MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023
City Hall – 625 Swift Boulevard – Council Chamber
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order:

Chairperson Maier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Chairperson Maier, Vice Chair Mealer, Commissioners Townsend, Eadie, Nicholson, and Smith.

Commissioner Richardson asked to be excused.

Also, present: Development Services Director Jensen, Planning Manager Stevens, and Permit Technician Hogan.

Approval of Agenda:

Chair Maier presented the meeting agenda for approval and asked for a motion to approve.

COMMISSIONER EADIE MOVED AND COMMISSIONER NICHOLSON SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 25, 2023 MEETING AGENDA. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairperson Maier presented the minutes from the December 14, 2022 Planning Commission meeting for approval.

COMMISSIONER TOWNSEND MOTIONED AND VICE CHAIR MEALER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 14, 2022 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0.

Public Comments:

Chairperson Maier opened public comment at 6:03 pm, with community members present Chairperson Maier confirmed that they were there to speak on an item of business. With no public comments, she closed the comment period at 6:04 pm.

Old Business – Public Hearing:

1. CA2021-108 Badger Mountain South LUDR Amendments (continued)

Chairperson Maier recognized Planning Manager Stevens regarding the continuation of this item. It was indicated that the applicant and the city agreed to continue the item until the March 22nd, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting. Chairperson asked if anyone in audience had public comment. No public comment. Also recognized was Development Services Director Jensen he asked Mr. Stevens if this was when we would announce the discontinuation of Zoom meetings. Mr. Stevens advised yes this would be the last meeting using Zoom and wanted that on record tonight. He advised we had not had anyone in attendance via the Zoom meetings. Chairperson Maier stated that we did not have anyone on the Zoom but also had not had anything on the packet. In past when there were deliberations there was a pretty large contingent of Zoom people, she asked if we could resume Zoom meetings when it is back on the agenda, not to be continued. Mr. Stevens advised the Council and City Administration wants us to wean off Zoom meetings for public meetings, all other boards and commissions are back to in-person. Chairperson Maier asked what the benefit was to stop the Zoom meetings other than making it harder for people to participate. Mr. Stevens advised there had been technical issues in the past and we do not have IT support available to help with those issues. Commissioner Townsend commented that it would limit the Commission's participation if they were not able to attend. Mr. Jensen commented that was the decision of the Council. Mr. Stevens indicated that the Hearing Examiner is the only one we are using Zoom with. Mr. Jensen also stated that the City attorney also advised the need to announce tonight as public notice. Chairperson Maier stated she would need to look at the handbook as she is pretty sure the Commission gets to set its rules of procedure. Mr. Stevens added that we do not have IT support for the Zoom platform. Mr. Stevens also stated this is a decision made by City Administration and there will be no IT funding for meeting support.

AT 6:10 P.M. COMMISSIONER EADIE MOTIONED TO CONTINUE THE ITEM CA2021-108 BADGER MOUNTAIN SOUTH LUDR AMENDMENTS TO THE MARCH 22, 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING. COMMISSIONER NICHOLSON SECONDED. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0.

2. Adoption of the Finding of Fact Regarding CPA2022-105

Chairperson Maier recognized Planning Manager Stevens to present the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law supporting the Planning Commission's decision to recommend approval of three (3) of the four (4) applications to City Council. Specifically, the Planning Commission directed staff to create the necessary findings to exclude File No. CPA2022-102 (City View – COR Economic Development Department) as it is being recommended for denial by the Planning Commission. Commissioner Maier asked if anyone wanted to speak to the topic. Mr. Stevens advised the Planning Commission hearing for the Comp Plan docket has closed. Chairperson Maier asked if anyone has questions for Mr. Stevens. No one did.

AT 6:13 P.M. COMMISSIONER NICHOLSON MOTIONED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT THE NECESSARY FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF THEIR RECOMMENDATION FOR THE COMP PLAN UPDATE AND COMMISSIONER TOWNSEND SECONDED. THE MOTION PASSED 5-1.

COMMISIONER EADIE OPPOSED.

AT 6:15 P.M. CHAIRPERSON MAIER CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING.

New Business – Public Hearing:

3. Recommendation of Zoning for the North Horn Rapids Industrial Park Annexation

AT 6:19 P.M. CHAIRPERSON MAIER OPENEDTHE PUBLIC HEARING.

Chairperson Maier recognized Planning Manager Stevens presented the annexation for approximately 1,643 acres of land previously owned by the US Dept. of Energy and provided to the City of Richland, Port of Benton, and Energy Northwest. City Council authorized the annexation process to begin through the adoption of Resolution No. 2022-111, which directed the Planning Commission to consider what zoning would be appropriate for this site. Mr. Stevens recommended that the land be zoned Heavy Manufacturing (M-2) as it will effectuate the Comprehensive Land Use Designation of the site as well as fulfill the intent of the land being transferred to the City, Port and Energy Northwest from the U.S. Department of Energy for large-scale manufacturing/industrial purposes. Commissioner Townsend asked if there were any comments. Mr. Stevens said he would go over comments in a moment. Mr. Stevens showed a map of the area and discussed the zoning both what it was previously and recommended. Mr. Stevens advised that a Representative from the Port of Benton was in attendance and in favor of recommended zoning. Chairperson Maier recognized Ashley Garza, 5440 Hershey Ln, West Richland. She stated she is a consultant for the Port of Benton. She advised the Port of Benton is also in favor of the M-2 zoning. Chairperson Maier asked if anyone would like to speak to this. No comments. Commissioner Townsend asked Ms. Garza to clarify why M-2 zoning as opposed to medium industrial, is more appropriate. She advised that the development of the area is primarily the same zoning and it goes along with the other growth of manufacturing already established in the area. It partners with what they have been doing and what they envision for the Port of Benton. Mr. Jensen commented that the City has intentions of extending City services in this area and as part of the long-range plan that this be zoned heavy industrial for all players in this. Chairperson Maier asked about an easement in this area. Ms. Garza spoke regarding the easements. Commissioner Smith asked who owns some section of the map “the E.T. cut outs”. Mr. Jensen advised it is locations of a former landfill and former European homesite. He advised they are properties we expect to acquire in the future. Mr. Jensen stated that the City continues to work with BPA regarding power to the area. Commissioner Townsend asked about a triangle section where the annexation boundary does not follow the property boundary. Mr. Stevens advised the boundary line adjustment had been done to include that area, after printing of the map.

AT 6:28 P.M. COMMISIONER TOWNSEND MOTIONED TO RECOMMEND FORWARDING A RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL THAT THE AREAS SUBJECT TO ANNEXATION REQUEST BE ZONED HEAVY MANUFACTURING M-2 AND COMMISSIONER EADIE SECONDED. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0.

AT 6:30 P.M. CHAIRPERSON MAIER CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING.

4. Election of Officers

Nominations were made for Francesca Maier as Chairperson by Commissioner Nicholson and Chairperson Maier nominated Jet Richardson as Vice-Chairperson. Since there were no other nominations there was no vote. Chairperson Maier accepted nomination for Chairperson. Commissioner Jet Richardson accepted nomination for Vice-Chairperson.

Communications:

Chairperson Maier asked if there were any communications. There were none.

Adjournment:

Chairperson Maier adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

PREPARED BY: Jodi Hogan
Jodi Hogan, Permit Technician

REVIEWED BY: Mike Stevens
Mike Stevens, Planning Manager

APPROVED BY:
Francesca Maier, Chairperson