

CITY OF MOTLEY  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MINUTES  
September 26, 2017

1. Call to Order

O'Regan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Planning Commission: Pat O'Regan (chair), Al Yoder, Steve Johnson, Amy Hutchison

Absent: Jace Carlson

City Staff: Lacey Smieja, City Clerk

Hometown Planning: Ben Oleson

Public: Duane Solga

3. Public Hearings

None

4. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

None

5. Open Forum

Duane Solga stated his interest in serving on the Planning Commission.

Duane Solga noted that issues previously worked on by the Planning Commission when he was on the City Council have still not been changed. He asked why there is a cap on the height of detached accessory buildings that is unreasonable (can't fit some of today's trucks in a 7 ft tall garage door, RVs, boats, etc. He suggested something should be done about this as it is bad for residents and the city's tax base.

6. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Yoder, seconded by Hutchison to approve the September 7, 2017 Planning Commission minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Planning and Zoning Administrator's Report

None

8. Other Business

Discussion – Interpretation of Ordinance

a. Accessory Structure vs. Principal Structure

Oleson explained the existing ordinances and how they regulate detached accessory structure height differently depending on the zoning district. The primary question is whether these differences should exist or not, which are most restrictive in the R-2 zoning district. Oleson also described the definitions for "accessory" vs "principal" structures and noted a need to clarify how they are applied in a situation where a lot does not have a traditional "primary" structure.

Duane Solga commented that for a structure he is proposing, he needs the additional storage for his horses and hay to protect them from the weather. He noted he has a more rural setting than almost anywhere in the City and that his proposed building would not be out of the ordinary for the area.

After discussion, a motion was made by Hutchison, seconded by Yoder, to schedule a public hearing for 6:30pm on October 16, 2017 (a special meeting of the Planning Commission) for an ordinance amendment that would eliminate the height restriction specific to detached accessory structures in the R-2 zoning district and have only the 25 ft height restriction applicable to all buildings.

After discussion regarding the application of “accessory” vs “principal” to buildings, the Commission felt that a storage building should be considered an accessory structure, even if it is the “primary” building on a lot.

b. Permitting and requirements for structures under 200 sq ft.

Oleson explained a situation where a building was constructed close to the river at the Duane Solga property without permits, and that there was apparent confusion and/or miscommunication between himself and Mr. Solga when Mr. Solga asked about permitting for the structure last year. Oleson felt he had communicated to Mr. Solga after the issue was discussed by the Planning Commission last year that a “water-oriented accessory structure” could not be permitted. Mr. Solga indicated he had been told by someone that a permit was not necessary.

Hutchison noted she had received several complaints about the building on the Solga property being built without permits.

Johnson noted he has heard of complaints from other communities about buildings close to the river detracting from the look of the area.

Yoder asked if there was a second structure being used for bathroom facilities. Solga said there was an additional 4’ x 4’ structure that was used to store items – not as a bathroom. He will remove that structure if necessary.

O’Regan asked if there was electric or water in the larger structure. Solga indicated just a space heater. O’Regan asked if the structure could be moved rather than having to be torn down. Solga indicated it would be difficult.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Yoder, seconded by Hutchison to require that the structure be brought into compliance with the ordinance (moved at least 150 ft back from the river). Motion passed unanimously.

All other items under “Other Business” were tabled.

Motion by Carlson, seconded by Hutchison, to adjourn the meeting at 9:16pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Oleson  
Hometown Planning