

**Minutes
Cheney Planning Commission
Regular Meeting**

September 9, 2019

Commissioners Attending: Richard Mount, Jake Vibbert, Daniel Hillman, Vara Lyn Conrath and Brian Mangis.

Commissioners Absent: Dan Turbeville and David Early.

Staff Attending: Brett Lucas, Todd Ableman, Tynan Stevenson, Mark Schuller and Susan Beeman.

Councilmembers Attending: Vince Barthels.

Call to Order: Chairman Mount called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Minutes: Minutes of the July 8, 2019 regular meeting approved with a correction to show that Commissioner Hillman was present, although his name had been omitted from the roll call.

Citizen Participation: None.

Public Hearing: #2019-03
Residential Zoning Code Update

Chairman Mount opened the public hearing at 6:02 p.m. and reviewed the rules of procedure for public hearings.

Mr. Lucas introduced the draft ordinance and reviewed the proposed changes. He explained that the proposed increase in maximum lot size in the R-1 zone is intended to accommodate a developer who is interested in building larger houses on larger lots, at a higher price point. The increase in maximum lot size in the R-2 zone is intended to accommodate senior housing duplexes which would be entirely on one level, instead of stacked units.

The other proposed change would be to allow limited commercial use in the R-3 and R-3H zones, providing for a very small commercial space that is ancillary to the residential use, such as a coffee kiosk in the lobby of an apartment building.

Commissioner Hillman asked about parking and increased traffic that might be generated by such a commercial use. Mr. Lucas said that he did not expect people would drive to the apartment complex just to buy coffee. Customers are likely to be people who are

driving to the area to park and walk to class, or who live in the apartment complex. He would not expect this to result in a substantial increase in traffic.

Chairman Mount added that he also has concerns about this proposal. How many of these would be following the first? He is not in favor of that.

Commissioner Vibbert asked if this would have any drive-thru capabilities. Mr. Lucas said it would not, and it would be located within the lobby area. The use would be limited to eating and drinking only, and not other forms of retail. Chairman Mount suggested that the language be amended to prohibit the sales of alcohol.

Discussion continued.

Mr. Lucas explained that the last proposed change is to reduce the required parking in the Senior Housing Overlay Zone to 2 spaces per unit. Staff felt that was appropriate in the areas which would be occupied only by seniors. Commissioner Conrath asked for clarification that this would only apply to duplexes located in the new Senior Housing overlay zone.

Chairman Mount called for public comment. Hearing none, he called for discussion from Commission members. He added that he is not in favor of changing the code to allow for retail uses in the residential zones, as it could have a negative impact on existing businesses. Commissioner Hillman said that he is also opposed to opening that door. Commissioner Conrath agreed. Commissioner Mangis added that he is in favor of increasing the maximum lot sizes. Discussion continued.

Mr. Lucas suggested that the Commission could accept or reject each of the proposed changes, as desired; this does not have to be a 'package deal.'

Commissioner Mangis made a motion to recommend approval of the zoning code changes on maximum lot sizes and the required parking reduction for duplexes in the Senior Housing overlay zone, but to reject the proposed changes related to allowing retail uses in the R-3 and R3-H zones. Seconded by Commissioner Vibbert. The motion carried with Commissioners Vibbert, Conrath, Mount and Mangis voting yea, and Commissioner Hillman voting nay.

Public Hearing: #2019-04

Adding a New Chapter 21.66, Cottages/Tiny Homes

Mr. Lucas explained that the state legislature has been looking at ways to address affordable housing. He introduced Tynan Stevenson, an EWU student in the Urban & Regional Planning Program, who is currently working as an intern in the Planning Department. Mr. Lucas explained that Mr. Stevenson has been researching ways to alleviate the anticipated housing shortage by considering policies that could 'raise the bar' on affordable housing in the community.

Mr. Stevenson explained that he is proposing to add a new section 21.66 to the municipal code, addressing cottage housing and tiny home development. He noted that by definition, a cottage is not a 'tiny home,' as commonly defined, which often is on wheels. The cottage housing ordinance would apply to all detached single family homes which are not accessory dwelling units, manufactured homes, or mobile homes.

Mr. Stevenson showed illustrations of clustered cottage homes located around a common green space, with parking to the rear. He explained that this proposed ordinance is based, to a large extent, on the cottage housing code in Ellensburg. It would be limited to R-2 and R-3 zones, with a maximum unit density of 16 units per acre. He described characteristics of a cottage home development, and reviewed site development standards, which would include:

- Minimum of 4 cottages in a contiguous pattern;
- Must be connected to utilities;
- Utilities must be buried;
- Transportation network connectivity must be provided;
- Parking would be regulated as duplexes, with one off-street parking space per bedroom required;
- Open space requirement of 1,000 sq.ft. of open space per unit must be provided.

Mr. Stevenson explained that there would be individual unit standards, as well:

- Dedicated land set aside for each individual cottage unit (like a yard), with a minimum of 250 sq.ft. of usable space. (This would prevent any future construction of a detached house smaller than 250 sq.ft.)
- Setbacks would ensure minimal yards on all sides of each building.
- Accessory structures prohibited except certain sheds.

Mr. Stevenson reviewed the proposed design standards, and explained that this is where he is trying to ensure the cottage housing is aesthetically pleasing, and would maintain high standards for livability. He invited the Commission members to review and forward suggestions to him for incorporation into the draft document.

