

Meeting Minutes, Boulder Town Planning Commission

March 9, 2017

Commissioners present: Carla Saccomano, Colleen Thompson, Tabor Dahl, Perry Tancredi, and Donna Jean Wilson. Secretary, Peg Smith; Town Council Liaison, Pete Benson. Members of public: Mark Nelson, Steve Cox, Brynn Brodie, Bill and Adalee Muse, Constance Lynn and Matt Cochran, Mike Thompson, Donna Owen, Daniel Kennedy. Carla called the meeting to order at 6:02p.m.

Adopt the Agenda

Carla added an item about work process; what works best for each member (work meetings, offline individual?) Colleen moved to adopt the agenda, Tabor seconded. All approved.

Tabor moved to approve the February minutes, Colleen seconded. All approved.

Presentation by Matt Cochran: Skills Foundation

Boulder Heritage Skills Foundation started seven years ago, with about 40 people. Their guiding vision was the belief that self-sufficiency is critical for any town. Providing for its own needs using its own skills, promoting resilience through education, encouraging use of appropriate technologies were components of that vision. They started by inventorying existing resources and made note of obvious gaps.

At the core of Heritage Skills is food production and small scale agriculture. One of the first activities were the garden tours. Nearly every Boulder gardener works with unique soil conditions and microclimates, so each person's strategies were instructive.

The Seed Collective is an ongoing seed bank of local, open-pollinated, non-GMO seeds adapted to Boulder. The Seed Collective is both a source of seeds as well as a source of education on how to grow and successfully save seeds.

Donations collected from Heritage Skills enabled resident Eric Feiler to take a soil science class. He can now assess soil samples for microfungal and bacterial content and provide the compost nutrients to stimulate better plant growth through soil health.

Working with the town's Tree City initiative and Town Park committee, Heritage Skills participants are establishing a food forest and orchard in the Town Park. Another interest is the Fibershed Project, or "sheep to shawl." Fibershed is a nationwide movement to stimulate local production of fiber materials and cloth/clothes-making.

Land-based economics and sustainable beef production was an educational topic last winter. Kelly Heaton, from the Bar 10 ranch in the Arizona Strip, presented his own research and shared practical experience with sustainable, niche beef production, a lucrative market.

Skills members have set up a ham radio system with a repeater on Thompson Ledge that can reach Navajo and Henry Mountains. They also sponsor radio license testing in town once a year.

Probably the best known Heritage Skills event is the yearly Harvest Festival at Red House Farm. This daylong event always features demos and workshops on diverse skills: beekeeping, cider making, candle-dipping, permaculture, ham radio operation, animal processing, vermiculture, fabric dyeing, too many others to list. The event culminates with a local foods potluck and dance.

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Boulder Heritage Skills Foundation is exactly that. As Matt says, the group is foundational for Boulder's future. It is a landing for enthusiastic, mostly younger residents looking to make their lives here by blending heritage activities with rediscovered skills.

Constance suggested that the Planning Commission consider the resources of the Boulder Skills Foundation in its planning. She said they have the initial inventory from that first meeting.

Discussion of Rural Planning's assistance in updating General Plan

The Rural Planning Group is the group recommended by Meg Ryan to work with the town in updating the General Plan.

They're based in Utah, get funding from the state. They do things like capital assessments, website evaluation, town evaluations. They work with the town, don't impose their vision. We give them a list of what's important to us and they work with us, they inventory our General Plan and our ordinances to see whether they support what we say we want. They look at our budget, our debt, see what your town seems to be like and don't recommend things that wouldn't fit.

They would actually come here: start early one morning and stay until late the next day. They can look at other things online, but they want to be out talking to people and observing.

Carla had a conference call with them and has already given them a partial, introductory list of Boulder's strengths and weaknesses. For example, we might ask about housing, but it may involve so many things peripheral to housing that we wouldn't even think about. She suggests the Planning Commission review that list and ask the Town Council to compile a list of their own. She asked for the Commission's opinions:

Colleen said it would be a good place to start. Donna Jean said there are other things too, not just housing. Things like open space, ag, where best to put it, if we got cluster development? Perry said reason to do it would be to focus on the areas Carla outlined. It sounds like we can focus them precisely. They could come back with recommendations we decide not to take. Tabor said it would be positive to get a fresh perspective, but would it be a waste of time if they come back with suggestions we really can't or don't want to implement?

