

GRAND JUNCTION PLANNING COMMISSION
April 25, 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, and Keith Ehlers.

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

There were 17 members of the public in attendance, and 2 virtually.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) from March 28, 2023.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Pino Annexation Zone of Annexation

ANX-2022-484

Consider a request by Smart Choice Res, LLC to zone 1.12 acres from County RSF-R (Residential Single Family Rural) to R-5 (Residential – 5 du/ac) located at 3140 E Road.

Staff Presentation

Dave Thornton, Principal Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Courtney Patch, a representative with River City Consultants, was present and available for questions.

Questions for staff

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Charles Gunther clarified that the north property line for the annexed parcel only extended to the center of the southern canal road of the Grand Valley Canal, not to the center of the canal itself.

Applicant noted that the surveyor of the property had the correct property line designation.

Commissioner Weckerly asked staff if they could provide more context for the property boundary.

Commissioner Ehlers noted that the City's Development Map showed that the property aligned with Tract G of the Pioneer Meadows to the West as intended. He encouraged Mr. Gunther to follow up on the matter at City Council. He asked Jamie Beard if the Planning Commission needed to clarify uncertainties between the legal descriptions/staff reports and the improvements survey.

Dave Thornton ensured that the City Surveyor was working with the surveyor for this project.

Jamie Beard clarified that the role of the Planning Commission was to forward a recommendation to City Council for the zone of annexation.

The public comment period was closed at 5:53 p.m. on April 25, 2023.

Discussion

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion "Mr. Chairman, on the Zone of Annexation request for the property located at 3140 E Road, City file number ANX-2022-484, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report."

Commissioner Secrest seconded; motion passed 6-0.

2. Recla Metals Zone of Annexation ANX-2022-818

Consider a request by RECLA METALS L.L.L.P to zone 9.31 acres from County I-2 (General Industrial District) to City I-1 (Light Industrial) located at 479 30 Rd.

Staff Presentation

Dani Acosta, Senior Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Jeffery Fleming with Colorado Land Advisor was present and available for questions.

Questions for staff

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

The public comment period was closed at 6:12 p.m. on April 25, 2023.

Discussion

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Scissors made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Zone of Annexation for the property located at 479 30 Rd, City file number ANX-2022-818, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Ehlers seconded; motion passed 6-0.

3. Mesa Trails Planned Development Extension **PLD-2023-243**

Consider a request by Foothills Housing 2 LLC and Foothills Housing 5 LLC to amend the phasing schedule of the approved Outline Development Plan for “The Community” development, now known as “Mesa Trails,” on approximately 177 acres located at 2350 Highway 6 and 50 between 23 ¼ and 23 ¾ Roads, from G Road to Highway 6 and 50.

Commissioner Teske recused himself from deliberating on this item.

Staff Presentation

Nicole Galehouse, Principal Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Ty Johnson with Kaart Planning spoke on the progress of the project so far and the request for the extension.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Weckerly asked if this proposal was consistent with other ODPs.

Commissioner Ehlers asked the applicant if the extension request was accepted outright or if there was any back and forth with staff.

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

The public comment period was closed at 6:21 p.m. on April 25, 2023.

Discussion

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Ehlers made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Mesa Trails request to amend the phasing schedule of the previously approved Planned Development, located at 2350 Highway 6 and 50 between 23 ¼ and 23 ¾ Roads, from G Road to Highway 6 and 50, City file

number PLD-2023-243, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact as provided within the staff report.”

Commissioner Secrest seconded; motion passed 5-0.

4. Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan

CPA-2023-167

Consider 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 Repeal and Replace Resolution 48-18 (2018 Complete Streets Policy). This item is being continued from the March 28, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting.

Staff Presentation

Dave Thornton, Principal Planner, introduced exhibits and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Questions for staff

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

Shawn Norris, president of Grand Valley Irrigation Company (GVIC) spoke on behalf of the 4 major irrigation providers and noted their opposition to the use of the canal system as pathways for multimodal transportation.

Tina Berdenzini, General Manager for Grand Valley Water Users Association (GVWUA) added that the canals are not lit or policed and should not be used by the public.

Jackie Fisher, Office Manager with Orchard Mesa Irrigation District (OMID) echoed that the canals were private property and were unsuitable for use as urban trails.

Kirsten Kurath gave an example of an instance when use of a canal road by the public lead to a lawsuit and explained why irrigation providers were so hesitant to allow use of the canal roads as urban trails.

Richard Blum noted that some of the canals run through people’s backyards. He echoed that the canals are dangerous and provided an anecdote about his family member crossing a canal.

