

MONO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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MINUTES

July 11, 2013
(Adopted August 8, 2013)

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Scott Bush, Chris Lizza, Mary Pipersky, Dan Roberts, Rodger B. Thompson
STAFF PRESENT: Scott Burns, CDD director; Gerry Le Francois, principal planner (by videoconference); Brent Calloway, associate analyst; Nick Criss, compliance officer; Garrett Higerd, public works; C.D. Ritter, commission secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Dan Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. at the county courthouse in Bridgeport and Commissioner Thompson led the pledge of allegiance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

3. MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: Adopt minutes of Special Meeting in Mammoth, June 13, 2013, as amended: Item 1: [meeting] at the ~~county courthouse in Bridgeport~~ **Town/County Conference Room in Mammoth Lakes**; Item 4, discussion: ~~LADPW~~ **LADWP**. (Lizza/Thompson. Ayes: 3. Abstain due to absence: Bush, Pipersky.)

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 13-02/Central Business Parking Districts would amend the Mono County General Plan Land Use Element, Chapter 06 (Parking). In order to balance off-street parking requirements with existing community character and encourage more economically productive land uses, the amendment would designate central business parking districts in and around the main street areas of the Bridgeport Townsite, Lee Vining Townsite and June Lake Village. Within the districts, the requirements for off-street parking for commercial land uses would be reduced, and greater flexibility would be allowed for alternative means of addressing parking demand. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, an addendum to the existing General Plan EIR is being utilized. *Staff: Brent Calloway*

Brent Calloway described regulations via PowerPoint, stating the intent is to better reflect actual conditions in historic downtown communities. Mono Supervisors (BOS) wanted to simplify regulations and encourage more economically productive land uses. RPACs hesitate to talk about boundaries, so regulations were based on commercial land use designation (C), which works well in BP, is OK in June Lake (except lots of mixed use (MU) that allows (C), but mostly SFR), and the entire community of Lee Vining. In the past, strong sentiment existed to maintain commercial, so keep that. All communities are about ¼-mile long.

Changes in regulations: Provide 50% to 60% reduction. Not reducing requirement, just accounting for existing conditions that reduce demand in those districts. Communities are already compact and walkable, not sprawling suburban areas. Lots of street parking exists, especially in Bridgeport, and nightly rentals at motels and campgrounds don't need parking.

Fractional parking spaces? *Round up when >0.5*. Commissioner Bush objected, saying it looks like favoritism. If spaces are being reduced, just round down so it's not arbitrary – make it consistent. Avoid battle over one parking space. Commissioners Roberts and Lizza liked the flexibility of rounding either up or down. Commissioner Pipersky thought a proponent could address Planning Commission, but Commissioner Thompson asked if it's fair to bring proponent back to more meetings. Calloway noted businesses could appeal if they didn't like the rounding of their parking spaces.

DISTRICT #1
COMMISSIONER
Mary Pipersky

DISTRICT #2
COMMISSIONER
Rodger B. Thompson

DISTRICT #3
COMMISSIONER
Daniel Roberts

DISTRICT #4
COMMISSIONER
Scott Bush

DISTRICT #5
COMMISSIONER
Chris Lizza

Minimum parking on commercial property? Scott Burns stated standards apply to all parking. Calloway noted whole districts share characteristics, so reduce for all. Numbers could be adjusted if necessary.

Lizza noted communities don't really know about parking proposal yet despite outreach to RPACs. Go back with specific plan to see if 60% is what they want.

If ordinance is approved, could an existing business build on extra space (dumpster, whatever)? Burns noted that if parking is not needed, nothing says owner can't use for something else up to 40% lot coverage. If parking was constructed before requirements, it's harder to say no without research.

Bush asked if regulations are only for new business or significant change of use. People park in [available] spaces and walk elsewhere, he said, thus impacting the community. *Burns indicated the door is not open for reductions of existing parking.*

Lizza asked about growing an existing business? *Theoretically, if extra parking was set by prior regulations, probably wouldn't want to. Include something where parking is in compliance. RPACs were apprised of across-the-board cuts.*

Lizza indicated parking is the #1 issue in Lee Vining. No need to rush; get it for next season.

Change of use: Burns noted that if a business with limited parking wanted to grow, County would find the current amount of parking acceptable for the existing use, and only would require additional parking to account for the new expanded use. A business with decent amount of new parking could change use.

Alternatives: In conjunction with Director Review or Use Permit. Off-site spaces could be up to 1,320' away. Instead of 10' x 20', alternative dimensions would be smaller (9' x 18'), but not compact size. Bush noted parking enforcement only by business owners, and contrasted small cars in cities to big vehicles here. Why reduce number of spaces and size too? Calloway agreed to look into it.

Tandem: Allowed in urban areas. Employees only? Bush thought that someone who sees it does it too. If signed, people would know it's a special deal, with cars parked there for hours.

Off-site joint use (shared): Allowed now, but not with off-site businesses. Could one business lease spaces from another? *Yes.*

Reduction of one space is allowed for bike racks, shower facilities, etc.

CEQA for addendum: Social impact of finding parking space does not have environmental impact.