Mark Nelson asked if they outline a process. Carla said we give them a list of things we want them to focus on. They go through our ordinances and GP. Perry said it would be interesting to give them things we've been dealing with for years and haven't been able to solve. Pete said they might ask about the five acre minimum and suggest another way to accomplish the same goal.

Tabor asked about their timeframe, and Carla said they could do it this summer. Perry asked how often they might come. Could they return in five years? We could focus them on a couple issues now and they come back in 2-3 years where we give them more.

Carla asked the Commission to review the preliminary list she sent them. She'll send the results to the Town Council for their input. Then she can contact them and start setting dates.

Continue conceptual plan discussion of Fox Grove subdivision

Daniel Kennedy thanked the Commission for another discussion of his concept plan. He said there are two issues: the subdivision and then the road access.

First the subdivision: [references to the plat maps displayed]. The road stays a private road. There would be a road dedication on the plat, with the owners' names.) He's added a new fire hydrant between lots 3 and 4.

Kennedy wanted the Commission to approve what's happening in the new subdivision, and not include discussion or approval of the back lots. He said these are current, legal lots of record. As such, he said fire suppression is not required. He could put a road to access those lots at that

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time. However, Carla was insistent on the fire suppression. She reviewed a phone conversation she'd had yesterday with county officials. The Planning Commission may have made a mistake previously, but that doesn't set a precedent. [The fire marshall had consulted an old version of our ordinance, and not the one in effect at the time.]

Donna Jean said it isn't feasible to require fire suppression because there isn't water available back there. Carla said our job with planning is to look after the welfare of the town and future buyers. [There was continuing discussion regarding including fire suppression and road access to the back lots of the parcel, and was this applicable to the discussion of the new subdivision.]

Carla: It's not legal to create a landlocked parcel. He would need signoffs from current owners as to use of that easement (the south road). Perry questioned the access by a private road that isn't owned by Kennedy. (He has an easement for one owner, presumably himself.) Carla said Kennedy would have to provide documentation that shows the legality of the road easements.

Perry said the fact of the existing lots not being up to code makes it harder to ignore noncompliance when there's development happening [on the same main parcel].

Bill: I can see I'll have to bring fire suppression in, so will I. The writing is on the wall.

Carla said if Kennedy doesn't want to do the fire suppression on the back lots and just wants us to look at the front lots as Phase 1, then he should merge those back lots back into the main parcel, and then what is being subdivided is just these four lots.

Tabor said the state fire marshall will be coming here on March 15 and they can walk the property and ask him to weigh in on the situation.

Carla said Fox Grove subdivision is still in conceptual phase until the road access is figured out.

Discuss the ZO change application regarding terms for PC members

The Town has completed their work on updating the Zoning Ordinance with clarification of Planning Commission terms. We need to schedule the public hearing to complete the process. Peg will schedule for next month.

Discussion of Work Flow:

Carla said she's like to continue keeping meetings to an hour. General Plan and subdivision conversations usually take a lot of time. She suggested that in order to keep the meetings themselves as brief as possible, each Commissioner take a component of a topic and do the research outside the meeting. Perry said the preceding discussion highlights several items that would have benefited from this. "It would be nice to know what we'll need to know about before the meeting." For example, if it is known that next month's discussion is about lot sizes, individuals would be assigned to research the applicable ordinance and describe to the group. Peg will get agendas out 10 days ahead of each meeting

Discuss upcoming business for April 13 meeting

Likely items on the next agenda include:

- Rural Planning—look at website, look at GP, and send list to Carla. She'll send list to TC for their next meeting.
- Arts Council

Donna Jean moved to adjourn, Colleen seconded. Carla adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Peg Smith, Planning Commission Clerk

Date