

MINUTES of the Vernal City PLANNING COMMISSION

Vernal City Council Chambers - 374 East Main Street, Vernal, Utah

January 11, 2022

7:00 pm

Members Present: Corey Foley, Stephen Lytle, Brandon Parker, Troy Allred

Members Excused: Jim Linschoten

Alternates Present:

Alternates Excused:

Staff Present: Allen Parker, Assistant City Manager; Matthew Tate, Building Official; and Gay Lee Jeffs, Administrative Secretary.

WELCOME AND DESIGNATION OF CHAIR AND MEMBERS: Vice Chair Corey Foley welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM November 9, 2021: Vice Chair Coley Foley asked if there were any changes to the minutes from November 9, 2021. There being no corrections, *Brandon Parker moved to approve the minutes of November 9, 2021 as presented. Stephen Lytle seconded the motion. The motion passed with Corey Foley, Stephen Lytle, Brandon Parker and Troy Allred voting in favor.*

CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR ELECTION

Allen Parker explained that Samantha Scott and Eric Hunting are no longer on the Planning Commission because their term has expired. Council Member Nick Porter is no longer on the Planning Commission because he has been reassigned to a different committee and Council Member Corey Foley will take Mr. Porter's position on the Commission. Mr. Parker explained that Brandon Parker and Stephen Lytle have now been moved from Commission alternates to Commission members. There are now two (2) vacant member positions on the Commission along with three (3) alternate positions.

Mr. Parker stated that it is time to elect a new chairperson and a new vice chairperson. Corey Foley is currently the vice chair, but a council member should not be a chairperson or vice chairperson because they have more of an advisory role on the Commission.

Mr. Foley opened up nominations for a chairperson. Troy Allred nominated Brandon Parker. The nominations ceased. Ballots were cast and Brandon Parker was elected as chairperson. The Commission voted by ballot for the vice chairperson and Stephen Lytle was elected as vice chairperson.

REQUEST FOR RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL

**CITY MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND ZONING CODE SECTION 16.42 – R-3
RESIDENTIAL ZONE – ALLEN PARKER**

Allen Parker explained that he had been looking at the City's densities, frontages and minimum lot sizes as the zones progress from the R-1 and RA-1 zones up to the R-4 zones. There is not as much of a taper as expected. Mr. Parker said that he would like to correct the R-3 zone by making the taper of the densities from zone to zone more appropriate. This correction will also force a change in the R-4 zone and in the definitions.

Mr. Parker reviewed the changes with the Commission. Section 16.42.040 Item A currently allows six thousand five hundred (6,500) square feet for the minimum area requirement for a single family dwelling and he would like to reduce that size by five hundred (500) square feet, which would change the density for that zone. Item B lot size would be reduced by five hundred (500) square feet, Item C would be reduced by one thousand (1,000) square feet, Item D would be reduced by five hundred (500) square feet and Item # would be reduced by one thousand (1,000) square feet. The changes in Section 16.42.050 currently allows sixty-five (65) feet for the minimum width requirement for a single family dwelling and he would like to reduce that size by five (5) feet. Item B would be reduced by five (5) feet, Item C would be reduced by ten (10) feet, Item D and E would stay the same. Mr. Parker stated that he did not write any changes to Section 16.42.060 because he wanted the Commissions input. Mr. Parker explained that when raw land that is in the R-3 zone is developed, the financing structure, the amount of units that can be built, and how it sits within the existing neighborhoods can be affected. Mr. Parker remarked that any changes to the R4 zone will mirror changes made to the R-3 zone. Mr. Parker informed the Commission for context that the largest lot requirement is eight thousand (8,000) square feet. Mr. Parker explained that with the pressure for higher density housing, it is better to make changes to the Code before there becomes a problem in the future. It also gives the staff consistency on how developments are approved. These changes will put the R-3 zone within what the State expects to see for moderate high density housing and will put the R-3 zone within the realm of possibility to receive grants that are related to this change, which is a side effect. Mr. Parker stated that there have not been any development pressures for this kind of change. Matt Tate commented that there is pressure in other parts of Utah, but not in Vernal at this time. Mr. Parker said that once the railroad hit the news on the Wasatch front, developers have taken interest in Vernal. Corey Foley verified that with the changes made to the zone that someone could build on a seventy-five (75) by seventy-five (75) square foot lot and that it would be single family high density zone. Mr. Parker affirmed that someone could potential do so, but that is a minimum size. There are different styles of homes that could be built on this size of lot for instance, shotgun homes and patio style homes. There is a lot of area in the City that are zoned R-1 and R-2 which supports single family dwellings. Troy Allred agreed that this change would be for more starter homes, retiree homes and more affordable homes. Mr. Parker said that the buildable envelope will depend on the setbacks of the lot. Stephen Lytle asked why the City prioritizes a larger front setback than a back setback with a smaller lot. Mr. Parker responded that front setbacks are almost always tied to aesthetics. It pushes the structure back away from the road, creates a front yard space and creates a more open community. Mr. Allred asked about the landscaping and water issues and if the City is going to allow gravel yards and rock yards. Mr. Parker answered that it will be allowed for residential, but not for multi-family and it is not allowed for