Recommend adoption or continue hearing after revisiting RPACs. Roberts commended good planning, noting people are healthier when they walk. Concepts shown in presentation are important. Bush noted parking spaces are easier to stripe and control with asphalt. On dirt, everyone parks wherever they want.

Burns suggested taking proposed ordinance back to RPACs along with Planning Commission ideas.

Commissioner Thompson described General Plan EIR as an umbrella and noted CEQA doesn't like piecemealed projects.

Burns noted Mono is doing an EIR with cumulative impact analysis.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT: None. CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENT.

MOTION: Continue to unspecified date after revisiting RPACs. *(Bush/Pipersky. Ayes: 5.)*

5. VARIANCE/Faris & Knott (at LDTAC's recommendation, this item has been continued to Aug. 8.)

This request is to vary from setback requirements to construct a two-car garage and workshop that would extend approximately 5 feet and 16 feet into the right of way on Juniper Drive (a private roadway) and encroach to within 10 feet of stream/surface water. The property is located at 667 Juniper Drive in Crowley Lake (APN 060-170-023) and has a land use designation of Single-Family Residential. Under the California Environmental Quality Act, an exemption under sections 15303(e) and 15305(a) is proposed. *Staff: Gerry Le Francois*

Gerry Le Francois noted many details yet to be worked out, so LDTAC had recommended continuance.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT: None. CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENT.

MOTION: Continue Variance/Faris & Knott to next meeting. *(Bush/Thompson. Ayes: 5.)*

6. WORKSHOP: SURFACE MINING AND RECLAMATION ACT (SMARA). Staff: Nick Criss

Nick Criss described the function of SMARA as cooperation between State and counties on required reclamation plans, bonds, annual inspections, and off-site disturbance. State can step in if a county is not in compliance. Mono has 14 mines, plus sand/gravel and pumice operations.

The Lead Agency Review Team (LART) is designed to assist lead agencies by corrective measures, but since 2009 has appeared more hostile than cooperative. Purported deficiencies were addressed repeatedly, yet response was ignored and eventually Mono received a 45-day notice. After Scott Burns and Nick Criss attended numerous meetings in Sacramento, Mono is now in the clear and part of a group working to highlight lack of communication. Enforcement efforts for Standard Industrial Minerals (SIM) have been under way since 2008. Multiple violation notices were issued, but SIM was allowed to cash bonds without notification. Lizza sat as a hearing officer. Mono County is suing SIM.

New inspection report form will require lead agencies to provide GPS coordinates and elevations. Mine operators also have to provide more detail to State and Mono.

For the General Plan update Mono must catalog mineral resources and aggregate materials. Sixty historic pits have been identified. Benton pit mine at Goat Ranch (north of SR 167 opposite Mono City) is new. Caltrans has closed five or six pits.

Burns noted Criss took issue with LART, but higher-ups disagreed. Offices didn't talk to each other. Mines & Geology Board threatened to take SMARA away from Mono. Monterey County has had the same problems. Posting documents at a common source would help. Mono has made an ongoing effort and commitment to SMARA, liberal in application to geothermal, cell towers and restoring sites after use. General Plan policies are located in Conservation/Open Space Element. Controversial gold mine was proposed earlier. Mono's policy is neutral: neither promotes nor discourages.

Does SMARA provide funding? Most pits are Caltrans, and Mono asked State to step in. Attorneys are competing. Mono charges for its time, but Caltrans buys materials elsewhere and is not paying. State Board needs to step in.

7. REPORTS:

A. DIRECTOR: 1) Budget town hall workshops: Latest version shows Planning Commission column; 2) Request on economic development issues: Draft strategy at next BOS meeting, follow-up workshop; 3) Casa Diablo 4: air district hearing July 15, pipeline now crosses Mammoth Pacific property and would require Use Permit; 4) BP visitor center: good traction by agencies, Mono facilitating/spearheading, but not buying property; 5) Biomass feasibility study: consulting firm looking at alternative sites; 6) Greenhouse gas: analysis offers tool for projects to tier off; 7) Frog/toad: Notice came as surprise when looked at maps and noted impact to Rock Creek Road recreation nodes, Convict Lake, Lake Mary, Ellery & Saddlebag lakes, Virginia Lakes, backcountry out of pack station in Walker. Listing is potentially significant, so botanist is helping. Requested extension of comment period would add 60-90 days.

GARRETT HIGERD: School Street Plaza is complete; streets project about 50% complete; Lee Vining about 2/3 complete, asphalt next week, sidewalk work remaining; June Lake streets project in fall (~\$3 million to invest), meet with CAC; meet with Chalfant RPAC regarding bike lanes; 2014 STIP cycle, data on Mono road conditions is powerful tool for programming future maintenance activities.

B. COMMISSIONERS: Bush: Today is 711, so patronize a local convenience store. Lizza: Mono Basin RPAC complimented public works project in Lee Vining. Garrett Higerd reported seeking other funding sources for a second paved entrance to Lee Vining community center parking lot and back driveway to fire station.

8. INFORMATIONAL: No items.

9. ADJOURN at 11:50 a.m. to August 8, 2013.

Prepared by C.D. Ritter, commission secretary