

Planning Commission Minutes
January 27, 2020

1. **ROLL CALL** – Meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Mann. A quorum was present.

PRESENT

Robert Mann, Chair
Howard Carter
Jay Moore
Chad Ball
Toni Lindsey
Gerry Harris
Judy Horne
Bobby Wilson

ABSENT

City Employees Present: Mayor Ernie Penn;
Melissa McCarville, City Business Manager; Rick
Bramall, City Building Inspector

2. **Approval of Minutes:** December 16, 2019 Minutes were approved as written.

3. **Comments from Citizens:** There were no comments from citizens.

Prior to the Land Use Plan discussion, Mayor Ernie Penn asked to speak to the Planning Commission. First, he thanked the commissioners for their commitment to the City and to the Planning Commission, noting the amount of time required. He said that people who come to the meetings feel rapport and feel they are listened to.

He noted that we are starting a new decade, a new era, with lots of development coming to our city. The developers have seen the opportunities for westward growth. With this rapid growth, one of the biggest challenges is residential development. However, he said we have good ordinances to ensure the growth is well done.

He mentioned that not everyone who wishes to live here can afford a home and escalating house prices are not helping them. Therefore, he felt that at some time we are going to need to talk about multi-family housing. There is a shortage throughout Northwest Arkansas. Here in Farmington there is available land near very nice subdivisions and he felt commissioners need to have an open mind regarding placement of multi-family housing near those subdivisions because property owners have rights, too. The City's right is to be sure what the developer presents adheres to the City's ordinances. This can be done when the developer presents a Preliminary Plat.

He urged commissioners to make a differentiation between our own personal wishes and what is best for the City and to listen to what the developers have to say before forming an opinion.

Mayor Penn also reminded commissioners that state law says the Commission can't dictate how structures will look. Those types of details are worked out in the Large Scale Development Plan where the City can dictate certain things.

Judy Horne said that she felt property owners adjacent to new developments have important rights, too and therefore, all new developments adjacent to existing properties must have good zone transition and blend in well and not lower their property values. Further, if we are going to have more multi-family housing we need to review the standards and regulations. She said that also, the City should look at requiring more green space in multi-family instead of the front view of multi-family being garage

doors, an entry door, and lots of concrete parking area. There is some older multi-family housing in our City that is very dismal looking and also, some landlords do not keep the buildings and the surrounding yards looking good. She said very good research studies are verifying that for improved feeling of well-being, people need to be able to see some green space.

She reminded that our City's logo says "Feels like home" and we need to ensure that we maintain that feeling within all areas of the city.

Robert Mann said that the older multi-family developments occurred many years ago before the City had better ordinances and regulations in place. That resulted in the type of development Judy was describing. He reminded that there is a need for multi-family housing and the Planning Commission must determine how it is going to be developed, doing what is best for the City.

He also agreed with Mayor Penn that the property owners do have rights, too.

Chad Ball said a diversity of housing types can be achieved. The City does not have to have only duplexes and "McMansions". One of his big concerns is regarding the strain all this new development is going to put on infrastructure. He asked what is the City's long-range plan for water and sewer? Are these new developments going to overload the current systems? Having these questions answered would be helpful to making better decisions.

It was determined that the City does not have specific plans for infrastructure. However, Rick Brammall does have a map provided by Western Water Authority and the City of Fayetteville. Also, the City currently has a contract to determine the impact of development in the south portion of the city.

Mayor Penn said once the Planning Commission approves a preliminary plat for a development, then it is carefully scrutinized by the City's Engineer, Chris Brackett. He determines all types of impacts the development will have.

Mayor Penn said that regarding the Riggins' development north of Clyde Carnes Road, they are going to build a sewer lift station. Also, the City is taking steps to see what water extensions will cost and if the City does expend dollars for this, how will it recoup the cost?

Bobby Wilson felt it was not the Planning Commission's call on the infrastructure, leaving it to the Engineer to make those determinations. It was noted that the City Engineer is very conservative and holds developers to a very high standard.

4. Discussion of the Land Use Plan

Melissa McCarville said the last time the Commission met, Sarah Ames talked to the group about how to move forward. She said many cities do a survey of citizens utilizing such things as Facebook and a city website. This helps find out what people who live here think our city should be.

In the discussion, Melissa McCarville was asked about land outside the actual city limits. She said the procedure is that if we turn down someone's development plan that is in the City's future growth plan, the matter is referred to the County for their decision. However, there has been some question whether the County has any authority at all since the land is in our planning area.

In discussion, it was noted that Farmington's population appears to be greatly increased and the sales tax continues to go up in a steady trend. Mayor Penn said that when he contacts businesses to come here they tell him there is not a high enough population; he reminds them that the vehicle count through Farmington is 27,000 cars per day. However, with the new census numbers, he thinks they will begin to be interested in Farmington.

Chad Ball wished to see the Flood Plain Map that is being updated, knowing drainage is a major issue in our city. He also inquired about Mr. Riggins' original plan to put a subdivision "pocket park" in lieu of paying a fee per residence built. The location was separated from the subdivision and next to the High School property. Steve Tennant's opinion, according to the Landscape Ordinance, is that park land must be an actual part of the development and the land in question is not. The City will be writing Mr. Riggins a letter explaining this to him.

It was decided that Sarah Ames will work on the questionnaire with input from Planning Commissioners and this will be reviewed at the next work session on February 17, 2020.

5. Adjournment: Having no further business the Planning Commission meeting was adjourned.



Judy Horne - Secretary



Robert Mann - Chair