission cannot make deals of this sort. Dr. Phelps left the meeting.

Ms. Anderson informed the Commission of the options Dr. Phelps has through the appeals process. He may request a text amendment per city code requirements, or request a text amendment to a different zoning classification and then request the property to be rezoned. Dr. Phelps had been told he had the options approximately 6 months ago.

Commissioner O'Donnal feels there should be somewhere in the zoning code for large animals and feels the property he has would be a good area. She also added it doesn't have to be in that specific area, but it should be looked at.

Ms. Anderson asked if there is a consensus from the Commission, they can direct her to come back to the Commission to add the use in to a zoning district as a text amendment.

Commissioner Hancock understands that we have to take in to account the smells associated with the proposed property and the surrounding properties affected.

Mr. Cassella stated Dr. Phelps dropped off the plans when he was not in the office. When he returned to the office, he called Dr. Phelps and said he would give the documents to the Zoning Administrator. At that time Dr. Phelps told him to take plans back downstairs and he would pick them up. Mr. Casella added he encouraged Dr. Phelps to start the process.

Commissioner O'Donnal feels that since our Thatcher neighbors have a veterinarian office, Safford should offer one as well since we are a rural community and it should be added to the zoning code. She added that she is not saying it has to be this site specifically, but it can be discussed.

Commissioner Hancock feels the procedures in place should be followed.

Ms. Anderson stated she will bring it back for discussion on September 19.

Commissioner Hancock said he would like to hear feedback from City Council.

Chairman Fowler has not known Ms. Anderson to operate in a way Dr. Phelps is accusing. He himself owns a business and he understands there are procedures, and as a business owner he has had to sometimes humble himself to get things done. He would hope Dr. Phelps could become a positive influence on this matter.

7. **NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:** September 19, 2019
8. **ADJOURN:** It was motioned by Commissioner O'Donnal, seconded by Vice-Chair Junion and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m. **MOTION ADOPTED**

APPROVED:

Gene Fowler, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission

ATTEST:

Amber Hogle, CMC, Administrative Events Liaison
Planning & Community Development

STATE OF ARIZONA)
) ss
County of Graham)

CERTIFICATION

*I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Meeting of the Safford Planning & Zoning Commission, located in Safford, Graham County, Arizona, held Thursday, August 15, 2019, and approved at a Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting on **TBD**. I further certify the meeting was duly called, held and that a quorum was present.*

Date

Amber Hogle, CMC, Administrative Events Liaison

DRAFT