COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
501 North Anderson Street, Ellensburg WA 98926

MINUTES OF ELLENSBURG CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Date and Time: Planning Commission Meeting of November 18, 2021 at 5:45 p.m.

Place of Meeting: Hybrid - In Person at City Hall, 501 N. Anderson Street, and Virtual Zoom Meeting

Present (in Person): Fred Padjen, Beverly Heckart

Present (Virtual): Ed Harrell, Sathy Rajendran, Sigrid Davison, Geraldine O'Mahony, George Bottcher

Absent:

Others Present: Community Development Director Kirsten Sackett (in-person); Planning Manager Jamey Ayling (in-person)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Padjen called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Heckart moved to approve of the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Bottcher seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Minutes of October 14, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Heckert moved to approve the minutes with edits previously submitted to Staff. Commissioner Rajendran. All in favor, motion passed

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Public Hearing (Legislative) to Consider 2021 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Chair Padjen read the script and opened the public hearing and called for a staff presentation.

Director Sackett presented the staff report. She said that eleven proposed amendments to the com plan had been submitted during this year's docketing process and were included in the report as Exhibits 1 thru 8. The actual text and map amendments were included as Exhibits 9 thru 16. She said that the docket proposals were reviewed by the Planning Commission during their last meeting held on October 14, 2021. Per the requirements of Ellensburg City Code (ECC) 15.250.090, and the RCW, it is necessary for the Planning Commission to hold at least one public hearing on proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments.

She further reviewed the code requirements, noting that under the GMA the City is allowed to amend its Comprehensive Plan one time each year, and that the City has also adopted a formal amendment process which is described in ECC 15.250.090.

She said that the Planning Commission recommendations would be forwarded to City Council for their consideration during a public hearing to be held on December 6, 2021. She then explained how the public noticing requirements had been met, and that a preliminary SEPA determination had been issued and that a Final Determination was expected to be issued near the end of November. She then noted that the required 60-day review by the Washington State will be complete by December 18, 2021.

Director Sackett then described the eight proposals that were docketed by City Council as follows:

- **Docket Item 21-01** Updates to the 6 Year Capital Improvement Plans.
  Sackett explained that this docketing request is a proposal to provide an annual update to the 6-Year Capital Improvement Plans.

  Commissioner Heckart commented that she felt that the street connection for Helena Street to the Ida Nelson Aronica school should have been included in the CIP. Director Sackett said that it is possible that the Transportation Plan can address this in the future as it is updated annually, and all of the Commissioners agreed that this was an important topic to continue to be aware of.

- **Docket Item 21-02** New DEI Chapter.
  Sackett said that this docketing request was submitted by the City's Community Development Department as a continuation of Docket Items 20-02 and 20-03 that were completed only in part in the 2020 docket cycle. The completion of it was the development of the new chapter for the comprehensive plan focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Commissioner Heckart had previously proposed some edits to the chapter and Sackett said that those were taken back to the DEI commission. The DEI commission accepted some of those edits, and also seriously considered the Planning Commission's concerns about the graphic header at the beginning of the chapter. The DEI commission did come up with a new header, which Sackett shared on her screen.

  Commissioner Heckart said she thinks that the report should be updated to add the full description of the acronym LGBTQ used in the chapter. The rest of the commission agreed. Commissioner Heckart is also not sure that the listening sessions the DEI commission is planning to have with individual groups will be very effective. Director Sackett noted that the DEI commission is currently developing a work plan for their future work.

- **Docket Item 21-03** Updating Housing Chapter to Conform to HB 1220.
  Sackett said that this docketing request is a proposal to update the Housing Chapter to conform with requirements of House Bill 1220 relating to supporting Emergency Shelters and Housing through local planning and development regulations.
  She pointed out the new language in Goal H-2, along with a new Program under Policy D, and a New Policy F with one new Program. Planning Manager Ayling noted that the State recommended making these changes, and incorporating them into the Comp Plan will help the City be eligible for future grant opportunities.

- **Docket Item 21-04** Updating the Housing Chapter to Conform with Current Demographics as outlined in the Housing Need Assessment.

