



~ Agenda ~
Final
For a Regular Meeting of the
PLANNING COMMISSION

1101 East 2nd Avenue
Durango, CO 81301
<http://co.laplata.co.us>

Thursday, September 7, 2017 6:00 PM County Board Room

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes

1. Planning Commission - Regular Meeting - May 11, 2017 6:00 PM

2. Planning Commission - Regular Meeting - May 25, 2017 6:00 PM

IV. Public Comment

Public Hearing of the following requests:

V. Other Business

1. PROJECT #2017-0160 DISTRICT PLAN UPDATE

The Planning Department will be updating the District Plans the public is encouraged to attend and provide comment.

Staff: Daniel Murray

VI. Adjournment

NOTICE is further given that all persons may appear and present oral & written testimony regarding these projects prior to or at public hearing and the Planning Commission may continue a project until a recommendation decision is reached. Complete files for projects listed on this agenda are maintained and available for review at the La Plata County Planning Department office located at 211 Rock Point Drive., Durango, CO 81301. Interested persons may visit the Planning Department office during regular business hours to review the files or ask any questions, or call (970) 382.6263. The policy of La Plata County is to not discriminate against the disabled in the provision of service. For special assistance, please call the Planning Department.



Planning Commission

211 Rockpoint Drive
Durango, CO 81301

SCHEDULED

OTHER BUSINESS (ID # 3793)

Meeting: 09/07/17 06:00 PM
Department: Planning Department
Category: Election of Officers
Prepared By: Allison Kardas
Initiator: Daniel Murray
Sponsors:
DOC ID: 3793

PROJECT #2017-0160 DISTRICT PLAN UPDATE

The Planning Department will be updating the District Plans the public is encouraged to attend and provide comment.

Staff: Daniel Murray

HISTORY:

08/03/17 Planning Commission CONTINUED

La Plata County Planning Director Jason Meininger introduced project #2017-0160 District Plan and introduced all of the members of the Planning Department staff that are present.

Chairman Tencza requested that Commissioner Scott join the Planning Commission on the dais. Commissioner Scott joined the Planning Commission on the dais.

Mr. Meininger gave a history of the update to the Comprehensive Plan which was recently completed. He said the comprehensive plan was updated by spending multiple meetings to write and review each element of the plan and then moving along to the next element. He said the process for the comprehensive plan was successful and effective and will be duplicated with the district plan update project. He asked the commission to provide direction as to how they would like to proceed with public involvement, the update process, and the parameters of the update. He invited the commission to ask questions throughout the presentation.

Mr. Meininger said update to the Comprehensive Plan was successful because it sets out goals, objectives, and policies as they relate to land use planning. He said the comprehensive plan is the largest guiding document for the county. He said then there are 12 different district plans throughout the county which each have their own unique set of characteristics. He said the next levels are sub districts, such as the La Posta District. He said the smaller the area the more refined and detailed the plan for the area will be.

Mr. Meininger said the county is in the process of rewriting the land use plan which will be the implementation of the goals and objectives that are outlined in the various plans. He said the plans are not regulatory but they come to fruition through regulation. He said this will be an opportunity for the county to ensure the new code and the district plans are in line with one another.

La Plata County Senior Planner Daniel Murray said the District Plans are close to or on-par with the ground level planning. He said they are policies that inform how the planning department interprets land use planning different areas. He presented a map with the twelve districts. He said he will be dealing with the project management for this project and said he would be the staff member to direct comments to. He presented a

sequence on how a district plan update will take place. He said there will be public engagement throughout the process.

Commissioner Minkler said he is concerned that the land use code will trump the district plans. Mr. Meininger said there will never be full alignment and consistency because of the diversity of the county. He said there are different opportunities and constraints within all of the regions. He said the code will be a one size fits most and it will be able to be adjusted along with the district plans to get the closest to alignment they can. He said there are somewhere between 50 and 55 land use classifications throughout the county. For instance, Ag/Rural is a different classification between the different districts. He said one of the goals will be to provide consistency between the plans. He said they were developed between 1995 and 2007, so the plans are all structured and created differently. He said another main goal is to ensure all of the plans have the same structure. He said it will be important for us to update both of the documents and the staff is working under the direction to update the code and the plans now.

