

**City of Blue Lake  
Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes  
October 17, 2022**

**The Blue Lake Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.**

**Commissioners Present:** Earl Eddy, Richard Platz, Matt Schang, Robert Chapman, and Cort Pryor

**Commissioners Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** City Manager Amanda Mager and City Planner Garrison Rees

**Staff Absent:** Planning Commission Secretary Cheryl Turner

**Public Present:** Jean Lynch and Sarah Malast

**1. Approval of Minutes: September 19, 2022**

- a. Motion (Chapman, Platz) to approve September 19, 2022 minutes as written.
- b. Motion passed (5-0).

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

- a. None.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

- a. Motion (Pryor, Schang) to approve agenda.
- b. Motion passed (5-0).

**Discussion/ Action:**

**4. Public Hearing/Action: Amendment of Section 17.16.111 (Opportunity or O Zone) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Municipal Code to allow emergency shelters as a principally permitted use type without discretionary review. This use type would allow housing with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six months or less by a homeless person.**

- a. Planner Rees presented a summary of the staff report and discussed staff's recommendation for amendment of the Opportunity (O) zone to allow emergency shelters as a principally permitted use subject to certain objective standards. Planner Rees noted that the objective standards recommended related to the provisions of onsite management and security, number of beds allowed, and the distance between shelters.
- b. Planner Rees explained that staff is also recommending an amendment to some of the stated purposes of the O zone to ensure internal consistency between the stated purposes and the development standards. The recommended amendments would remove language about residential uses being secondary to commercial and manufacturing uses since, with a use permit, the development standards allow residential uses to occupy up to two-thirds of a development project.

- c. Planner Rees presented a comment letter received from Jean Lynch requesting clarification of the term homeless persons and asking what facilities in Blue Lake currently serve as emergency shelters. Planner Rees responded to the comment letter and explained how the term homeless person is defined by the Department of Housing and Community Development. Planner Rees also noted that the facilities in the City that would function as emergency shelters during a natural disaster include Prasch Hall and the Skinner Store. Planner Rees added that these facilities are not officially designated by the Red Cross or other agencies/organizations as emergency shelters, but City staff is working on getting them designated for that purpose.
- d. Chair Eddy opened the public hearing.
- e. Jean Lynch provided comments stating the following: 1) expressed concern that Prasch Hall and the Skinner Store are not currently designated as emergency shelters; 2) asked where funding would come from for the development and operation of emergency shelters; and 3) expressed that the Powers Creek District would not provide opportunity for homeless persons since it lacks services, transit, educational opportunities, etc.
- f. Chair Eddy asked Planner Rees to clarify what action the Planning Commission is being asked to take and whether the City itself would be developing and operating emergency shelters.
- g. Planner Rees responded that the Planning Commission is being asked to adopt a recommendation to the City Council for amendment of the O zone to: 1) allow emergency shelters as a principally permitted use; and 2) amend some of the stated purposes of the zone so they are consistent with the development standards. Planner Rees explained that the City is not proposing to develop and operate emergency shelters. Planner Rees added that the City is required by State law to provide a zone where emergency shelters are allowed without discretionary review and the properties in the zone must have the ability to accommodate emergency shelters (e.g., vacant sites or vacant buildings). Planner Rees explained that City staff is recommending allowing emergency shelters in the O zone because it has several acres of vacant land and/or underutilized sites. Planner Rees concluded that although the City of Blue Lake may not be as optimal of a location for emergency shelters as the larger cities in the Humboldt Bay region, there is a homeless population that has been documented in the Mad River Valley and the City is required to have a zone where the shelters can be developed.
- h. Planner Rees provided a summary of Resolution No. 3-2022, which contains the findings for the Planning Commission's recommendation to the City Council for amendment of the O zone. Planner Rees explained that comments on the proposed amendments were received by the California Department of Housing and Community Development after the agenda packet was completed for tonight's meeting. The comments stated that the City cannot require a distance greater than 300 feet between emergency shelters. Currently the recommended amendments propose a separation distance of 2,000 feet between shelters. Planner Rees instructed that if the Planning Commission chooses to adopt Resolution No. 3-2022, they should do so with the separation distance revised to 300 feet.
- i. Motion (Eddy, Platz) to approve Resolution No. 3-2022, a Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Blue Lake Recommending Amendment of Section 17.16.111

(Opportunity or O Zone) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Blue Lake Municipal Code.

- j. Motion passed (5-0).

**5. Planning Commission Discussion: Storyland Studios Presentation – Blue Lake RV Park and Campground Project.**

- a. Manager Mager provided a brief introduction of the Blue Lake RV Park and Campground Project and then played a recorded presentation from Storyland Studios about the proposed design.
- b. After the presentation, the Commissioners discussed the proposal and took turns providing input on the project.
- c. Commissioner Chapman questioned why the presentation was focused on all other aspects of the project except the RV park portion. Commissioner Chapman also inquired why a community center is proposed to be developed at the site.
- d. Vice-Chair Platz stated that he thinks the project idea is crazy and expressed that he does not think it would be desirable to have a bunch of tourists crowding Blue Lake.
- e. Commissioner Pryor indicated that he thought the presentation was too corporate and polished. Commissioner Pryor stated that he generally supports the project concept but thinks the messaging and presentation is wrong for the community. He concluded that he wants to see the project be truer to Blue Lake.
- f. Both Chair Eddy and Commissioner Schang indicated that they understand the other Commissioners perspectives. They concluded that they are generally in support of the project but don't like how it is presented and would like to see it be more "Blue Lake."
- g. Manager Mager addressed some of the Commissioners comments and provided an overview of the process for developing the project concept and design. Manager Mager described the public outreach that occurred throughout the process and the market analysis completed to determine project feasibility. Manager Mager explained that the project would provide much needed revenue to the City in the form of sales tax and transient occupancy tax. Manager Mager concluded that there are always going to be members of the community that are opposed to growth, but that this project would provide more community benefits than impacts.

**6. Miscellaneous Planner Items**

- a. Manager Mager provided the Planning Commissioners with an update on the bike park project proposed in the Powers Creek District.

**7. Upcoming Planning Commission Meetings for the next 3 months will be on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

- a. Commissioners Chapman indicated that he will not be available for the November meeting.

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

- a. Motion (Chapman, Platz) to adjourn.
- b. Motion passed (5-0).
- c. Meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.