

**OFFICIAL MINUTES JULY 10, 2013  
CITY OF GUNNISON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**7:00PM**

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<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>EXCUSED</b>
Erik Niemeyer	X		
Erich Ferchau	X		
Andy Tocke	X		
Bob Beda	X		
Greg Larson	X		
Stephanie White			X
Councilor Stu Ferguson	X		

OTHERS PRESENT: Community Development Director Steve Westbay and Planning Technician Pam Cunningham

**I. CALL TO ORDER AT 7:08 PM BY CHAIR GREG LARSON**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**III. UNSCHEDULED CITIZENS.** There were none.

**IV. CONSIDERATION OF THE JUNE 26, 2013 MEETING MINUTES.** Commissioner Tocke moved and Commissioner Niemeyer seconded to approve the June 26, 2013 meeting minutes as presented.

Roll Call Yes: Ferchau, Beda, Larson, Ferguson, Niemeyer, Tocke  
 Roll Call No:  
 Roll Call Abstain:  
 Motion carried

**V. COUNCIL UPDATE.** Councilor Ferguson updated the Commission on recent Council business:

- The majority of Council business has been background work to get the new Communications Center and Police Department going; those pieces seem to be coming together. It is an incredibly ambitious project because of the timeframe—the County wants Dispatch out of the County building by January 1<sup>st</sup>. Director Westbay interjected that the actual building structure is not complicated, but the electronics and lay of the land for operational needs complicate it quite a bit. Councilor Ferguson said there will be 15,000 feet of wire in the building.

Commissioner Beda asked if a Conditional Use will be required for the communications towers in the Industrial zone district where the new Communications Center will be located. Councilor Ferguson stated that they will need radio towers. Commissioner Beda asked how the towers will fit with the Airport Overlay zone and if they will need lights. Director Westbay replied that there is no Airport Overlay zone. Councilor Ferguson stated that as long as the towers are under a certain height lights won't be required. But it is a good point to see if a Conditional Use is required. Director Westbay will look into it.

- Most other Council business has been housekeeping.

**VI. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

- Commissioner Beda asked to be excused from the July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting and Commissioner Ferchau asked to be excused also.

**VII.** Councilor Ferguson moved to excuse Commissioners Beda and Ferchau from the July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting and Commissioner Niemeyer seconded the motion. Director Westbay asked if they would like to amend the motion to excuse Commissioner White from tonight's meeting. They both agreed to amend the motion and second. Motion to excuse Commissioners Beda and Ferchau from the July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting and Commissioner White from the July 10, 2013 meeting.

Roll Call Yes: Ferchau, Tocke, Beda, Larson, Niemeyer, Ferguson  
Roll Call No:  
Roll Call Abstain:  
Motion carried

**VIII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS (continued)**

- Commissioner Ferchau stated that he has had conversations with the County Commissioners about alternate locations for rebuilding the courthouse. He feels something as significant as that could trigger other things. He said "My thought is that we should slow down enough to consider putting the courthouse by the jail and moving the rodeo grounds out of town and look at the complexion of downtown and over time what do we need, parking being one consideration. Put a hotel over there, but the hotel people want to be accessible to the highway. Maybe a park and parking. I'd like a reaction to bigger picture thinking and does it make sense to formulate a bigger vision plan. The whole point of it was, it is very hard to raise big private money if people don't get to see big things happen. It is hard to do little pieces at a time. But if you are going after big money, if there is a bigger plan, it tends to be something, that if you put their name on it, they will give the money. What is the reaction to that? It is long range growth planning, but it is not government doing it. However, government is doing something (building the courthouse and creating an opportunity to significantly change downtown) that is a significant piece of that kind of puzzle. If you are going to have the energy and change that you want to play off of, whether it is the college, hospital, or ski area changing plans."

Councilor Ferguson stated, "That evokes discussion with City Council at their retreat. Their priorities are being refined and will be discussed next week. One of the items on the radar is that Carolyn [Councilor Riggs] is inquiring about what could be done to promote a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly downtown. CDOT came today [to meet with the City Manager and others]. They are talking about traffic calming devices and splitting traffic. One of the possible things is splitting Hwy 135 so that Main Street is one-way and a block over it is one-way in the other direction.

Chair Larson asked Commissioner Ferchau what kind of response he got from the County Commissioners. Commissioner Ferchau responded that all three are receptive to the thought. But, it doesn't seem like there has been conversation on their end to indicate that it stuck.

Chair Larson said that discussions about the rodeo grounds are always political. Commissioner Ferchau responded, "It is really a private enterprise trying to play with different pieces of the puzzle. We need a lot of private money to get the DOW facility on track."

Commissioner Beda asked where the rodeo grounds could be relocated. Director Westbay responded they could be in the Equestrian Meadows in Gunnison Rising, which is in the city. Discussion then followed about FAA regulations.

Commissioner Ferchau stated that “the point is it is very hard to spend time and money investigating if you aren’t at least willing to think about it.”

Commissioner Beda responded “we have pumped a lot of money into the Fred Field Center and the rodeo grounds lately. If we had not done that, it would be easier for people to accept.”

Discussion turned to the concept of a downtown plaza and a Downtown Development Authority. Councilor Ferguson stated that would fall to the purview of the P&Z and City Council.

Director Westbay interjected that staff and Council have been working to refine and prioritize the ideas that came out of the Council retreat. Within that context economic development has come forth as a big discussion item. City Council and staff are formulating ideas about the City’s role in that. Part of it will be the City permitting process to make applications easier and the other part is infrastructure to serve those needs. He said that “the other part is as we have started to wrap up the *LDC*, we are thinking about a new *Master Plan* and how it will work through a public process. It is a defining document that gets to Erich’s discussion about how we will grow and develop identifiable objectives. We are thinking in that strategic sense to some degree. We will get direction from Council in the next few weeks.”

Councilor Ferguson stated that Council is trying to reach a consensus in the next few weeks and will no doubt focus on economic development.

Director Westbay stated that the hardest part is the public process; master planning is reaching out to the public and articulating that in goals and objectives.

Commissioner Ferchau asked if there was other input. He would like to figure out how much more to pursue the conversation with the County Commissioners.

Commissioner Tocke responded, saying, “I haven’t really given that much thought at the level you are talking about. I could see moving the rodeo grounds could be an improvement. Some don’t care for it by residential areas. I think you are right that when you have a number of things come together you do get a refreshed energy. I haven’t given much thought to the details, but will.”

Commissioner Niemeyer stated that he thought the Courthouse was on the National Register. Commissioner Ferchau responded that a portion of it is and they will restore it.

Commissioner Ferchau said, “About the Downtown Development Committee, to the degree that it is more government doing more government projects, we need to get private enterprise involved.” Chair Larson responded that there have been several attempts at economic development and it starts out great but people lose interest.

Councilor Ferguson stated, “The Downtown Development Authority is a separate district and people vote to tax themselves to fund improvements for that district. There are pros and cons.

Where there is interest, there is a vehicle to generate a large amount of money. Should the people in the district chose to do that, it could be significant.” Director Westbay said, “It is a board that determines the allocations of the funding that will occur in the district. It is a process that uses bonding authority and property taxing levies to pay for capital improvements. Generally they are community-oriented improvements. For example, in Mt. Crested Butte the initial though was to develop the community areas within the base area.”

Commissioner Beda asked how many of the buildings [on Main Street] are owner-occupied versus leased and whether the tenants have any say. Director Westbay responded that “One of the mechanisms is it defers property tax to the schools for a set period of time into the Downtown Development Authority. It is deferral of tax from traditional coffers.” Commissioner Beda asked if they have to pay the taxes back after the deferral. Director Westbay responded that “The theory is the improvements will increase property tax values, so after the 18 year sunset the property values will increase. The practicality is it is always a contentious situation when you talk about taking money out of different coffers.” Chair Larson stated that with limited funding for schools, it could be contentious.

Commissioner Ferchau asked “Was there a conduit from Gunnison Rising that has a slowdown with a bike path that slows down traffic?” Director Westbay replied that there is a special provision to make improvements to the Georgia Avenue corridor. It is a streetscape design where pedestrian traffic and development links the city and the annexation.

**IX. PLANNING UPDATE.** Director Westbay updated the Commission on recent activity in the Community Development Office. Staff has been working on:

- the annual Three Mile Review;
- a draft update of the zoning map;
- building encroachment at the US Forest Service office;
- future population projections for the county and development of the Gunnison Sage-grouse listing; and,
- staff has been thinking about the Master Plan and how to move forward

**X. ADJOURN.** Chair Larson adjourned to a Work Session at approximately 7:40 p.m.

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Greg Larson, Chair

Attest:

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Pam Cunningham, Secretary