Sackett said that this docketing request was submitted by the Community Development Department to update the Housing Chapter of the Comp Plan to align with more current demographics outlined in the June 2021 Housing Needs Assessment conducted by BERK Consulting. She explained that no amendments specific to this docket request were included with this report, as Staff will be recommending to Council that this item be deferred into the 2022 year. While the June 2021 Housing Needs Assessment provides much data to update this chapter, there are several other chapters that need to be updated with the new data, and staff would recommend that all changes are done concurrently as part of a more comprehensive update to the overall Comp Plan. Sackett said that she would also recommend that the Planning Commission work with staff and the community to update the goals and objectives section of the Housing chapter as called for in the new Housing Action Plan. This work could be ongoing with the Commission in order to be finalized in time for inclusion in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan update.

- **Docket Item 21-05** Update Telecom Utility Articulating Broadband Vision for City. Sackett said this docketing request was submitted by the City's IT Division and is related to support of the Telecom utility. The proposed amendments would articulate a vision for broadband fiber deployment and guide development of the City's "digital roads". She said that additional programs and action items were proposed within both the Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter and the Economic Development Chapter. Exhibit 12 includes the proposed text additions to the Capital Facilities and Utilities Chapter, and Exhibit 13 includes the edits to the goals section of the Economic Development Chapter, as proposed by the IT Division. The goals section also included a few edits proposed by the DEI Commission. She explained that the chapter content was also heavily edited in response to Docket Proposal 21-06 which would be explained under the next docket item.

  Chairman Padjen asked about the expansion of broadband as a city utility. Commissioner Bottcher asked if there was a commission that oversees the Broadband. Director Sacket noted that it is the Utilities Advisory Commission.

- **Docket Item 21-06** Update Economic Development chapter with current data. Sackett said that this docketing request was submitted by Centerfuse, the local Economic Business Development Authority, with a proposal to update the Economic Development Chapter of the Comp Plan. This proposal had been reviewed by the Planning Commission during their last meeting, and as a reminder the proposal was to add language to the chapter speaking to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resiliency of the community, reference the findings of their recent broadband study, update the economic data in the chapter, including economic forecast data from the US Bureau of Labor and Statistics, and also reference the relationship of the housing market and the impacts to economic development. Sackett said that several edits had been made to the chapter following the recommendations of the Commission.

  Commissioner Heckart approved of the edits that Director Sackett made to add the Centerfuse information to the chapter. Commissioner Bottcher wanted to highlight the transportation information to note that there might be other modes of transportation to be added to this chapter.

  Director Sackett then noted for the record that Docket items 21-07, 21-08 and 21-09 were not docketed by Council.

- **Docket Item 21-10** Update Future Land Use Designation from Blended Residential Neighborhood to General Commercial & Services.
  Sackett said that this docketing request was submitted by property owner Fabian Kuchin who is proposing to update the Future Land Use Designation for parcel 716133. She said that the proposal is to change the future land use designation of the newly-created parcel from Blended Residential Neighborhood to General Commercial and Services. The original docket request asked for a designation of Neighborhood Commercial, but the purpose behind this request is to allow for future rezone of the property from Residential-Suburban (R-S) - which was assigned during the 2020 Currier Creek annexation - to Commercial-Highway (C-H). This zoning would complement the existing C-H zoning of the adjacent properties owned by Mr. Kuchin that have frontage along University Way. This concept was approved for docketing by City Council. She referred them to Exhibit 14 which depicted the proposed map amendment and to Exhibit 15, which was a map of the neighboring zoning districts.

  Sackett shared her screen to show the map and what it is zoned at this time. Commissioner Harrel asked for clarification regarding what is the actual, future land use that they are asking for. Director Sackett noted that the proposal is to change the future land use designation from blended residential neighborhood to general commercial and services which would allow them to ask for a future rezone to C-H. If it is changed from general commercial and services it would not be allowed to be rezoned to commercial neighborhood (C-N). Commissioner Padjen asked if small grocery stores would be allowed in commercial neighborhood, and Sackett stated that they would be. Sackett then shared the Land Use Table of ECC 15.310 to depict which uses would be allowed in the C-N zone. Commissioner Heckart asked which zoning would allow for residences, and Director Sackett responded that the C-N zone would allow for some housing but not the C-H, but then went on to point out that if the zoning ordinance amendments are approved in the near future, then multifamily would be allowed in C-H zone through the granting of a conditional use permit.

