

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
March 28, 2023, 5:30 PM
MINUTES

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Commissioner Teske.

Those present were Planning Commissioners; Sandra Weckerly, Kimberly Herek, Shanon Secrest, Ken Scissors, Keith Ehlers, and Melanie Duyvejonck.

Also present were Jamie Beard (City Attorney), Felix Landry (Planning Supervisor), Nicole Galehouse (Principal Planner), Dave Thornton (Principal Planner) and Jacob Kaplan (Planning Technician).

There was 10 members of the public in attendance, and 2 virtually.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) from March 14, 2023.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan

CPA-2023-167

An Ordinance adopting the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan as an element of the 2020 One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan, amending the Active Transportation Corridor Map found in Ordinance 4808 (Grand Junction Circulation Plan) and found in Ordinance 4971 (2020 One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan) and replace and sunset Resolution 48-18 (2018 Complete Streets Policy).

Staff Presentation

Dave Thornton, Principal Planner, and Carly Sieff, a consultant with Fehr and Peers, provided a presentation regarding the request. Sarah Lubin with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee spoke in support of the plan. Ian Thomas, also with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, spoke in support of the plan.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Secrest asked where the implementation of the plan would begin. He also asked who would be paying for the project.

Commissioner Weckerly asked where the funding of the project would come from. She also inquired about the trails proposed along North Avenue and how they would impact private properties. She noted that while the current code does contain requirements for developers to include trails and bike paths in their plans, the trails proposed in the Ped & Bike seemed to be

significantly more expensive to develop. She asked for more transparency in how funding for this project would be obtained.

Commissioner Ehlers inquired about specific language in the plan as to who would be responsible for funding this project. He noted that the plan gave examples of what developers would be responsible for, but there was no language about what aspects would be paid for through grants and government funding. He wondered why the plan should be adopted prior to determining how it would be financed. He asked how access would be addressed in the TEDS manual given that many streets would become active transportation corridors upon adoption of the plan. He asked if the plan didn't work better for a more urban setting given the higher density of vehicular roadways.

Dani Acosta listed a variety of the stakeholders who provided input on this plan.

Public Hearing

The public *comment period* was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Rosemary Bonine expressed concerns about a bike lane being placed too close to her home.

Rod Hoover asked for more information about the plans for his property.

Diane Schwenke noted that the plan was too long and also that it required more time and planning. She also wondered why the City needed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator when there is already have a Mobility Planner.

Sarah Lubin asked Commissioner Weckerly for clarification as to her definition of "stakeholders". She argued that the plan was not "half-baked" as Diane Schwenke had put it.

Mark Austin reiterated the concerns with how this project would be funded. He expressed concerns about the proposed impact fees on developers.

Jason Nguyen brought up that the plan is designed to reduce vehicle traffic, thus reducing the need for roads that support them. He also spoke about "Captive Users" who do not and cannot drive and would benefit from adoption of this plan.

Ron Abeloe reiterated the concerns with how this project would be funded. He proposed asking the citizens to pay for it through a sales tax increase.

Ian Thomas commented that he doesn't own a car and travels exclusively by bike and foot. He expressed the importance of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure on public safety and mobility for the residents of Grand Junction.

Rebecca Scarrow said she had not read the plan but expressed concerns that adoption of the plan would dictate code revisions and that the development community would ultimately become responsible for funding the plan.

The public comment period was closed at 7:40 p.m. on March 28, 2023.

Discussion

Dave Thornton noted that the concerns for the future of Orchard Ave were part of an undertaking by the County and were not a consideration for this plan. Additionally, he noted that the Ped & Bike Coordinator position referenced in the plan was the same thing as the Mobility Planner position.

Henry Brown brought up some examples of how grant funding was already providing mobility improvements in the City. He noted that there would be challenges when implementing the plan and that compromises would need to be made to best accommodate all parties.

Felix Landry commented that while the 2020 One Grand Junction Plan called for pedestrian and cycle infrastructure but could not itself be used to acquire grant funding. He noted that if an expense is deemed necessary, it will be funded one way or another. Additionally, he noted that grant funds acquired to fund ped & bike infrastructure could often be leveraged to provide improved infrastructure for all modes of transportation.

Commissioner Scissors asked how the funding mechanisms suggested by the plan impacted the grant funding decisions. He proposed eliminating the contentious language from the policy section of Chapter 6. He also brought up that there was not an actual deadline for adoption and requested more time to solidify the plan.

Dani Acosta noted that the policy addressed the demand aspect and not just infrastructure was because many of the grants currently available were demand based.

Commissioner Ehlers asked why an economic feasibility had not been done to create an estimate of how much the project would cost prior to identifying funding methods. He asked if a continuance would be possible for this type of application.

Commissioner Weckerly proposed asking the citizens of Grand Junction if they would be willing to fund this plan. She mentioned that the trail systems would require additional development which would increase the price on developers. She stated that the item would require several more workshops before she could support it.

Commissioner Herek expressed concerns about the language in the plan and the impact of this proposal on stakeholders.

Commissioner Secrest stated that he was not opposed to the plan, he was opposed to it tonight.

