

**City of Blue Lake
Planning Commission Minutes
January 19, 2015**

The Blue Lake Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. at Skinner Store

Commissioners Present: Earl Eddy, John Amirkhan, Karen Nessler

Commissioners Absent: Richard Platz

Staff Present: City Manager John Berchtold, City Planner Garrison Rees, and Planning Commission Secretary Cheryl Gunderson

Staff Absent: None

1. **Approval of Minutes: December 17th, 2014**
 - a. Motion (Nessler/Eddy) to approve December minutes as drafted.
 - b. Motion passed unanimously.
2. **Public Input on Non-Agenda Items**
 - a. None.
3. **Approval of the Agenda**
 - a. Motion (Eddy/Nessler) to approve agenda as is.
 - b. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/ Action:

4. **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.
 - b. The points discussed with the Commission included the revisions made based on Planning Commission and City Staff input from the December meeting.
 - c. Commissioner Eddy requested that a word stronger than “encouraging” be used regarding applying the historic overlay zone to historic properties/structures in the City and asked about the timing for implementation of the historic overlay zone.
 - d. City Manager Berchtold inquired about ownership of the Rousseau mobile home park and State jurisdiction. Discussion ensued.
 - e. Commissioner Nessler inquired about the mixed use zoning and a discussion ensued regarding individual lot zoning.
 - f. A memorandum from Commissioner Platz regarding the use of the word “infill” in the Land Use Element was discussed. It was agreed upon by the Commissioners to revise the Element according to Solution 1 presented in the letter from Commissioner Platz. This revision would remove the word “infill” from one policy and one implementation measure in the Land Use Element. Policy 5 on page 13 which states, “Infill development should be encouraged as the most efficient use of existing public utilities and services” would be revised to state, “Development should be encouraged to achieve efficient use of existing public utilities and services.” Implementation (g) on Page 15 which states, “The City should establish a phased development plan, with an emphasis on the City Center and Business Park, to implement infill development.” would be revised to state, “The City should establish a phased development plan, with an emphasis on the City Center and Business Park, to implement efficient use of existing public utilities and services.”
 - g. City Manager Berchtold suggested that the entire General Plan be reviewed to ensure the word “infill” was not used anywhere else.
 - h. Commissioner Eddy asked Planner Rees about the next steps in the process for updating the Land Use Element.
 - i. Planner Rees answered that a public hearing would be held next to obtain public comment but that this does not have to occur within the time frame of the grant.

- j. The Commissioners expressed satisfaction with this draft of the Land Use Element.