Commissioner Minkler said what if the South East district comes up with a plan, will there be time to have it come together with the land use code. Mr. Meininger said they have laid out a 3 year time frame for the district plans. He said the land use code will be finished before a number of the district plans are started. He said they are seeking to find a balance with a schedule that is reasonable. He said it will be a significant amount of work and time especially with the involvement of the public. He said most of the plans will be done are the land use code is finished. Chairman Tencza said this could be to our advantage, because the new code will be more detailed and provide more information to guide the creation of the plans.

Commissioner Gorton said he was involved when the plans were first done and the districts have wildly varying interests in the different districts. He said he would feel strongly that the priorities of the districts not be taken away in the interest of coming up with consistency. He said the district plans are the best documents the county has that represent the feelings of the citizens and the areas and how they want to see development in their community. He said he is hopeful that the plans will have more teeth in the future. He said he is hopeful that in the end the code acknowledges the uniqueness of the regions. He said he is concerned that the goal of consistency will take away from the uniqueness of the communities. Mr. Meininger said their desire is to have alignment to the greatest extent as possible and he agrees that it should be a bit flexible. He said the uses identified in mixed use need to be the same throughout the county but the county will not dictate where they go. Commissioner Gorton said the District plans allow for the citizen to have more predictability in what they can do with their land and have the land use code reinforce that in the simplest way possible.

Commissioner Malanadra said there are 3 districts that have the higher priority and each plan will be dealt with sequentially and have do attention from staff. Mr. Murray said they are in a similar mind as the commissioners. He said the land use code will create a menu of classifications. He said it will then be up to the district to determine where the designations apply where. Commissioner Minkler said if they want a plan in

the South East district, as it is the most agriculturally based area in the county, they citizens will want things that are uses by right for farmers and ranchers and that should not be hindered by the new code. Chairman Tencza said if the South East district gets put toward the end of the code they will have an advantage of the experience of the staff and commission.

Mr. Murray said they are recommending that the Planning Department work on the La Posta and the Durango District plans because that is where the staff experiences the most development proposals on a daily basis. He said they have more staff power by using the City of Durango staff. He said the Florida Mesa would be next as it receives a large portion of the interest, it is the most dense district outside the city, and it has the most infrastructure. He said the next nine will be picked based on the commission and the public's input. Chairman Tencza said he would like to have the districts on the calendar so that the public knows what is coming up and when to be prepared for their district. He said it will allow the public to plan. Mr. Meininger said they will do a quantitative analysis of the levels of development and interest that would inform the process and the order of the remaining districts. Chairman Tencza said the staff should prioritize the districts and then let the commission provide input on the sequence.

Mr. Murray said the commission should have received a flash dive with the plans on them and the maps that are being used in this meeting. He gave a list of documents that will be provided to the commission in the future. Chairman Tencza said he likes the flash drives, they work well. He said they might ask for some printed material if the documents get lengthy. He asked the commission to identify the district in which they live: Commissioner Scott lives in the Florida Mesa District, Commissioner Malandra lives in the Florida Road District, Commissioner Gorton lives in the Florida Road District, Commissioner Minkler lives in the South East District and Chairman Tencza lives in the Bayfield District. He said the group represents many of the areas of the county.

Mr. Murray presented the current work plan. He said the commission will be provided with ongoing education including zoning and water. He said the La Posta Road Plan will be executed though the rest of 2017 and then the Durango District Plan will begin 2018. He said the code update will come toward the end of the year 2018. He reminded the planning commission that they will have a meeting on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month to address current planning projects. Commissioner Malandra asked if the commission will be considering district plan map amendments brought by the public while the plans are being considered. Mr. Murray said yes because they have map amendment project coming through currently. He said planning does not stop just because of the update. He said they will have to create a delicate balance. Mr. Meininger said there is an applicant that is currently considering a map amendment in the La Posta Area and they have advised them that they could incorporate their project into the district plan update. He said both options will be open to potential applicants.

Commissioner Scott said he would suggest that the prioritization is posted before Florida Mesa begins. Mr. Murray said they will do as much advance warning as they can.

