



City of Blue Lake

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Oct 28, 2024

- 1. Quorum Established:** Commissioners Present: Cseh, Hogan, Schang, laasc
Absent: Commissioner Pryor
Staff Present: Garry Rees, Mandy Mager, Tonie Quigley, Leanna Brotherton
Public Present: Marty Granger, Kat Napier, Lisa Hoover, Jon Sawatzky, Elise Scafani, Lori Ponte, Julie Christie, Nona, Becki Thornton, Jeff Landon, Jean Lynch, Justin Goad

Meeting Called to Order: 7:04PM

Quorum Established

- 1. Approval of Minutes with date corrected – Sept 16, 2024**

Motion to Approve: Cseh

Seconded by: Schang

Public Comment:

Julie Christie: commented that not enough detail in public comments.

Motion Summary: Consensus

- 2. Public Comment:**

Lori Ponte: Requests that a commission representative attend the monthly Council meeting to provide updates on commission activities; questions Commissioner Schang's residency status.

Julie Christie: Comments on the comment timer not being accessible to Zoom viewers; comments on the truck route and concerns regarding the bulb outs, damage to the boulevard and truck turning safety; supports Lori Ponte's comments.

John Sawatzky: States that the concrete brick divider on Greenwood is slippery when wet. Commissioner Hogan notes that Commissioner Matt laasc has joined the meeting midway through the public comment period; four commissioners are now present.

Jean Lynch: Asks if the question regarding Commissioner Schang not living in BL was going to be answered.

Commissioner Hogan: States that public comment is not a time for back-and-forth conversation. It's a time for commissioners to take information from the public, and if the commissioners choose, they can direct staff to bring back information for a later date.

3. **Motion to Approve the Agenda as Presented:**

Motion by: Cseh

Seconded by: Schang

Public Comment:

Julie Christie: Asks if the Climate Action Plan will be on tonight's agenda

Motion Summary: Consensus

4. **General Plan Housing Element Update:** Presentation from staff on the Draft California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Negative Declaration prepared for the Housing Element. Commissioner Hogan introduces the item. Planner Garry Reese presents the staff report.

Commissioner Rees: Staff is providing an update and opportunity for the commission to ask questions about the proposed Negative Declaration for the Housing Element. In 2023 a final draft was developed and submitted to HCD for review; in September of 2023, HCD reviewed the draft and required Blue Lake to implement a program as part of the implementation strategy.

Staff has completed the CEQA initial study and is making a recommendation of a Negative Declaration. Staff has conducted a plan level review; this is not a project specific review. Staff has analyzed what the plan proposes, not the implementation of an action. It is very common to do an initial study and adopt a negative declaration. Project specific review is triggered by a discretionary action; if no exemption fits the project description, then an initial study is developed for the project.

The proposed combining zone program does not preclude local, State and Federal regulations; these are still followed and staff determines through the building referral process which issues need to be addressed and by whom; this may trigger referral to State and Federal agencies.

As part of the CEQA process, the document is sent out to the State Clearinghouse, noticed throughout the community and publicly advertised. People can provide comments up until the point at which the City Council considers the adoption of the Housing Element. Correspondence was received from the Water Board, Kent Sawatzky and Lisa Hoover.

Commissioner Schang: Asks staff what are the benchmark deadlines for the process of adopting the housing element and does this set the City up for future cycles.

Planner Rees: December 2024 is a deadline; the DANCO project is also relying on the City having an adopted housing element in order to apply for funding. The City will continue to be required to update the housing element and will be subject to on-going allocations for housing development. The adoption of the element brings the City into compliance and future elements will be updated rather than completely rewritten.

Public Comment:

Lisa Hoover: Reads the letter she sent to the Commission; concerned about the adoption of a negative declaration and how it impacts projects and local control.

Julie Christie: States that she wants the housing element to be consistent with the City's General Plan; comments on the public comment process.

