

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Regular Planning Commission Meeting – August 15, 2016

Monday August 15, 2016

The meeting of the Town of Meeker Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Goedert at 7:06 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Members Present: Terry Goedert
Elisabeth Morton
Sam Hale
Kurt Nielson
Michelle Morgan

Others Present: Scott Meszaros, Town Administrator
Carl Padilla, Building Inspector
Amy Tupy, Admin Assistant

Citizens Present: Melinda Parker, Zubie Devish, Bob Barr, Rita Proctor, Kelly and Pam Sullivan, Sherry Jordan, Lexie Meszaros, Rich Merriam

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Goedert asked for any changes to the agenda with none noted, a motion was made to accept the agenda as presented. Moved by Commissioner Nielsen. Second by Commissioner Morgan. All ayes. Motion carried.

Approval of the Previous Minutes

Hearing no changes to the previous minutes dated June 6, 2016 Commissioner Goedert asked for motion to approve them. Moved by Commissioner Hale. Second by Commissioner Morton. All Ayes. Motion carried.

Public Hearing

Applicant Ken Harmen, CEO, Eastern Rio Blanco Health District, 100 Pioneers Medical Center Drive Meeker, CO 81641 requesting approval of a Rezoning from R-1A to MR-A for lots formerly known as Pioneers Medical site and identified adjacent parcel.

Administrator Meszaros summarized the proposal request. He stated that the property owner is seeking approval of a rezoning from R-1A (Single-Family Residential District) to MR-A (Mixed Residential District) for the entire parcel of block 41, and Lots 4, 5 6 and West half of Lot 3, Block 19. The applicant desires to sell this property for additional housing as Identified in the Meeker Housing Analysis done by Better City. Property parcels in the Town of Meeker for single unit residential lots in the R-1 and R-1A zoning currently exist in extreme abundance. This location suits residential development, is within walking distance of the downtown, and utilizes the parcel in a fashion more suitable to adjacent homeowners than the previous use/density. The rezoning would allow for multiple unit townhomes which are much more economical to build than single family homes providing a new and affordable product which does not exist in the current market. Better City has recommended this very type of product as a necessary catalyst to existing housing conditions in the market. Staff did not identify any significant issues associated with the rezoning. The applicant's site has historically been used as a busy Medical and Living Facility which incorporated a Heli-Pad with non-scheduled helicopter transportation at all hours of the day and night, Emergency Room with ambulance delivery, high-volume outpatient

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clinic and Walbridge Wing living facility. The proposed rezoning and use concept will be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood in a much more compatible manner with severely reduced visitation and traffic in comparison with the prior property use. The site is currently cleared and vacant and ready for immediate development. In Staff's opinion, the change in land use to MR-A is supported by the land use principles and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Policy #3, The Town of Meeker recognizes the importance of providing an adequate spectrum of commercially zoned land exists to accommodate new businesses. Staff concurs with the rezoning request to accommodate new use in a currently vacant building site suitable to proposed development concept. The residential market appears to be very limited near this location due to the adjacent buildout of residential lots. Rezoning would enable building to occupy and utilize the existing site in a cost effective manner bringing updated, modern product to our current market. It is quite evident that R-1A single family lots are not being utilized in the Town as there are numerous build-ready lots which are not being developed. It stages growth in the community and promotes infill development on vacant land. The rezoning would encourage development of the parcel and utilize a currently vacant block within the center of residential properties.

Administrator Meszaros reiterated that the proposed re-zoning application meets the intent of the Comprehensive Plan as follows: it provides for compatible land uses to proposed future development with adjacent properties (residential product), it promotes the beneficial and economic use of the land, it will conserve and actually escalate the property value of the land and surrounding neighborhood properties. He stated that Town Staff received one letter after the deadline and a few phone calls as to what the rezoning meant because there is no known builder or final design concept.

Mr. Meszaros also stated that previously this location was one of the busiest locations in Meeker due to high traffic volume at the past hospital. He also said that when there is open land we try to develop that land for compatible use. He stated that Staff recommends approval of the request.

Ken Harmen CEO of Pioneers Medical Center reported that the Hospital Board received a phone call from Better City's asking if the Hospital Board would be interested in selling the property, which was the plan. We, the Hospital Board, don't know if Better City's will come with a builder or not but there's new possibilities that come with the MR-A zone, for example if Better City does not find a builder, in the future the hospital could put up an acute care facility if needed and the MR-A would cover that. No one that I know of has put up the cash and we want the marketability for the land.

Commissioner Morton questioned if there was a demand for this type of housing, Administrator Meszaros stated that Better City's findings on the study that was conducted showed there in fact was a high demand, that Meeker is outdated, there are not many, if any turnkey affordable houses, there is a low share of multi-family units especially in comparison with the rest of the state of Colorado and because of this roughly 42% of people in Meeker rent the houses they live in.

There is a lot of apprehension from the neighboring residents that building townhomes/multi-family units at the previous hospital site will cause the value in their homes to decline, they feel that 48 units is far too many and sticking something of this nature in a residential neighborhood is not a good fit. There are also a lot of concerns that this type of housing will not be built for quality rather quantity and eventually turn into run down housing; Mr. Bob Barr made the comment 'that building just to build is non-sense.' There is a lot of uneasiness on who is going to buy these units if there are not any jobs in this area. One citizen questioned if the property was for sale to the public, Mr. Merriam questioned if the Hospital District had entertained the idea of lowering the price of the lots to less than market value to attract different buyers especially when the hospital was given the land at their new location.

Commissioner Nielson made the comment that we are looking at change and it can be scary, he wants his kids to return to Meeker after they graduate college and not flee like everyone in his class did, Meeker is

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going to disappear if we don't fix it, we are here to discuss if the hospital meets the zone requirements, and he also stated that 48 is not the number he would be looking for.

Commissioner Morgan stated that she has seen a lot of Better City's work and it could be a really good thing for Meeker, we are talking about a lot in the center of a residential area and feels that there are better, more conducive lots available in town for this rezoning, she certainly does not want to see 48 either.

Chairman Goedert noted that he looked at this as the applicant and stated that he is a huge advocate for property owner rights and also as a business owner he's a big advocate for the free market, the issue here is does the previous hospital site qualify for rezoning, we don't know if there's going to be 48 units or not.

Hearing no further comments or questions, Chairman Goedert closed the hearing at 8:54p.m. and called for a motion to approve the *Applicant Ken Harmen, CEO, Eastern Rio Blanco Health District, 100 Pioneers Medical Center Drive Meeker, CO 81641 requesting approval of a Rezoning from R-1A to MR-A for lots formerly known as Pioneers Medical site and identified adjacent parcel.* Moved by Commissioner Nielson. Second by Commissioner Hale. All ayes. Motion for recommendation carried.

Commissioner Goedert recommends that the same concerns should be taken to the Board of Trustees meeting on August 16, 2016 at 7p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02p.m.

Attest:


Chairman Goedert