Kyle Vanderberg with Redlands Water and Power echoed the safety hazard these canals posed. He worried that any indication of these canals being used as urban trails, future plan or otherwise, would mislead the public into thinking the canals were open for public use. He added that people using the canals are trespassing as the canals are private property.

Charles Gunther, assistant manager of the GVIC, urged staff to remove any mention of the canals as proposed trails from the Active Transportation Corridor Map.

The public comment period was closed at 7:18 p.m. on April 25, 2023.

Discussion

Dave Thornton clarified that none of the trails proposed in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan would be located along irrigation canals. He noted that the proposed trails along canals in the Active Transportation Corridors Map from 2018 were considered due to their high connectivity, but that the City would need to obtain permission from the irrigation companies before any development could occur.

Commissioner Weckerly asked if the Ped & Bike Plan codified the use of the canals as trails. She asked about the previous discussions around including the proposed canal trails on the Active Transportation Corridor Map. She requested that in future info sessions with the public, the City make it clear that the canals were off limits to the public. She reiterated her concerns about who would bear the costs of implementing this plan.

Commissioner Scissors asked if there were any studies done on increased traffic on the canal roads following adoption of the Active Transportation Corridor Map. He asked if there was an existing map that excluded the canal roads from the City's inventory of available trails. He requested that such a map be made available to the public.

Commissioner Ehlers asked if there was any language in the Ped & Bike Plan that would allow the city to legitimize the proposed canal roads as multimodal transportation corridors. He commented that the proposed plans did not do a good enough job of properly communicating implementation and how use of private property would be handled.

Henry Brown noted that the current Active Transportation Corridor Map listed Patterson Rd as a route, but that there were not many bicyclists/pedestrians using the road since they knew it was heavily trafficked by vehicles.

Felix Landry explained that the trails proposed in the 2018 Active Transportation Corridor Map were showing up in the Ped & Bike Plan because there had not been any discussion to remove them as options for future trail systems. He indicated that there was currently a map available through the City's Development Map that showed only the publicly available ped and bike routes.

Tamra Allen explained that if someone were to look up available trails in Grand Junction, the resources they would find do not show trails on the canals. She cited an excerpt from the Ped & Bike Plan about accidents between vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists and highlighted the importance of finding safe ways for the community to move about the city.

Commissioner Herek asked if there was language in the Ped and Bike Plan which discouraged public use of the canal roads.

Commissioner Secrest thanked staff for their work in addressing the concerns about implementation that the Commissioners had at previous hearings and workshops.

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Scissors 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 forward a recommendation to City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report for adoption of the plan and approval of amendment of the Active Transportation Corridor Map in the Grand Junction Circulation Plan and of amendment of the Active Transportation Corridor Map in the 2020 One Grand Junction Comprehensive Plan, and replace and sunset the Complete Street Policy with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.”

Commissioner Ehlers seconded; motion passed 6-0.

5. Zoning Code Amendment-Cannabis Manufacturing Facilities ZCA-2023-200

Consider a request by the City of Grand Junction to Amend Title 21 of the Grand Junction Municipal Code to regulate cannabis product manufacturing facilities by providing use-specific standards, specific location requirements, and definitions.

Staff Presentation

Nicole Galehouse, Principal Planner, introduced exhibits into the record and provided a presentation regarding the request.

Questions for staff

Commissioner Scissors asked for clarification on the definition of Cannabis-Infused Product Manufacturers.

Commissioner Ehlers stated his confusion about discrepancies between the terms defined in the staff report and those listed in the presentation. He asked why there was specific regulations pertaining to cannabis manufacturers in comparison to other business that utilized hazardous materials. He asked what the basis of discrimination was in determining the extent of the overlay.

Commissioner Teske inquired about “bee-assisted” extraction. He asked if a business had to be both in a zone that allowed cannabis manufacturing and in the proposed overlay.

Commissioner Weckerly asked how the proposed zoning changes would impact the cannabis manufacturers.

Tamra Allen offered suggestions of terms that further outlined the extraction process to better align with industry standards and expectations.

Public Hearing

The public comment period was opened at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, via www.GJSpeaks.org.

The public comment period was closed at 8:16 p.m. on April 25, 2023.

Discussion

Motion and Vote

Commissioner Scissors made the following motion “Mr. Chairman, on the Zoning and Development Code Amendment, ZCA-2023-200, I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report.”

Commissioner Weckerly seconded; motion passed 5-1.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ehlers moved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote to adjourn was 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.