

**City of Blue Lake  
Planning Commission Minutes  
February 16, 2015**

**The Blue Lake Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. at Skinner Store**

**Commissioners Present:** Earl Eddy, John Amirkhan, Karen Nessler, Richard Platz, David Glen

**Commissioners Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** City Planner Garrison Rees and Planning Commission Secretary Cheryl Gunderson

**Staff Absent:** City Manager John Berchtold

**Public Present:** Thomas Parsons Blue Lake Roundstock General Manager and Josh Cooper Blue Lake Roundstock Employee

**1. Approval of Minutes: January 19, 2015**

- a. Motion (Nessler, Amirkhan) to approve January minutes with the following changes to Item 7: *"Upcoming Planning Commission Meetings for the next 3 months will be on February 16<sup>th</sup>, March 16<sup>th</sup>, & April 20<sup>th</sup>."*
- b. Motion passed unanimously with Richard Platz and David Glen disqualifying themselves since they were not in attendance at the January meeting.

**2. Public Input on Non-Agenda Items**

- a. None.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

- a. Motion (Platz, Amirkhan) to approve agenda as is.
- b. Motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion/ Action:**

**4. Planning Commission Review: 312-161-020 & 313-231-001/2013 Blue Lake Roundstock 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Compliance Monitoring Review.**

- a. Planner Rees provided Discussion Points to the Commissioners and requested that they refer to the Blue Lake Roundstock maps included in their packet (Sheet Numbers C-1 and C-2) during the presentation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report.
- b. Planner Rees presented the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Compliance Monitoring Review report to the Commission. Planner Rees explained that one more report is required to be presented to the Commission as part of the conditions of the Roundstock permit.
- c. Planner Rees explained that Blue Lake Roundstock is found to be in substantial compliance with the conditions of the their permit and the Industrial (M) zone performance standards with the exception of several days of unpermitted wood grinding activity that occurred at the end of Dec./beginning of Jan.
- d. Planner Rees also explained that the applicant intends to reconfigure the equipment at the site to increase efficiency. The applicant has been requested to submit a description and revised Site Plan for City Staff to review which may require approvals from the Planning Commission and Building Department.
- e. Lastly, Planner Rees noted that a complaint had been received during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter from a concerned citizen that Roundstock was expanding their operation outside of the approved project site boundary. Planner Rees explained that the property owner, Gary Johnston, stated that he was conducting the activity to create an additional location for the storage of logs, equipment, etc. and that Roundstock would not be using the additional area.
- f. Blue Lake Roundstock General Manager Thomas Parsons provided an explanation of the unpermitted grinding activity by making the following points: 1) The activity was being done to clean-up the wood waste that had accumulated on the site during the prior season; 2) Blue Lake Roundstock was unaware that grinding activity was not allowed under their permit; 3) Once they were notified the activity was not permitted

- they stopped grinding the same day; 4) They do not intend to conduct grinding activity in the future; and 5) They understand that future grinding activity would require an additional approval from the City.
- g. The Blue Lake Roundstock 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Compliance Monitoring Review was accepted by the Commission.

**5. Planning Commission Discussion: City of Blue Lake Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Sustainable Communities Planning Grant No. 3012-552. Review of Draft Land Use Element.**

