



TOWN OF WILLISTON
Planning Commission Minutes
May 20, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.

Williston Planning Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jake Mathon, Kevin Batson, Paul Laska, Shannon Hiltner, Meghan Cope, Planning Commission Members; Ken Belliveau and Matt Boulanger planning staff

1) CALL TO ORDER

Jake Mathon called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

2) DISCUSSION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Ken Belliveau distributed copies of the December 2013 Report of the Williston Affordable Housing Task Force. Belliveau reviewed the findings and recommendations of the report. Belliveau discussed the sections of the Williston Development Bylaw (WDB) that could be changed in order to implement the recommendations of the task force. Belliveau handed out a summary of the impacted WDB sections.

Housing Targets:

Belliveau said the most likely assumption was that the overall growth target for Williston would be the same as it has been for the last 10 years, at 80 dwelling units per year. The goal stated in the report would be to build 50 of the 80 units at above 120% median, and 10 dwelling units each in three “affordable” categories, 100-120% median, 80-100% median, and below 80%.

Belliveau also explained that in addition to the overall targets for affordable housing, there is also a geographic mechanism, in that new dwelling units are regulated both as to when they are built and their location. Jake Mathon asked what the impacts would be of making the affordable housing goals regulatory- would a lack of construction of affordable units cause an overall slowdown in the construction of market-rate units. Paul Laska said that he felt the intent of the Task Force was to set the housing numbers as goals to be achieved through incentives, but that there were too many unknown factors to actually mandate that a certain number of units be constructed.

Ken Belliveau reviewed the scoring system under the existing Growth Management process. Belliveau gave the example that currently, affordable housing scores very high in the Growth Center and Sewer Service Area, but does not weigh as heavily for projects that are reviewed in the Agricultural/Rural Residential Zoning District (ARZD).

Meghan Cope asked if it was feasible to continue with 80 dwelling units a year including 56 units a year in the Growth Center, given the constraints presented by the land and sewer capacity available for new development there. Ken Belliveau said that at the current density

projects are developing, there might not be. However, overall, Finney Crossing is actually building at just above the minimum allowed density for the Taft Corners Zoning District (TCZD). Meghan Cope asked if the Town Plan should continue to prioritize the Growth Center for the bulk of the new residential growth in town. Ken Belliveau said that he thought it made sense to keep the overall allowed numbers of dwelling units constant. Belliveau said that he did think the densities in the Growth Center should be made higher. Cope said that she was in support of examining densities in the Growth Center. Ken Belliveau asked if the commission members felt that the targets should be regulatory or stated as goals.

Kevin Batson asked about the reworking of state Growth Center regulation and how it impacts affordable housing. Belliveau said that the new legislation provides some relief for projects with affordable housing from the Act 250 provisions.

Paul Laska said that his concern was that the Growth Management aspect was one aspect of the recommendations made by the committee.

Impact fees:

Ken Belliveau said that impact fees could be reduced along the same scale recommended for the reduction in water and sewer connection fees. Jake Mathon said that he was not in favor of lowering impact fees where the current fees do not cover the impacts of new development completely. Ken Belliveau said like it sounded like there would need to be further discussion on impact fees before a consensus is reached.

Meghan Cope asked if the Housing Trust Fund could cover the impact and sewer connection fees NOT paid by affordable housing. Ken Belliveau said that the fund would not be used to offset those costs, but would more likely be used to ensure ongoing affordability and to help buy down land costs.

Kevin Batson said that he was in favor of reducing water and sewer impact fees (connection fees) as a tool to help encourage the construction of affordable housing.

Meghan Cope said her main concern was that such a large reduction (50%) is offered for 100-120% of median income housing. Cope said that she felt the reduction should be steeper, with maybe a 20% reduction for the 100-120% category and then greater reductions for more affordable categories. The consensus of the group was to allow the following reductions in the impact and sewer connection fees:

Category	Discount
120%+	0%
100-120%	25%
80-100%	75%
Below 80%	100%

Accessory Dwelling Units

Ken Belliveau reviewed the proposed changes, which would allow ADU's to be a little larger (up to 720 square feet) and would remove the requirement that the property owner has to live in the primary dwelling unit. The group discussed the limits on owner occupancy. Jake

Mathon asked why the owner might be required to live on the property at all. Matt Boulanger said that there needs to be a line drawn somewhere delineating what a subdivision is.

3) MAY6, 2014 MINUTES

On a motion made by Shannon Hiltner and seconded by Kevin Batson, the commission members voted 6-0 to approve the minutes of May 6, 2014 with the following changes:

- Change “patters” to “patterns.”
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The meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.