Extensive discussion followed, with concerns raised about how to keep these from becoming over-crowded, poorly maintained places where students are warehoused.

Mr. Stevenson added that because of the communal nature of these developments, with shared open space, cooperative ownership is common. With a cooperative, buyers are purchasing a share in the cooperative, rather than purchasing a house. When they get ready to sell, they sell the share back to the cooperative. The process is detailed on page 3 of the draft ordinance.

Mr. Lucas added that this could also work just like a rental apartment situation, where all the land is under one ownership and the individual units are rented out. The other alternative is some kind of cooperative ownership, and the state law is currently in flux with regards to condominiums.

Chairman Mount said that he would expect that nobody except developers would own any of these homes. Commissioner Vibbert said that the math would drive developers toward apartments, because the one acre lot that would accommodate 12 cottage units could be developed to hold 36 apartment units. Mr. Lucas agreed, and said that is why the cottage housing provision would only be found in the R-2 and R-3 zones. The higher density R-3H would be only for apartments.

Commissioner Hillman said that he lives in an R-2 neighborhood, and he sees this as a worse alternative to a duplex development. He is not a fan of the concept.

Discussion continued.

Mr. Schuller thanked Mr. Stevenson for his work on this topic. He noted that affordable housing is a major topic of concern in the state legislature, and was a central topic at the Association of Washington Cities conference last week. He admitted that he has a great fear of what this can turn into, until we get a handle on enforcing occupancy limits. He added that he would like to solve the problems of over-occupancy before we go this direction.

Mr. Stevenson stated that if this ordinance were adopted tomorrow, he does not expect anything would be built any time soon because of the financial incentives related to building apartments. But he added that people of his generation are growing up with HGTV and concepts of tiny homes, minimalism, and somewhere down the road, looking at some of this language again would be appropriate.

Chairman Mount thanked Mr. Stevenson for his presentation, and commended him for the quality of his research and the presentation, in general.

Commissioner Mangis said that in the landscaping section, it might be appropriate to encourage some percentage be in drought-tolerant plantings.

Mr. Lucas suggested that this is something we should keep on the back burner, and marry up with the building codes and the fire code. He added that state law is going to be addressing cottage housing at some point, too.

Chairman Mount commended staff for thinking ahead about how to address affordable housing. He feels it is essential for this commission to be looking ahead at how today's decisions will affect live in the community over time.

Commissioner Hillman noted that what caught his attention on this was the statement about increasing density. This seems to be something the Planning Commission has been moving away from recently. Mr. Lucas commented that he attended the Cheney School District presentation on enrollment projections last week, and they are looking at about another 4,500 students in 10 years, with an estimated 5,000 additional dwelling units on the West Plains. If you estimate 2.5 persons per household, you can see we're looking at a substantial population increase.

Mr. Stevenson noted that in developing this cottage housing proposal, he was letting the adopted Cheney Comprehensive Plan drive the document, and that is where the idea of increased density comes from.

Commissioner Hillman made a motion to continue this topic and the public hearing until the January 2020 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Mangis, and the motion carried unanimously.

Information Item: #2019-05
2018 Water Conservation Plan – Final Report

Mr. Ableman explained that the 2018 Cheney Water Conservation Plan was presented to City Council on July 23, 2019. He showed the conservation plan logo, and explained that all communications will feature this logo.

Mr. Ableman stated that Cheney is facing a water crisis in declining aquifer levels and limited alternative sources. He described the goals of this study being to provide a history and current status of the City's water supply; brand the movement; and set water conservation goals. The plan describes public planning and outreach efforts to support development of the recommendations, and recommends short-term conservation measures focused on how City residents view and use the potable water resource. It also provides a plan for implementing long-term measures.

Mr. Ableman described the process, which centered around a technical advisory committee that was appointed, and a public participation process. He added that the City can enact policies for water conservation, but must lead by example. The committee developed recommendations for the city council, for city staff, and for the school board. Their long-term recommendations included starting the design phase for a Class A Water Reuse (commonly referred to as a purple pipe system), and looking at Aquifer Storage & Recovery, which is the injection of treated drinking water into an aquifer for later recovery and use.

Discussion followed. Chairman Mount asked if the water rate increase that went into effect recently was intended to encourage conservation, or to provide funding to address future needs. Mr. Ableman said it was both; we need to start planning for future infrastructure costs.

Mr. Schuller stated that we have a lot of aging pipe and aging infrastructure, which will be a huge cost to replace. Mr. Ableman added that we just opened a bid for replacement of 600 linear feet of water line at \$200,000, or about \$1.8 to \$2 million per lineal mile. We have over 40 miles of water mains in the city. It is estimated that over 17 miles are either under-sized, or deteriorating steel, or some type of material other than PVC.

Mr. Ableman reviewed average single family residential winter and summer usage rates, and indicated the average usage in single family homes was significantly high, according to industry standards.

Commissioner Reports: None.

Staff Reports: Mr. Ableman said that construction season continues and is very busy, and traffic around the high school is a mess. Mr. Lucas added that the Harvest Bluff subdivision is within 5 permits of full buildout; they plan to have 100% of the remaining footings and foundations in before winter.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved By:

Susan Beeman, Secretary

Richard Mount, Chairman