- **Docket Item 21-11** Update Future Land Use Designation from General Commercial & Services to Light Industrial.
  Sackett said that this docketing request was submitted by City Staff proposing to update the future land use designation for property located in the UGA, directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the city limits. The property currently has a future land use designation of General Commercial and Services and the original docket proposal was to update it to Light Industrial. If the property is annexed in the future, this future land use designation would allow the property to be assigned Light Industrial zoning at the time of annexation. She said that this proposal was forwarded by staff in recognition of the dwindling amount of industrial zoned land that is available to accommodate economic development and growth in the City. The owners are also in support of this amendment; however, since the time of docketing they have requested a modification to the proposal. They are proposing to keep the northwest portion of the property with the existing future land use designation, and amend the remaining portion of the property to Light Industrial. Sackett shared her screen to display Exhibit 16 which depicted this owner-proposed modification.

Commissioner Harrell asked which option the commission would be recommending to Council, and Sackett noted that Staff would concur with the request of the property owner.

Director Sackett then reviewed all of the staff recommendations on each of the docket items.

Chair Padjen closed the public hearing, as there was no public in attendance and there were no further questions for the staff.

Commissioner Heckart moved to accept deferring the consideration of Docket 21-04 to next year. Commissioner Harrell seconded. No discussion. **All in favor, motion passed.**

Commissioner Heckart moved that the planning commission recommend to Council that Docket items 21-01, 21-02, 21-03, 21-05 and 21-06 be approved as presented by community development staff. Commissioner Rajendran seconded. No discussion. **All in favor, motion passed.**

Commissioner Heckart made a motion to recommend to City Council that docketed item 21-10 be altered so that the future land use designation be Neighborhood Commercial or some other designation that allows for mixed use on that property. Chair Padjen seconded. Commissioner Heckart said her rationale is that the surrounding property is all residential. Commissioner Heckart agreed that it would be a good idea to provide services for those residential areas that would allow them to walk to various services. Commissioner Heckart said she knows that in regard to retail use in this community, no matter what is provided on that property, people are going to drive. However, it is important that we provide for some degree of services in the area, perhaps similar to the 18th street deli. Chair Padjen said it would allow for a medium sized grocery story in C-N, like a Trader Joe's type use. Commissioner Davison asked if Commercial Highway would allow for housing and Commissioner Heckart said that it doesn't currently allow for it. No further discussion. **All in favor of the amendment to the docket. Motion passed**.

Commissioner Heckart made a motion that for Docket item 21-11 that the recommendation to City Council that the entire property to the south of Berry Road be designated as Light Industrial. There was no second. Commissioner Heckart said her rationale is that we have a multitude of C-H zoning north of Berry Road and is sufficient for our needs, and doesn't want us to expand our strip mall areas. Chair Padjen said that it is unlikely that we would get a strip mall. It might be more likely to be another truck stop. Chair Padjen made a motion to recommend that Docket Item 21-11 be designated as proposed by the applicant, with the northwest portion remaining as General Commercial and Services, and the remainder be re-designated as Light Industrial. Commissioner Bottcher seconded. No further discussion. **Six commissioners voted in favor of the amendment and one against. Motion passed**

5. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Heckart asked about the proposals that city council was looking at regarding the rules, procedures and term limits for commissions. Director Sackett said she will send the information to the commissioners, and if they have any comments they can send them to her to be passed to city council.

6. CITIZEN COMMENT

No members of the public in attendance.

7. STAFF UPDATE

Sackett said that the plan for the next commission meeting is to develop a work plan for the 2022 year. She said it would include work on land development code amendments, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, and work on the Housing Action Plan strategies. Chair Padjen noted that he would like to put the Land Development Code amendments at the top of the list.

Commissioner Heckart said that she felt a priority for next year should be to look at the transportation plans, and felt that the bus service in the community was not adequate. Director Sackett encouraged Commissioner Heckart to visit the Transit Advisory Committee about those specific concerns.

Next meeting will be December 9, 2021

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Padjen adjourned the meeting at 7:14 pm.