- a. Planner Rees presented the draft Land Use Element to the Commission and noted that the Commission's review of the draft Land Use Element was completed at the January 19, 2015 Planning Commission meeting and is being presented again for the benefit of the Commissioner's absent at the prior meetings.
- b. The comments of the Commissioners were as follows:
  - i. General Issues Goals and Policies, Policy A1: Commissioner Glen asked about the strikethrough on the word 'new' in the policy. Planner Rees responded that the term 'new' was remnant language from the prior update and has been removed since there is no intention to increase densities as part of this General Plan and Zoning Ordinance update.
  - ii. General Issues Goals and Policies, Policy A4: Commissioner Glen requested that the word 'areas' be added to the policy so that it states: "Landscaping areas in private developments shall be required to ensure adequate open space on a site by site basis."
  - iii. General Issues Goals and Policies, Policy A5: Commissioner Glen inquired about how the preservation of private open spaces associated with historic properties would be encouraged. Planner Rees explained that City Staff encourages this during processing of development applications and that CEQA can also encourage this if impacts to historic resources would occur.
  - iv. General Issues Goals and Policies, Implementation Bh: Commissioner Glen inquired about the City Council's involvement with this requirement. Planner Rees explained that this requirement has been included due to the City's interest in minimizing impacts to its sewer treatment plant since there is limited remaining capacity for non-residential uses. Commissioner Glen asked about for additional information on the remaining sewer capacity. Planner Rees explained that in 2012 the sewer treatment plant had approximately 100 Residential Equivalent Units (REU) of capacity remaining. Due to this situation the City Council decided that the capacity needed for full residential build-out in the City (estimated at 60 units in the 2009 Housing Element) should be reserved and the remainder (40 REUs) could be allocated to non-residential uses.
  - v. General Issues Goals and Policies, Policy C2: Commissioners Platz and Glen expressed that this Policy is unclear as written and suggested the removal of the phrase "and executed." The Commissioners requested that the first sentence of the Policy be revised to state: "Developers shall be encouraged to design projects so as to avoid topography changes and unnecessary stripping of natural foliage."
  - vi. Residential Goals and Policies, Policy C4: Commissioners Glen and Platz discussed the zoning policy currently in place regarding mobile homes and manufactured housing. Planner Rees provided information on Zoning Regulation Sections 609 and 609.1 as they pertain to both types of housing. These types of housing units are considered incompatible with all residential zones except Planned Development Residential (PDR). Planner Rees noted that the Zoning Ordinance requirements are consistent with the wording in the General Plan. Commissioner Glen suggested that the policy be split to discuss manufactured and mobile homes separately.
  - vii. Commercial Land Use, Downtown Issues Discussion: Commissioner Glen requested that additional wording be added to clarify that the low commercial activity within the City Center is due to Blue Lake being a "bedroom community," instead of the statement that the cause is a poor commercial climate.
  - viii. Industrial Goals and Policies, Policy D1: Commissioner Glen indicated his lack

of faith in Design Guidelines. Planner Rees explained that Blue Lake currently has three sets of Design Guidelines and that they have proven to be effective in encouraging applicants to design projects consistent with the Guidelines. Planner Rees noted that Staff believes they would also be effective for the Business Park to discourage the development of plain metal boxes which are the most cost effective type of building to develop.

- ix. Commissioner Platz expressed satisfaction with preservation of the most important General Plan policies especially those supporting maintenance of the rural character of the City. Planner Rees explained that the SGC Grant is funding targeted updates to the General Plan and not a complete overhaul.
- x. Planner Rees called attention to the new 'Creeks and Wetlands' section that was added to the Land Use Element. He explained that the City does not have setback requirements for all zones adjacent to Powers Creek or that contain wetlands. It is proposed to require a 50 foot setback from these features consistent with the requirements in the M & ML zones. Commissioner Glen commented that this may make some properties undevelopable. Planner Rees explained that this is less than the setback that would be recommended by state agencies and consistent with other zones in the City. Planner Rees added that a process will be included for the justification of reduced setbacks.
- xi. Planner Rees added that the next steps in the process will be to: 1) incorporate the Commissioner's comments; 2) hold a Public Hearing before the Planning Commission; and 3) for the Commission to make a recommendation to the City Council.
- xii. Planner Rees explained that the General Plan Elements and Zoning Ordinance need to be ready for public hearing but do not need to be adopted within the time frame of the SGC Grant.