Commissioner Gorton asked about the education on Zoning. He said if the districts plans are all made consistent and adopted would that constitute zoning. Mr. Meininger said yes, there are some nuances; the adoption does not constitute zoning. He said there is usually a corresponding official zoning map that is adopted as part of the code and become regulatory.

Commissioner Gorton said the current district plans are advisory, but could they be adopted as a zoning map. He said if that was done would it be easier to adopt the district plan maps to make the application and planning process more straight forward. Mr. Meininger said typically they are two different documents. He said the zoning typically is subject the existing infrastructure, which are currently very limited in the county. He said the advisory plans are typically looking toward the future. He said they would remove a lot of the uncertainty by putting zoning in place. He said if there was an agriculture zone that would allow for agricultural equipment sales, maintenance facility, and a brewery as a use by right, the property owner would know what their use by right is. He said the system now is every use that is proposed, other than a home, has to go through a process where the outcome is uncertain.

Chairman Tencza said there might not be enough infrastructure in many of the districts to implement zoning. He said the Planning Commission had a number of 101 meetings when he began that informed the public and the commission and he would like to have the same thing for the new commissioners.

The staff and commission discussed the possibility of having another meeting this month to discuss the process. Mr. Meininger said the staff has heard the commission say they are concerned about the land use classifications and they are sure they will hear it from the public as well. He said as they go through the adoption of the new district plans they will likely have to go through the initial districts to align them with the new ones. He said they would like consent and direction from the Planning Commission to begin the project so they have bounds within where they can operate. He asked if the commission would like the staff to use the 12 classifications that are proposed currently or the list of classifications that are currently in the district plans as the basis. Chairman Tencza asked if the consultants for the new land use code have proposed a list of classifications as well and if their classifications can be modified to reflect our classifications. Mr. Meininger said the classifications that they are presenting were created by the consultants. He said staff is proposing alignment between the classifications of the new code and the district plans.

Commissioner Gorton said he would say the classifications that exist In the plans now should be considered the highest priority, the classifications proposed by the staff and commission should be considered next and the consultants proposals should come last. He said in his mind the consultants have a menu they pick from that is convenient for them but not specific to our community. He said this is a job to the consultants, it is the commission, staff and public's job to find the best solution for the county. Mr. Meininger said they will be thoroughly reviewing the proposal of the consultants and asked if he is on board with having the same list of classifications for all of the district plans.

Commissioner Gorton said he would think that staff would come up with designations that keep intact with the individual district plans. He said he understands that there needs to be consistency but he is skeptical with taking the 12 designations that the consultants passed out. Commissioner Minkler agreed.

Commissioner Malandra said the commission had the ability to look at the earlier drafts of elements during the comprehensive plan. She said that process will be a foundational part of the process and so she is reluctant to say "go for it" because they should have some ability to change it later. Chairman Tencza said the designation is just the name, he said what is inside and the purpose is what matters. He said he will not held up on the name designation the consultants came up with as much as what it means for the plan. Commissioner Gorton said he is not speaking as much to the names as he is to the menu of designations.

Commissioner Reber asked if they will have the ability to adjust the names of the designations. Mr. Meininger said she is correct. Commissioner Reber said that it will work just fine to have the standard list as long as they are able to add and modify it. Mr. Meininger said what he is hearing is generally yes they would like to have consistency as much as possible and look at what is provided currently and how they line up with the current designations. He said they need to cover all the bases that currently exist. He said the staff will look at how the designations line up with the corresponding district's designation.

Commissioner Scott said it would be helpful to understand if there are district designations that are not included in the list so they can be addressed by the commission. Mr. Meininger said they will work on getting the complete list of the designations. There was lots of nodding from the commission.

Mr. Meininger said he would like the commission to consider that there is a lot of similarity in the plan boundaries and the Assessor's areas of economic interests. He said they would like to present to the commissioners that they consider the district plans line up with the areas of economic interest of the assessor.