Jean Lynch: States her concerns about the circulation element and Greenwood Road impacts.

Lori Ponte: Requests more public education on zoning and by-right zoning; it's not possible for everyone to attend the meetings and not everyone understands the issues.

Kat Napier: States that she has just begun to delve into all the information and would like to look at circulation issues. Tells the Commissioners to learn as much as they can.

Public Comment Closed.

Commissioner Hogan asks Garry to explain more about plan level review and project specific review level. What would be the difference between how a project would be addressed now versus when the element is adopted.

Planner Rees: Explains that By-right zoning- creates a new zoning tool, this zone could be overlaid upon a specific property; this would allow a density level prescribed by the State and would bring the City into compliance with State mandates. These properties are already zoned for development and by-right zoning still mandates that the project is developed consistent with the City's adopted zoning regulations.

Commissioner Hogan allowed additional public comment

Julie Christie: comments on the public comment process.

Jean Lynch: Questions the effects of vacation rentals on housing in the City.

John Sawatzky: States that there are a lot of people that will make money on this; and asks the commissioners to not make a quick decision.

Elise Scafani: States that she is on the Council but is not acting as a Councilmember; recommends that a town hall meeting be held to learn about the housing element.

Public Comment Closed.

Commissioner Hogan asks the commission if there are any further questions or directions for Garry. The next step will be a public hearing as identified in the staff report at the regular scheduled November meeting on Nov. 18,2024

5. **Review City of Blue Lake Housing Needs Video (REAP Funded project)-**

Discussion/Presentation:

The City Manager presents the item; the video was funded by the Regional Early Action Planning Grant; this funding is to support housing development and to bring awareness to housing issues in communities. The City chose to produce a video and worked with HCAOG staff to procure the services of a videographer. The video is reviewed by the Commission and the public in attendance.

Public Comment:

Jeff Landon: States that the video is a marketing pitch to push an agenda.

Jon Sawatzky: States that the video is well made, but felt that the special meeting was generated to push this project through before the end of year.

Julie Christie: Comments on the REAP funding; states that the funding was Rural Energy Agriculture funding to support farmers; questions where the money is going and states that housing is not impacting school enrollment.

Lori Ponte: States that she saw the video a month ago; the video was well done and she does not have issues with the DANCO affordable housing project; appreciates the comments from the people in the video.

Jean Lynch: States that the video brought up a lot of thoughts; she owns a bigger home and she's not interested in giving it up for someone else; comments that annexation was a missed opportunity and she has experience living in a live/work situation.

Kat Napier: States that she appreciates the quality of the video, but all of the people that spoke were business owners; should listen to people that have lived here; she's not against housing, but she wants to preserve the town character.

6. **Discussion: Regional Climate Action Plan (CAP).** Presentation from staff on the status of the Regional CAP.

Commissioner Hogan introduces the item. Garry Reese presents the staff report.

Planner Rees presents an overview of the CAP and deadlines for the EIR presentation and comment period.

Public Comment:

Julie Christie: Comments on the CAP presentation by the County; it can be viewed on Humboldt Access; people should watch what other are cities doing. Comments on energy infrastructure on Taylor Way.

Public Comment Closed.

Commissioner Hogan: Stated that housing/zoning seems to be meeting the lot of the CAP strategies.

7. Miscellaneous Planner Items:

Planner Rees presents revised submittal dates for the DANCO Project; it is expected that a full submittal will be presented at the end of the month. State and Federal agencies have been consulted through the CEQA process and peer review will be conducted to ensure completeness of the review. CEQA is ongoing and will be presented through a formal process when completed.

8. Upcoming Planning Commission meetings for the next 3 months:

November 18, 2024, December 16, 2024 and January 20, 2025

Commissioner Schang will be out in November.

Commissioner Hogan will be out in December.

9. Motion to adjourn:

Motion made by: Commissioner Schang

Seconded by: Commissioner Cseh

Motion Summary: Consensus

Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm