

MONO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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MINUTES

January 10, 2013
(Adopted March 14, 2013)

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Scott Bush, Chris Lizza, Mary Pipersky, Dan Roberts, Steve Shipley

STAFF PRESENT: Scott Burns, CDD director; Gerry Le Francois, principal planner; Heather deBethizy, associate planner; Brent Calloway, Nick Criss & Wendy Sugimura, CDD analysts; Louis Molina, environmental health; Garrett Higerd & Walt Lehmann, public works; Stacey Simon, assistant county counsel; C.D. Ritter, commission secretary

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Steve Shipley called the meeting to order at the county courthouse in Bridgeport at 10:13 a.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.
3. **MEETING MINUTES:** Review and
***MOTION:** Adopt minutes of Nov. 8, 2012, as amended: Item 6B: Solano County's Marine **former Navy** base. (Bush/Roberts. Ayes: All.)*
4. **PUBLIC HEARING:** None.
5. **WORKSHOPS:** Scott Burns introduced workshops that deal with planning issues.
 - A. **INITIATION OF COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE:** Wendy Sugimura described a three-year work plan. An internal timeline staggers projects for staff. Non-grant-funded portion overlaps with area plans. Enhance Circulation Element beyond RTP.

Why coordination with Public Health? *Built environment has impact on health. Taking interdisciplinary approach.*

Resource Efficiency plan: Element of requirement to address greenhouse gas, plus reduce impact of future developments by tiering off General Plan EIR.

Integrating public transportation between communities? *Part of RTP update. Unmet needs hearing later.*

Scott Burns noted LTC funds short-range transit plans. Commissioner Roberts has observed that people are more willing to use public transit now.

Task 7 will reformat General Plan to be more user-friendly. RPACs are doing a lot of work on this.
 - B. **HOME OCCUPATION REGULATIONS:** Heather deBethizy described AB 1616, California Homemade Food Act, which allows home preparation of food for sale to consumers, mainly non-refrigerated products. Options: allow outright; ministerial permit with existing regulations; or more-discretionary permit. Existing regulations are compatible with AB 1616. Current home occupation regulations do not allow employees.

Nick Criss stated business model must be compatible with neighborhood, and Scott Burns stipulated use must be compatible with underlying designations. Commissioner Shipley cited several criteria for neighborhood compatibility: noise, visual and traffic. It's OK to store and sell wood, but not split it.

Shipley noted staff has steered applicants away from problematic projects by pointing out that yes, it could be done, but obstacles exist. If one person does it, would be OK. But if everyone did it, could be a problem.

DISTRICT #1
COMMISSIONER
Mary Pipersky

DISTRICT #2
COMMISSIONER
Steve Shipley

DISTRICT #3
COMMISSIONER
Daniel Roberts

DISTRICT #4
COMMISSIONER
Scott Bush

DISTRICT #5
COMMISSIONER
Chris Lizza

Commissioner Bush stated, "If someone standing in front of a property does not know business is there, then it's not more obnoxious. If nobody realizes you're doing it, no problem; if there's noise, there's a problem."

Nick Criss wanted some standards, criteria to decide if expanded home occupation would be allowed. Commissioner Roberts thought it was not a one-size-fits-all matter. Burns stated that if someone applies, commission must find that four standards are met. Maybe consider parcel size and screening. Bush thought noise was the biggest factor.

Burns noted potential of home occupation expanding into transient rental. Make it clear transient rentals are not OK with home occupation process. Mono's regulations are more restrictive than AB 1616. Should allow some, like employee (works there, or gets paid). DeBethizy noted employee is defined in legislation AB 1616: one full-time equivalent not including family or household member. Louis Molina thought AB 1616 gave Mono less discretion: "Shall not prohibit..."

Burns suggested listing the findings in home occupation and being consistent with AB 1616 (consider noise, snow, odors, pollution).

Stacey Simon noted that fire issues are not covered. Mono is required to permit cottage food industries only if they meet Mono's criteria on number, traffic control, noise, and parking (broadly applicable ordinances).

C. FLOODPLAIN REGULATIONS. Garrett Higerd noted Mono County has not yet adopted 2006 floodplain map. A new map has been prepared for Tri-Valley. See if any significant changes occurred in new ordinance. New definitions lead to cohesion. Appendix: Community rating system allows discounts on flood insurance premiums. The term "100-yr flood" was changed to 1% of annual, a more-statistical reference. Higerd recommended one foot above, or two feet if it would buy a discount.

