

# MINUTES of the Vernal City PLANNING COMMISSION

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

July 11, 2023

6:00 pm

**Members Present:** Brandon Parker, Brian Eades, Samantha Chapoose, Ryan Pugh

**Members Excused:** Corey Foley, Troy Allred, Stephen Lytle

**Alternates Present:** Randel Mills, Brittany Young, Ryan Balch

**Alternates Excused:**

**Staff Present:** Gabby Hawkes Blackburn, Assistant City Manager; Matthew Tate, Building Official, Gay Lee Jeffs, Administrative Secretary, Leslie Ivers, Planning Technician.

**WELCOME AND DESIGNATION OF CHAIR AND MEMBERS:** Chair Brandon Parker welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM June 13, 2023:** Brandon Parker Chair asked if there were any changes to the minutes from June 13, 2023. The minutes were approved with there being no corrections, Ryan Pugh *moved to approve the minutes of June 13, 2023 as presented.* *Randall Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with Brandon Parker, Brian Eades, Samantha Chappoose, Ryan Pugh, Randel Mills, Brittany Young and Ryan Balch voting in favor.*

## **RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER A SUBDIVISION AMENDMENT REQUEST FROM QUINTON DANIEL AND JACOB SPEIRS FOR THE VILLAGE AT QUAIL RUN PHASE I PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1650 WEST 500 SOUTH, VERNAL, UTAH, PARCEL #'S 05:067:0101; 05:067:0104; 05:067:0117; AND 05:067:0144 CONTAINING 4.1466 ACRES – 2023-008-SUB**

Gabby Hawkes Blackburn presented a proposal for a subdivision amendment from Quinton Daniel and Jacob Speirs for the Village at Quail Run. The project involves a one-unit residential development in the R-3 zone. The property is owned by CV Enterprises and Development Inc., and the applicants have rights to work on the property through a seller financing agreement with the owner.

The project was previously approved, but only a portion of the units were built. The new developers aim to improve the project's efficiency by implementing a more efficient four-plex style. The amendment involves changing the building style, specifically the floorplan, while ensuring compliance with landscaping, setback, and parking requirements. The applicants have met with the public works department to discuss required improvements, including sidewalks, and they are willing to address any deficiencies highlighted by inspections.

The existing homes in the area are owned by various individuals, and a certain percentage of them must sign off on any changes. The utilities, including sewer and water, are already in place, and public works will collaborate with the developers to ensure compliance with city standards. The proposed amendment also includes right-of-way easements for a private road that could potentially become public in the future.

Chair, Brandon Parker, opened the public hearing to receive public comment. Quinton Daniel 2727 West 1500 North, Vernal, Utah answered questions from the Commission about ownership, financial arrangements, utilities, and access for emergency services. The developers explained that they have taken measures to address concerns, such as improving parking design and availability, providing wider right-of-way for potential future road adoption, and ensuring sufficient turnaround space for emergency vehicles.

Chair, Brandon Parker, closed the public hearing.

*Brian Eades moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to consider a subdivision amendment request from Quinton Daniel and Jacob Speirs for the Village at Quail Run Phase 1 property located at 1650 West 500 South, Vernal, Utah, parcel #'s 05-067-0101; 05-067-0104; 05-067-0117; and 05-067-0144 containing 4.1466 acres – 2023-008- Ryan Pugh seconded the motion. The motion passed with Brandon Parker, Brian Eades, Samantha Chappoose, Ryan Pugh, Randel Mills, Brittany Young and Ryan Balch voting in favor.*

**RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, CHAPTER 16.60 - MASTER SITE PLANS - ORDINANCE 2023-13**

Gabby Hawkes Blackburn discussed the need to revise the process for master site plans. Currently, staff can approve these plans, but certain items require the Planning Commission's decision. Three options were presented: (1) Staff makes the final decision, (2) Planning Commission makes the final decision based on staff recommendation, or (3) Planning Commission makes the final decision after a public hearing. Option 2 was favored as a middle ground, eliminating public hearings but still allowing Planning Commission involvement.

The proposed language for the Code amendment was presented, specifying the timeline for applications, staff reports, and Planning Commission approval. It was emphasized that public hearings would not be required under this option. The difference between legislative and administrative decisions was explained, highlighting the need for public input when making laws but not for administrative decisions.

Concerns were raised regarding specific cases where public interest and input should be considered, such as locating businesses near schools. The importance of striking a balance between efficient processes and public involvement was discussed.

Chair Brandon Parker opened the public hearing to receive comments from the public. There being no public comment, Chair, Brandon Parker, closed the public hearing.

