



Mills Planning & Zoning Board Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2024

Board Members Present: Bob Greenley, Leon Norvell, and Chris Volzke were present for the P&Z Meeting. Dale Smith and John Gudger were absent.

City Staff in Attendance: Megan Nelms, City Planner, Sabrina Kemper, Community Development Director, and Sarah Osborn, City Clerk

Chairman Leon Norvell called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM on March 7, 2024, as a quorum was present.

Chairman Norvell asked board members if everyone had read the minutes of the February 1, 2024, P&Z Board meeting and if there were any noted changes. There were none. Board Member Bob Greenley made a motion to approve the minutes. Chris Volzke seconded the motion. Chairman Norvell called for a vote to pass the minutes of the February 1, 2024, P&Z meeting. All ayes, motion passed.

Chairman Norvell asked Megan to present the first agenda item. Megan presented proposed bylaws to govern the processes and procedures of the P&Z. She stated that during the review and update of Title 17, she noted that they had no bylaws. There was discussion on whether there were bylaws before or not. Megan could not find a copy of previous bylaws, so she drafted these using examples from other entities around the state. She gave an overview of some of the main points, including a provision that allows members to participate virtually or call into the meeting. She also discussed term limits. Chris and John expire next year. Bob, John and Dale's terms expire this year, and she noted that Dale is filling an unexpired term.

Notice of the 3 upcoming openings was published on March 1, 2024. Sabrina informed the board that if they would like to be re-appointed to another term, they would need to let her or Megan know and fill out the application before the deadline. She knows Dale does not want to stay, so there is definitely one opening. She also stated that they have one applicant so far. Sabrina went on to explain the timeline and process, stating that interviews, if needed, of multiple applicants will be in May and then staff will make a recommendation to Council and appoint people in June so they will be ready for the first meeting in July. Leon stated he will probably not be staying and he is ready for someone else to have a chance. He would like to see some new people come in. Megan then asked the commission to continue reviewing the proposed bylaws and let her know of any other changes.

Chris mentioned the clause regarding missed meetings. He felt that missing 4 out of 6 was a little too lenient. Leon suggested dropping it by 1, to no more than 3 missed meetings out of 6. Chris concurred with that. Megan amended the document to state that if a member fails to attend 3 regular meetings without cause over 6 months, the seat will become vacant. Bob stated he agreed with the change.

Chris also noted the 5-minute time limit for people at a public hearing to speak. Megan stated that was a standard rule at the city and that council also limits speakers to 5 minutes each. She said there is a new clock/timer in the chambers that P&Z can also use.

Mills Planning & Zoning Board Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2024

Chairman Norevell then asked if there were any further comments on the proposed by laws. There were none. He asked for a motion. Board Member Volzke made a motion to approve the bylaws as presented, with the changes as discussed. Board Member Greenley seconded. All ayes, motion passed.

The next item on the agenda was the proposed amendments to Title 17, the Zoning and Subdivision regulations. Megan informed the board that there was a work session with the city council scheduled for Monday morning at 9 am. She wanted to present the draft to the P&Z as a work session tonight, have discussion and then give them until the next meeting to review more in-depth and make any comments, edits, suggestions, etc. She also presented the Summary Table of Changes, which outlined the major amendments made to the regulations.

Megan provided an overview of major changes and gave an overview of the process and timeline for adoption of the updated rules. She said the intent is to for the regulations to be similar to Casper's, while still remaining somewhat less stringent, more flexible and willing to work with proposed developers.

Regarding the other stakeholder input and reviews, she stated that Bill Fehringer at CEPI is providing a courtesy review at no charge to the city.

There was general discussion about the proposed amendments and Megan provided an overview of some of the key changes proposed, including: removing the requirement for gather neighbor signatures for rezoning and variance requests, including interactive hyperlinks within the digital document, requiring a traffic study for subdivisions with more than 20 lots, and permitted uses that require a special review permit.

Board Member Greenley asked about home businesses. He gave an example of a car repair business on 3rd and Benton, and the owner lives on the property, but uses garage to repair equipment. Megan responded that within the commercial and industrial districts, the regulations allow for caretaker housing. She stated the rules were outlined in the accessory use section, and state that someone is allowed to live on the same property as their business, where the business is the primary use.

Bob responded that the property was in a residential district, and it has been going on for at least five years. Megan stated that it would not qualify as a caretaker unit and explained that generally, we do not want to see businesses as the primary use of a parcel in a residential district. There was general discussion about the code update. Megan stated that there is no way to create a rule to fit every scenario. She also spoke about grandfathering and explained that any use or activity occurring on a property at the time of the updated rule adoption would be allowed to continue. The city is not going to retroactively go after people and make them comply with the new code. They get to keep doing what they are doing until the use is discontinued. She reminded the commission to focus on what is coming in and applying the new rules to those proposed developments, not what already exists.

Board Member Greenley then asked about mother-in-law homes or apartments. Megan thanked Bob and stated that was something that was supposed to be included, provisions for accessory dwelling units. She stated that she would add that language into the update for the commission's review next month.



Mills Planning & Zoning Board Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2024

Megan then asked the commissioners, as they review the proposed amendments, to think of any and all circumstances so they can “stress test” the new code. Either make something up or think of an old case and we will apply the new rules to it and ensure it works the way it is envisioned or if changes need to be made.

Board Member Volzke asked about the anticipated timeline for adoption of the new rules. Megan stated they will know more after the work session on Monday, but the hope is to have them adopted and in use by the new fiscal year, starting July 1.

Chairman Norvell then asked if there was any further discussion. There was none. With no further business, Chairman Norvell declared the meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM.

Leon Norvell, Chair

Attested: Sarah Osborn