Mono has not seen much construction in floodplains. Practically speaking, biggest impact would be for new development or remodels in Chalfant and Hammil. Base flood elevations, which are tied to survey data, exist only for West Walker River through Walker, stop by Topaz. Applicants should have surveyor file elevation certificate. June Lake Loop: Reversed Creek improvements have been made to floodplain. Better, more-realistic data were reviewed, but FEMA was not willing to state elevations. Other planning regulations (setbacks) keep people away from creeks. "Community" means Mono County as a whole minus Mammoth Lakes. Higerd will take floodplain regulations to all RPACs along with General Plan update and then return to commission.

D. PARKING REGULATIONS. Brent Calloway presented background on origin of parking regulations. Standards in Mono are typical, designed to prevent spillover parking conflicts. Ideas came from surveying other jurisdictions and Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation Manual. Local studies came into play, especially with snow issues.

Minimum parking standards? They don't work in downtowns (not enough space to enforce). With new development, parking becomes the dominant land use, resulting in loss of pedestrian scale, increase in traffic, congestion, greenhouse gas, and health impacts. Enforcing parking minimums in downtowns results in either issuing many parking variances or declining downtowns. Options to parking minimums: 1) Do nothing; 2) Alternative: in-lieu fees to pay for parking garages (successful in big cities, but not recommended for areas without intense development); 3) Reduce and simplify: density bonuses for underground parking, parking management incentives; 4) Eliminate minimums: allow market to manage parking; 5) Create maximums; 6) Eliminate on-site parking altogether, like Carmel with its completely built-out downtown.

What can Mono do? Pricing; "smart" technology to direct motorist to parking spots; on-street credits; sharing/trading; transit/bike/pedestrian improvements; active management (valet or under-utilized parking); or public lots (who would build, maintain?). Or, simplify regulations; e.g., Plumas County businesses voluntarily cooperated.

Calloway requested commission feedback.

Commissioner Lizza mentioned lack of parking in Lee Vining. One person contemplated ~~not fixing business plans, as he did not want to jump through hoops~~ **opening a business, but was deterred by restrictive parking regulations**. Purpose of changing regulations could be commercial activity, reducing pavement, or reducing regulations in general. Divide parking standards into residences, institutional facilities, and commercial activity. People do find parking spots, but it's in the best interest to provide customer parking. Use market forces to regulate parking to some degree. Business is seasonal here, so regulate for peak season and non-seasonal use.

Commissioner Shipley suggested a public lot at [defunct] Buster's Market in Bridgeport so people could walk to businesses. On-street parking as much as possible is fair game. Parking overburdens small businesses, and metered parking is not applicable. Mammoth's #1 problem is parking.

Commissioner Roberts noted June Lake businesses can't meet parking requirements.

Shipley asked about studies on parking's impact on business and neighbors. On-street parkers would walk to businesses. Revamp if there's a way to ensure not overburdening other business. Level the playing field. If parking were on-street only, lion's share would go to the business with the most.

Does lack of parking affect business? Commissioner Lizza stated that if Lee Vining followed the Bridgeport model, his business [at Mono Market] would increase. Wendy Sugimura cited studies from larger urban areas mentioned by consultant for Bridgeport Main Street Project. Provide parking in more creative ways; e.g., closing Jolly Cone driveway to open up multiple diagonal parking spaces.

Shipley wanted to utilize streets toward parking requirements. Signs could direct people to public parking, especially on event weekends.

Garrett Higerd indicated Public Works would support reforming parking requirements. When Caltrans agrees to do progressive activities, it wants Mono to make up by taking on long-term snow removal maintenance, irrigation, etc. Mono holds a bag of liabilities related to that. A business district creates a permanent funding stream for parking spaces. However, Public Works gets more to maintain, and does not have designated funding sources to pay for parking. Meters are not practical, but zones of benefit could work. Roberts suggested meters as an alternative to zone of benefit.

Commissioner Lizza thought a lot of support for reform existed. Commissioner Pipersky wanted to look at parking regulations from community standpoint rather than countywide basis. Encourage on-street parking, improve properties by landscaping. Commissioner Bush cited Walker's 1.5-mi length and no on-street parking, which limits pedestrians. Relax standards, let communities work it out.

6. REPORTS:

A. DIRECTOR: 1) Bridgeport Main Street: Wendy Sugimura is working with RPAC on new painting scheme; 2) Bridgeport public facilities: Mono Supervisors want to address public facilities with Mono purchasing property for that, but take stock first; 3) LAFCO: Spheres of Influence and Municipal Service Reviews are under way; 4) Sage grouse: Mono Supervisors directed Mono to help prevent listing.

STACEY SIMON: Mono Supervisors denied geothermal appeals by two entities. LIUNA filed suit Dec. 14, and Simon is working on defense with Ormat and consultants.

B. COMMISSIONERS: None.

7. INFORMATIONAL: No items.

8. ADJOURN at 12:50 p.m.

Prepared by C.D. Ritter, commission secretary