Commissioner Duyvejonck noted that the stakeholders are not just the business community and the bike community and that the steering committee had done a good job with outreach. However, she noted that not all voices had been heard and that more time should be given to allow those stakeholders to address their concerns. She also asked if the future workshops could discuss the grant applications and updating the language to reflect who would be financing the plan.

Commissioner Teske asked for clarification as to which parts of the plan had the most concerns.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan request City file number CPA-2023-167, I move that the Planning Commission continue this application so that further review and study can be done in workshops as well as asking staff to particularly look at language within the plan that would identify direct responsibility for implementation of it.”

Commissioner Duyvejonck seconded; motion passed 7-0.

2. Zoning Code Amendment

ZCA-2023-172

Consider a repeal and replace of the 2010 Title 21 Zoning and Development Code as amended.

Staff Presentation

Felix Landry, Planning Supervisor, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Elizabeth Garvin and Gabby Hart, consultants with Clarion Associates, elaborated on the presentation.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Ehlers asked if there was any language in the proposed ordinance or the code that would require the City to revisit the adjacent topics. He also asked about the amendments and what specifically was being proposed this evening.

Tamra Allen stated that while the language in the ordinance concerning the adjacent topics could not be codified, the Planning Commission could amend their recommendation to City Council to include their concerns on any topics they believe should be revisited in the future.

Commissioner Secrest asked if there was any language being added regarding underground utilities or if the amendment was just providing clarity.

Commissioner Scissors asked if the memo containing committee comments about undergrounding and electric vehicles was in response to the edits proposed in the “Consolidated Draft Proposed Edits” document.

Public Hearing

The public *comment period* was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Rod Hoover commented that the City was moving too quickly with the plan and that there was not enough time for citizens to read and understand the issues being discussed.

Greg Tolle questioned the max height of structures for the various residential zone districts and expressed concerns about the height of future developments impacting existing properties.

Dave Zollner expressed concerns about retiring the R-1 and R-2 zone districts and the need for “transitional areas” from higher to lower density neighborhoods.

Mark Austin expressed concerns that there were many amendments to the code without adequate time for the community to review it.

Jane Quimby wondered why the amendment needed to be rushed and speculated that it was tied to the upcoming City Council election.

Ron Abeloe commented that he would like more time to review the amendments to the proposed changes.

Mike Foster mentioned that the least amount of time had been given to the Module 3, which he deemed the most important module.

Bill Wade noted that while the Development Code Committee was formed in February of 2022, the first meeting wasn't until April. He requested continuation of the item to allow more time for deliberation of the proposed code.

Diane Schwenke requested continuation of the item to allow more time for deliberation of the proposed code.

Rebecca Scarrow cautioned that the increase in costs on developers could hinder development.

The public comment period was closed at 10:07 p.m. on March 28, 2023.

Discussion

Felix Landry addressed comments and concerns about community engagement and the project timeline. Additionally, he spoke about the desire for the new code to be more flexible while still meeting the expectations of the existing properties and land uses.

Elizabeth Garvin commented that there are always reservations when adopting new code but noted that there was a “clean-up” period to address oversights in the months that follow.

Commissioner Ehlers asked if there was any public comments or feedback requesting that the item be expedited for approval.

Commissioner Scissors asked if the existing ZDCC would retain its members and continue to provide input on future maintenance of the code.

Commissioner Weckerly asked for Elizabeth's professional opinion on how long it takes to complete a code rewrite of this magnitude for a city this size. She recalled that the proposed timeline for the code rewrite was particularly short. She asked why the max height for structures in the R-12 zone district was more restrictive than in the R-8 zone district. Additionally, she asked for clarification about the max density for properties currently zoned R-O (Residential Office) since they would now be constrained to the Mixed-Use zone district requirements. Lastly, she brought up her desire to revisit the landscaping code.

Commissioner Secrest echoed the concerns that the process was being rushed.

Commissioner Duyvejonck stated her agreement with the points that had been made.

Commissioner Herek stated her desire to continue this item to allow further review.

Commissioner Ehlers commented that there was no particular urgency to pass the amendment and that he would like to allow more time for review and consideration.

Tamra Allen requested a timeframe and specific sections that required further consideration should the Planning Commission recommend continuing the item.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the request to repeal and replace the 2010 Title 21 Zoning and Development Code of the Grand Junction Municipal Code as amended, file number ZCA-2023-172, I move that the Planning Commission recommend continuance with a directive of the staff working with the Planning Commission through workshops as well as the Code Committee to determine an appropriate timeframe and remaining issues to be resolved."

Commissioner Scissors seconded; motion passed 7-0.

3. Comprehensive Plan Amendment CPA-2023-176

An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 4986 and Adopting the One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan with Revised Zone Districts to be Consistent with the Zoning & Development Code Update.

Discussion

As this item was a companion to item two which was continued, this item was determined to be continued as well.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, City file number CPA-2023-177, I move that the Planning Commission continue this item in accordance with the continuation of agenda item number two this evening.”

Commissioner Scissors seconded; motion passed 7-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Scissors moved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote to adjourn was 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 p.m.