La Plata County Planner Robby Overfield said he enjoys working with the other county departments to understand they way planning affects them and how they effect planning. He said the planning districts have been established for some time. He said the planning department does not look at trends in comparative analysis to see what has changed on the groun over time. He said part of the role of the Assessor's Office is to track valuation, market trends, infrastructure and how those things intertwine and how planning affects those. He said planning land use designations affect the valuation and the market. He said the Assessor's Office look at tends on retrospect to see how things change in different areas. He said planning tends to prospect into the future. He said he has worked with Mark Reddy from the Assessor's Office to create the

Forecasting Committee that tries to understand how the defined boundaries and districts affect each other and the public. He said the public and commissioner are very familiar with the planning districts and boundaries but are not aware of the second set of

boundaries and factors. He said there He presented a map that included the district plan boundaries and the areas of economic influence. He said you can see how the areas of economic influence follow different patterns like access, infrastructure, and growth. He said boundaries get set over time but they change. He said over half the map is public and tribal so if they were to take that away the land under the county's revenue is significantly less. He said they can consider how the economic boundaries have commonalities and how they can influence the planning districts. He said this project is not policy driven like the rest of the discussion tonight. He said they do have maps that show the economic influence areas in the past that can be laid over the current map.

La Plata County Assessor Mark Reddy said the colored areas are economic areas of the county. He said in the process of discovering listing classification and valuing all the property they have to look at all the underlying data as groups until it starts telling a story. He said when they go to value a property in the county they have to value every two years. He said their benchmark valuation date is June 30, 2016. He said they look at sales, income, and market data in order to analyze the underlying groups and trends. He said different parts of the county that are influenced by different economic influences. The influences include physical, economical, governmental, and social influences. He said they reanalyze the maps every couple years to assess the influences. Mr. Reddy demonstrated on the historic maps that the southeast area of the county was once much larger than it is now. He said they are looking at the data retrospectively to see what forces impacted the changes in values.

Mr. Reddy said they started talking about how planning decisions affect the market districts that the assessor uses to determine the influences market forces. He said they decided to share data between departments and determine when they make decisions that effect each other. He said when you look at the maps with different layers on you can see how different constraints affect development. He said with the parcel layer you can see that the higher densities are found where there is infrastructure. He said the economic areas are the foundations of the role of the appraisers office. He said when they take all of the data the economic areas seem to be the most influential in determining the appraisal. He said the departments have found that it makes a lot of sense that the economic influence areas align with the planning districts.

Chairman Tencza said where they currently have district boundaries, some of the boundaries may need to move around so that there is a consistency with the economic influences that are identified by the assessor. Mr. Overfield said they are a great boundary for reference and they reflect what is happening on the ground today.

Commissioner Reber asked if she should get a KMZ file so that she can lay it over google earth. Mr. Overfield said he would make sure he gets it.

Commissioner Minkler asked if there is criteria for the 12 different classifications. Mr. Reddy said they are ensuring that when you move from one district to another, they

have different influences than the other areas. He said the area around Durango that has IGA as an influence.

Chairman Tencza opened the project to public comment. He requested that the public identify their district and asked them to explain how they think their district can be reached and involved.

Dan Hunnington, County Resident. He said he lives in the northeast corner of the Fort Lewis Mesa District. Mr. Hunnington asked if they would be changing the boundaries of the districts. He said if you do change the districts and it should be considered how a change in the boundaries will affect the residences along those boundaries because it would take the La Plata River drainage head waters out of the Fort Lewis Mesa district and it has a lot of restrictions. He said he is concerned with changing the boundaries.

Barbara Jeffries, County Resident. Florida Mesa District. Ms. Jefferies said she does not understand the planning language even though she has been involved for 40 years. She asked if land is designated agricultural, will it be designated that way forever. Chairman Tencza said map amendments will happen just as they always have. Mrs. Jefferies said people need to be able to do things with their property that will be able to make them money. She said it costs money to keep open space and farm. Chairman Tencza asked what she means. Mrs. Jefferies said the public needs to be able to have the ability to divide their land. She said she suggests that they have a phone tree for the meetings. She said the email notice was great but you have to read it and 3 or 4 years is a long time to stay involved. Chairman Tencza said they will know when it is put on the calendar so they know when they need to be involved.

DRAFT PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES CONTINUED...