5. 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.
- b. Planner Rees explained that State law requires a Circulation Element to address transportation as well as utilities. Currently, the City's Circulation Element only addresses transportation and utilities are addressed in the Land Use Element. Some jurisdictions choose to include transportation and utilities in their Circulation Element and some choose to develop separate Transportation and Infrastructure/Utilities Elements.
- c. Planner Rees suggested that Blue Lake leave their Circulation Element the way it is and reference within the introduction to the Circulation Element that utilities are addressed in the Land Use Element. Planner Rees will confirm with the State that this format is acceptable.
- d. Planner Rees discussed a variety of specific points within the Circulation Element that needed further consideration by the Commission.
- e. Planner Rees explained that the Circulation Element only contains one goal which states, "To provide a safe and convenient, coordinated circulation system that will further community goals and provide for all forms of transportation needed and used by the community."
- f. Commissioner Nessler commented that the traffic counts in the Circulation Element are outdated, to which Planner Rees explained that additional counts will be taken as part of the update. Two more traffic counters will be purchased to aid in obtaining new traffic counts.
- g. Planner Rees noted that recent traffic counts have shown that traffic levels on Greenwood are much lower than they were in the mid-80s. It was suggested that the mill may have been operating at the time the previous counts had been taken. City Manager Berchtold noted that SHN may have traffic counts for the truck route from last year that would be useful to include.
- h. The Commissioners expressed support for development of the Annie & Mary Rail Trail through the City. Commissioner Nessler inquired as to whether the property owners along the railroad right-of-way have been contacted. Planner Rees provided information about the research currently being done by Humboldt County and Streamline Planning Consultants.
- i. Planner Rees explained that the bike routes with the most bike traffic need improved signage and labeling. Discussion ensued regarding the varied sizes of the streets and liability related to designating bike routes. City Manager Berchtold requested that Planner Rees research liability before language is included in the Circulation Element encouraging the City to designate new bike routes.
- j. Planner Rees inquired about whether the Commissioners would like to include language requiring bike parking for new construction and uses. Commissioner Nessler inquired about whether there are currently bike racks at City facilities. City Manager Berchtold said that bike use would be monitored and if necessary, the City would install them.
- k. Planner Rees explained that the Circulation Element currently contains language about finding alternatives to the existing truck route to limit impacts to residential and commercial uses along the route. It was explained that options have been explored but it has ultimately been determined by staff that the existing route is the best alternative available. Commissioner Nessler asked whether there have been complaints about truck traffic in residential areas and City Manager Berchtold answered that there were on Railroad Ave.
- l. Planner Rees suggested that the language encouraging the City to find an alternative truck route be removed from the Circulation Element and additional language be included concerning minimizing the impacts of the existing truck route. Reducing residential densities for properties along Greenwood was discussed as a method of limiting impacts of the truck route. City Manager Berchtold explained that this would be contrary to the implementation measures in the Housing Element. The Housing Element lists the potential density for PDR zoned lands along Greenwood at approximately 48 residential units. The Commissioners recommended that language

concerning minimizing impacts from truck traffic along the truck route be emphasized in the Circulation Element.

- m. City Manager Berchtold noted that the truck route may be eligible for grant funding since it is the main thoroughfare through the City and for access across the Mad River.
- k. Planner Rees explained that the loading zone requirements in the Zoning Ordinance and encouraged in the General Plan are not practical for existing developed properties in the City Center. Planner Rees inquired if the Commissioners thought on-street loading would be an issue for access and traffic. After some discussion, the Commissioners decided that that language should be included stating that loading areas for new business will be considered on a case by case basis.
- l. Planner Rees inquired whether the Commissioners thought allowing reductions in off-street parking was a concern. Commissioner Eddy stated he feels it should be addressed on an individual basis.
- m. City Manager Berchtold explained that the Planning Commission determined in 2012 that parking was not a concern in the City Center and that implementation of the 2006 Downtown Parking Plan was not warranted at that time. The Commission requested that language be included stating that the City should revisit the need for implementation of the Downtown Parking Plan every three years.
- n. Planner Rees stated that there have been issues in the past between property owners and recreational users trespassing on private property to access the Mad River. It was discussed that the property owned by the City on the other side of the Mad River could be further developed to provide access and recreational enjoyment of the Mad River.
- o. Establishing a parking area in the Business Park for recreationists was discussed. Commissioners Nessler and Eddy and City Manager Berchtold supported this idea.
- p. Discussion ensued concerning increasing recreational opportunities for the public including kayaking and fishing events and increasing access to the River.
- q. Commissioner Nessler suggested that the City's insurance agency be contacted concerning liability for the City if they were to further develop access to the River on public property. Planner Rees will revisit this topic at a future meeting once additional information has been obtained.

6. Miscellaneous Planner Items

- a. Planner Rees presented the Preliminary FEMA Maps to the Planning Commission which were released January 9th.
- b. Planner Rees explained that the flood zones for the areas protected by the levee have not been revised and a note was included on the map stating that they will be revised in the future once sufficient study of the condition of the levee has occurred.
- c. City Manager Berchtold explained where the City and County are in the process of recertifying the levee.

7. Upcoming Planning Commission Meetings for the next 3 months will be on February 16th, March 16th, & April 20th.

- a. All Commissioners in attendance will be available to attend upcoming meetings.

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

- a. Motion (Eddy/Nessler) to adjourn. Passed unanimously.
- b. Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.