

**VILLAGE OF SPARTA  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

**Regular Meeting**

**June 5 2023 @ 7pm**

**75 N. Union St. (Sparta Civic Center)**

**Present:** Chairman Bob Liscomb, Commission members Jon Braybrook, Robert Carlstrom, Emilie Henry, Rose Frederick, Gary Moody, Ryan Wolford, and Robert Whalen.

**Also present:** Village Manager Jim Lower and Village Clerk Katy Shelton.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **Roll Call:** Formal roll call was taken. Those in attendance/absent are noted above.
3. **Minutes:** Approve Regular Planning Commission minutes of May 1, 2023. Motion by Moody with a second by Frederick to approve. Motion passed unanimously.
4. **Additions or Corrections to the agenda – Approval of agenda:** No additions or corrections. Motion by Whalen with a second by Moody to approve. Motion passed unanimously.
5. **Public Comment on Agenda Items:** None.
6. **Communications:**
  - a. **Rogue River Flats Site Plan Update:** This project is on hold for now. Their current site plan approval will expire this

month. The developers will start over when they are ready to start work on the project again. :

- b. **Housing Next Presentation by Brook Oosterman:** He gave an extensive presentation explaining Housing Next and their history. He also discussed the housing needs in Kent County as well as the goals of Housing Next. He mentioned that the complete 200 page Housing Needs Assessment could be accessed at [www.housingnext.org](http://www.housingnext.org).

7. **Public Hearing:** None.

8. **New business:**

- a. **Site Plan Review – 275 Hickory – Baker Investment Properties LLC:** The proposed site plan involves the construction of a new and expanded building to replace the one that was destroyed by fire. It will include office space, parking, and loading bays. The plan will relocate the storm water lateral that was located under the prior building. The building will be used to house Great Lakes Firearms and Ammunition once completed. This is a 26,000 square foot industrial facility with 34 parking spaces.

Roosien & Associates was hired by Baker Investments to put together a site plan and shepherd it through the Village processes. The Village engineering firm Prein & Newhof has reviewed the plans and discovered one issue: that of impervious areas and storm water storage. Village staff recommends approval of the site plan contingent upon an agreement being reached regarding that issue.

Matt Cole from Roosien & Associates was present to explain the project and answer any questions. It was noted that the

storm water lateral will be fixed which is a plus for the Village.

The lack of a fire suppression system at the facility was questioned. It was stated that that is a very expensive item and is not required. Commissioner Whalen expressed that he believes that those systems SHOULD be required in all new construction.

Motion by Moody with a second by Frederick to approve the site plan contingent upon an agreement being reached regarding impervious areas and storm water storage. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. **Master Plan Update:** Danielle Bouchard from Mckenna Associates was present to give an update. She said they had had an “Open House” on May 22, 2023 to get input from the public. Next steps will be a land use draft, a joint planning areas draft, and a parks and recreation plan She expects to get a full draft of the Master Plan to Village staff for review by the end of June. Once the Planning Commission approves it, the Plan will be sent to the Village for a 63 day comment period so that all entities can weigh in. She anticipates a final vote on the Plan possibly happening in November.

She also reviewed the results of a recent survey which registered 290 responses which is 7% of the Village population. The survey queried respondents about what things do they most like about the Village, what things they would change, most preferred housing type, and what things they would like more of. There was also a recent business

leaders workshop with the DDA Director asking about their needs.

- c. **Draft Marijuana Ordinance Discussion:** The Village Manager explained that the Planning Commission had asked him to draft a Marijuana Ordinance for review. He has submitted that draft to the Planning Commission. He said that implementing the policies discussed by the Commission would require the adoption of two ordinances and one resolution by the Village Council. The first ordinance would create Sparta's Marijuana Establishments Ordinance and the policies and procedures contained within it. The ordinance would also repeal prior ordinances banning these establishments. The second ordinance would amend Sparta's zoning ordinance to include Marijuana Establishments as a non-residential special use, allowed in the CG and LI districts. Finally, a resolution setting the dollar amount of the application, renewal, and licensing fees will need to be created, which is a Village Council matter.

The Village Manager said that after the Planning Commission reviews his draft ordinances, he will submit it to Village legal counsel (the law firm of Mika Meyer) for review. He noted that the application will contain a waiver of certain conditions under which someone can sue the Village regarding our marijuana establishment ordinances.

Commissioner Whalen stated that he thought the Village Manager should have whichever law firm he felt was most appropriate review the draft ordinances and not necessarily rely upon the Village's legal counsel. He felt that having it reviewed by more than one law firm might be a wise strategy depending upon cost.

Each Commission member was surveyed and each commission member indicated that he/she was in favor of the Village Manager going forward with this project.

9. **Unfinished business:** None.

10. **Public Comment:** None.

11. **Village Manager's Report:** Christina Owens has been appointed to the vacant Planning Commission position. She will be in attendance at the next Planning Commission meeting which will be in August due to the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

Manager Lower was asked about the timing regarding when the Village mows a lawn if the homeowner is not in compliance with the Village ordinances. He said there is not an actual time period. He said that in actuality a homeowner needs to be cited several times by the Code Enforcement Officer, and that he himself has to sign off on the Village going ahead to mow the lawn. It was noted that the Village's ordinance regarding lawn mowing was fairly vague.

12. **Commission comment:** None.

13. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Liscomb at 8:30pm.

Submitted by Katy Shelton, Village Clerk.