*Samantha Chappoose moved to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to consider amending the Vernal City Municipal Planning and Zoning Code, Chapter 16.60 - Master Site Plans - Ordinance 2023-13 granting final decision-making authority to the Planning Commission without a public hearing. Brittany Young seconded the motion. The motion passed with Brandon Parker, Samantha Chappoose, Ryan Pugh, Randel Mills, and Brittany Young voting in favor. Brian Eades and Ryan Balch voting in against the motion.*

**RECOMMENDATION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND ZONING CODE, CHAPTER 16.58.055 – MINOR SUBDIVISION – ORDINANCE 2023-14**

Gabby Hawkes Blackburn proposed amending the Vernal City Minor Subdivision Ordinance. The purpose of

this amendment was to address issues raised by the Uintah County Surveyor and streamline the minor subdivision process. Currently, Vernal City's code allows for minor subdivisions with four or fewer lots to skip preliminary steps and proceed directly to the final plat. However, this approach created problems during the recording process as it did not exempt the final plat requirements.

To rectify this, the proposed amendment aims to align Vernal City's Code with Uintah County's standards. The changes included removing unnecessary sections, referencing the Utah Code for minor subdivision requirements, and specifying the metes and bounds legal description for minor subdivisions. The proposed language closely mirrored Uintah County's practices, which had proven effective.

A key point of discussion was whether the minor subdivision process should be an administrative decision or require approval from the Planning Commission and City Council. Ms. Hawkes Blackburn suggested transitioning to staff approval, as many other municipalities had done. This change would simplify the process and eliminate the need for approval at multiple levels. The Planning Commission expressed support for this shift, although it had not yet been presented to the City Council.

Chair Brandon Parker opened the public hearing to receive comments from the public. There being no public comment, Chair, Brandon Parker, closed the public hearing.

*Samantha Chappoose moved forward a positive recommendation to the City Council to consider amending the Vernal City Municipal Planning and Zoning Code, Chapter 16.58.055 – Minor Subdivision - Ordinance 2023-14 with all of the proposed changes. Ryan Pugh seconded the motion. The motion passed with Brandon Parker, Samantha Chappoose, Ryan Pugh, Randel Mills, and Brittany Young, Brian Eades and Ryan Balch voting in favor.*

#### **TINY HOMES OVERLAY**

Gabby Hawkes Blackburn discussed the idea of implementing a tiny home overlay in Vernal City's zoning code. The purpose of this overlay would be to address the issue of affordable housing by allowing for smaller lot sizes and capping the size of homes.

Ms. Hawkes Blackburn presented the concept, mentioning that other communities have successfully used this approach to diversify their housing options. The proposed overlay would apply to specific zones, such as R3 and R4, while larger lot sizes in R1 and R2 zones would be excluded. The idea was to incentivize developers and home builders to construct smaller, more affordable homes by reducing the minimum lot size requirement.

During the discussion, the Commission expressed their thoughts on the square footage of the tiny homes suggesting 700 square feet, with considerations raised regarding the practicality of smaller sizes for mobile homes. The possibility of creating pre-approved house plans and offering streamlined permits for such homes was also discussed.

Concerns were voiced regarding the potential for parents building tiny homes for their children in their backyards without contributing to taxes or the community. Ms. Hawkes Blackburn clarified that existing regulations, such as accessory dwelling units, already allow for secondary residences on properties, but property taxes would still apply. The Commission agreed to explore tiny home overlays.

**DISCUSSION TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE VERNAL CITY MUNICIPAL PLANNING AND ZONING CODE CHAPTER 16.58 – SUBDIVISION CODE**

Gabby Hawkes Blackburn suggested amending the Vernal City Municipal Planning and Zoning Code, specifically Chapter 16.58, which pertains to the subdivision code. Ms. Hawkes Blackburn provided an update on the subdivision process, mentioning that Uintah County Community Development is proposing a two-phase approach.

Under this proposal, applicants would first submit a preliminary planning application, which would be presented to the Planning Commission for approval. The second phase would involve the submission of a final plat application, which would be approved by either staff or the Development Review Committee (DRC), with signatures required from utility providers.

Ms. Hawkes Blackburn sought input and feedback from the Commission regarding Uintah County's process and whether Vernal City should align its process with theirs. The State has mandated that the Planning Commission no longer approves final plats, but only the preliminary phase, which includes a public hearing. The decision between staff or the DRC approving the final plat was also discussed.

The Commission expressed the importance of meeting the criteria and ensuring that the public has an opportunity to provide feedback during the preliminary phase. There were considerations about the number of signature blocks and the possibility of the DRC meeting online if discrepancies arise.

Ms. Hawkes Blackburn informed the Commission that the administration and process section of the standard subdivisions code will be brought forward for review in the next meeting.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business, *Samantha Chapoose moved to adjourn. Randel Mills seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned.*

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Brandon Parker , Planning Commission Chair