commercial. Mr. Parker informed the Commission that he is working on a water conservation plan that will be going before the City Council soon. Xeriscaping or water wise conservation could be looked at if there is interest. Mr. Parker asked the Commission if they liked the setback requirements. Corey Foley suggested changing the front setback to twenty-five (25) feet or twenty (20) feet so a builder has the opportunity to build a larger structure on the lot. This would be the minimum. Mr. Parker commented that it seems like the community is lacking age restricted homes that have low maintenance environments in which they exist. It could be a need in the community. Higher density means a different lifestyle that someone is looking for. Mr. Parker stated that he would change the front setbacks to twenty (20) feet and leave the other setbacks the same. He will bring the definition changes and the R-4 zone changes that will reflect the R-3 zone changes to the next meeting which will be a public hearing. Mr. Foley commented that parking is always a challenge. Mr. Parker replied that two (2) parking spots per unit will still be required in this zone.

REQUEST FOR RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND ZONING CODE SECTION 16.46 – MANUFACTURED HOME ZONE (MH) AND SECTION 16.04 – DEFINITIONS - ALLEN PARKER

Allen Parker introduced the amendment to the Commission. The concept of a tiny house dwelling has been added to the City Code and is proposing that it be allowed explicitly within the Manufactured Home (MH) zone. The only zone that the City has a size square footage minimum is the R-1 and RA-1 zones. The Manufactured Home (MH) zone has requirements that are very similar to the R-1 zone. If the City is going to address tiny homes as specific sub-categories of dwellings, then maybe the City should allow a tiny home to be built in Manufactured Home (MH) zone subdivisions or placed in Manufactured Home parks. The International Residential Code (IRC) calls tiny houses “any residential structure under four hundred (400) square feet in size.” Mr. Parker felt like the minimum of a tiny house should be one hundred fifty (150) feet. Corey Foley mentioned that a shipping container is eight (8) feet wide and twenty (20) feet long which is one hundred sixty (160) square feet. Mr. Foley felt that realistically someone could live in a home that small but wondered if a home that small on a lot that big, smaller than that is almost a waste of a lot. Mr. Parker explained that he defined the tiny house in this change and said that it is a permitted use within the MH zone and then shrunk the lot size to five thousand (5,000) square feet and the lot width down to fifty (50) feet within a Manufactured Home subdivision which is not the same as a trailer park. The City needs to look at the size of the lot and does the City create a specific sub-category of lot sizes for tiny homes or does the City shrink the lot sizes overall. Mr. Parker stated that a lot of the State permits tiny homes as Additional Dwelling Units (ADU), which are allowed in the City in the R-2, R-3 and R-4 zones. Mr. Foley voiced his concern about putting a man-camp house on a lot. Mr. Parker responded that Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards would have to be met before this type of home could be placed on a lot. There are dimensional standards that also need to be met. Matt Tate explained that a tiny home is a site built home or brought from a manufacturer. A man-camp house would need engineering and bringing it up to IRC standards before it could get approval from the building department. A shipping container will also need to meet these standards to be a habitable space. Mr. Parker stated that he is looking specifically at the MH zone

Vernal City Planning Commission Minutes
January 11, 2022

and specifically at subdivisions that were created with manufactured homes in mind having tiny homes on the lot. Mr. Parker wondered if the City should shrink the lot sizes down to three thousand (3,000) square feet, but a manufactured home will never fit on that size of lot. That could prevent people from being able to use the lot for a manufactured home after the setbacks have been applied. There still needs to be appropriate spacing between neighbors. Should the City split a concept out and say that tiny homes can sit on two thousand (2,000) square foot lots, but then there is a break and if it is not a tiny home as defined in the Code then the lots have to be at least seven thousand (7,000) square feet or six thousand (6,000) square feet. Mr. Parker would like to know what direction the Commission would like to go. Brandon Parker expressed that a smaller lot is more suitable for a tiny home. Mr. Foley suggested changing the lot size to two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet or three thousand (3,000) square feet per lot. Mr. Parker felt that the setbacks would protect from having overly small lots with giant manufactured homes sitting on them. Troy Allred asked if someone could have a tiny home and be able to put a single wide in a subdivision as well. Mr. Parker replied yes, if the lots are shaped right. Mr. Parker stated that he would make a drawing with two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet lot and will give a concept with the minimum size and one (1) parking space for a tiny home so that the Commission has a visual of what it would look like.

ADJOURN: There being no further business, *Corey Foley moved to adjourn. Troy Allred seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned.*

Corey Foley, Planning Commission Vice Chair