**6. Planning Commission Discussion: City of Blue Lake Strategic Growth Council (SGC) Sustainable Communities Planning Grant No. 3012-552. Review of Draft Circulation Element.**

- a. Planner Rees presented the draft Circulation Element to the Commission and highlighted issues that the Commissioners have already discussed at previous meetings.
- b. Planner Rees explained the State requirements for a Circulation Element discussed in the OPR General Plan Guidelines. Planner Rees explained that the discussion on utilities is included in the Land Use Element and that the Circulation Element only deals with transportation related issues. A reference to the utilities section in the Land Use Element will be contained in the introduction to the Circulation Element.
- c. Planner Rees indicated the need for additional traffic counts. He added that counts for Taylor Way and Greenwood have already occurred. Planner Rees noted that the counts taken so far indicate that traffic levels are lower than they were at the time of last General Plan Update (mid-1980s).
- d. Planner Rees commented that Commissioners expressed general support for the development of the Annie Mary Rail-Trail at prior meetings.
- e. Planner Rees added that prior to encouraging the designation of additional bike routes in the City, that potential liability issues should be discussed with the City's insurance agency.
- f. Planner Rees noted that the Commission concurred that discussing the existing truck route as the best available alternative in the Circulation Element was appropriate. Additionally, general language will be maintained about methods to reduce the impacts of the truck route.
- g. Planner Rees added that the requirement for new development to provide off-street loading zones was recommended by the Commission to be considered on a case-by-case basis since off-street loading is not always an option.
- h. Planner Rees also commented that the Commission recommended reductions or elimination of off-street parking requirements due to the lack of available space or amenities such as open space. The Commissioners also suggested that the Downtown Parking Plan be reviewed by the City every three years to determine if it should be implemented.
- i. Planner Rees discussed encouraging access to the river through public and/or private property. The Commission expressed support for this at their last meeting dependent

upon the potential liability.

- j. Commissioner Platz suggested that “should” be replaced with “may” in Goals and Policies, Implementation, Parking, section k. Planner Rees added that this would only be necessary if a use permit was needed.
- k. Commissioner Platz requested that the first sentence of Policy 13 be revised to state: “The City shall consider amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow reductions or elimination of off-street parking...” Commissioner Platz requested that “shall” be replaced with “may” in the second sentence of Policy 13.
- l. Commissioner Platz requested that “pursue” be replaced with “consider” in Policy 22.
- m. Planner Rees commented that Policy 22 was revised to be general and not recommend specific methods of reducing the impacts of the truck route.
- n. Commissioner Platz commented that the Circulation Element is not an Element that is often used and it shouldn’t obligate the City to implement policies that may not be accomplished.
- o. Planner Rees added that the Circulation Element will come back to the Planning Commission once additional traffic counts have been done and the figures have been updated. At this time the Commission has gone through all the goals, policies, and implementation of the Circulation Element and it is not anticipated that many policy changes will occur based on the updated traffic counts and figures.

#### **7. Miscellaneous Planner Items.**

- a. Planner Rees discussed the issuance of the Preliminary FEMA Flood Map at the beginning of January. He noted that changes to the area protected by the levee have been deferred pending release of the Geotechnical Report documenting the condition of the levee. If the levee is recertified then the areas protected by the levee will mostly be shown as being in the 500-year floodplain. Planner Rees added that the Flood Plain Management Ordinance will be revised to incorporate the flood map changes.
- b. Planner Rees commented that presently there are not many development applications. He briefly provided information on the upcoming applications.
- c. Commissioner Platz reminded the Planning Commissioners of the upcoming Conflict of Interest class. Commissioner Nessler offered to attend.
- d. Planner Rees also reminded the Commissioners of the Land Use 101 webinar that will be shown at City Hall in the near future.
- e. Planner Rees also reminded the Commissioners of the need for a new Chair and Vice-chair now that Vice-Chair Jon Fechner has resigned.
- f. Clarification was made that Commissioner Glen is a fill-in Commissioner for the remainder of Jon Fechner’s term (18 months).

#### **8. Upcoming Planning Commission Meetings for the next 3 months will be on March 16<sup>th</sup>, April 20<sup>th</sup> & May 18<sup>th</sup>.**

- a. All Commissioners in attendance will be available to attend upcoming meetings with the exception of Commissioner Platz being unavailable in May.

#### **9. Adjournment by 9:00 pm unless extended by the Planning Commission.**

- a. Motion (Eddy, Nessler) to adjourn. Passed unanimously.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.