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**CITY OF BELEN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES
JANUARY 26, 2015**

Chairman Tom Greer called the regular meeting of the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Tom Greer
Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves
Commissioner Steve Ethridge
Commissioner Claudine Montano

ABSENT: Commissioner Debbie Thompson

CITY STAFF: Steven Tomita, Planning & Zoning Director

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves moved to approve the Agenda.

Commissioner Claudine Montano seconded the Motion.

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 26, 2015, were reviewed.

Commissioner Steven Ethridge had some corrections to be made.

Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves moved to have the minutes of January 2 2015 approved as corrected.

Commissioner Claudine Montano Seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

ACTION ITEM

- A. REQUEST FOR A VARIANCE ON FRONT & SIDE SETBACKS * FENCE HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS. JACKELYN VAN BUREN. LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Township 5 North, Range 2 East, Section 17, Eastside Addition, Block 2, Lots 3-6, containing .22 ac. AKA 316 DeSoto Ave., Belen NM 87002.

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that the applicant purchased this property with the wall partly constructed. They were running into problems with trespassing, crime, and theft so they completed the fence not knowing that there were restrictions on height in the front and twenty feet back from the front. This was brought to their attention so they filed for a variance so that the fence could remain.

Ms Jackelyn Van Buren informed the Commission that when she bought the home the fence was partially constructed already. Then in September of last year there was a burglary at her home and her car was stolen. She spoke with the neighbors about the concerns of crime in the area and was told they have also had problems. She proceeded to change the locks on her home, installed an alarm system, and started purchasing the materials so that she could complete the fence. She finished the fence so that it would be level with her neighbors fence plus some of the neighborhood fences. She was unaware that there were restrictions because so many of the neighbors had fences the same height. She feels that if she was to take off the wooden section of the fence, she would feel very vulnerable again.

Chairman Tom Greer said that her situation on DeSoto is not unusual. It is also not unusual to present this request to the Commission after the fact.

Commissioner Claudine Montano said that she went by their today and the fence looked good.

Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves asked if the variance was just for the front or for other sides as well.

Ms Van Buren said that it was also for the first twenty feet of the sides. It was explained to her by Lisa Miller from the Planning & Zoning Department.

Steven Tomita explained that according to our Ordinance the front fence and the first twenty feet from the front are required to be three feet for a solid fence and four feet for an open faced fence. She is asking for a variance on this area. The rest of the fence is ok.

Commissioner Steve Ethridge moved to approve the fence height variance for the front and side setbacks.

Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Vote was as follows:

Commissioner Claudine Montano	Yes
Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves	Yes
Commissioner Steve Ethridge	Yes
Chairman Tom Greer	Yes

DISCUSSION/REVIEW

City of Belen Boundaries.

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that in the coming meetings they will be moving forward on the consolidation of the City Boundaries. The previous Committee that was working on this has identified properties they felt should be annexed into the City, either willingly or not willingly. Some of the other things we need to be looking at is the economic feasibility of some of those annexations, because when we do annex we have to be in a position to provide utility services and emergency services to these areas. Some of these areas would require very extensive cost to provide some of our utilities to. Pumps would have to be put in, lift stations etc. We are trying to get rid of all the zig-zag of the current Boundary.

Chairman Tom Greer asked if, when all the Boundary maps were being reviewed, the Commission was intact.

Steven Tomita said no, not at that time.

Chairman Tom Greer said that they need to review the Boundary Maps, look at the feasibility, then move them on to the City Council.

Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves asked if they would be looking at the annexation process at the February 9th meeting.

Steven Tomita said yes and also, if there is time, start looking at our Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the land use. Our present Ordinance does not allow heavy industrial manufacturing, etc. Cemco or the Lardner factory would not be allowed according to the present Ordinance. Things like this need to be changed. Our Ordinances are really out of date and need to be redone.

Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves asked if maps would be provided so that they could review them.

Commissioner Steve Ethridge asked if utility maps were available.

Steven Tomita said yes and that Lisa Miller will provide them. When going thru this you have to keep in mind that residential areas are a financial burden to a Municipality. It is said that for every public dollar that is spent to maintain utilities, fire and police, etc. the actual cost would be five to seven dollars for a residential area. This would include salaries, vehicles, etc. and not the cost of maintenance. The only time you break even is if you go into things like high density apartments. You make your money on commercial, manufacturing, and heavy industrial uses.

Chairman Tom Greer said that it seems that the trend is to have the C-2 (Medium Commercial) around the fringes, the C-1 (Commercial) in the middle, and the Residential together often as second story to commercial. We have seen those trends developing everywhere. He asked about the stipend fee for the two meetings.

Steven Tomita said that he submitted it and the Council is looking at all Commissions and Committees to determine whether all of them should be compensated. The Council recognizes that the P & Z Commission are putting in a big effort on all of this but they want to make sure that all bases are covered so that nothing comes back to them.

Chairman Tom Greer said that there are many committees and they serve a select group. The P & Z Commission, being the right hand commission to the Council and the Planning & Zoning Department involves the entire community and feels that they should get a little something for all of their efforts.

Steven Tomita agreed.

Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves said that the P & Z Commission is a buffer for the Community. The Community comes to us.

Chairman Tom Greer said that the P & Z Commission is the bedrock of the community.

Art Ordinance.

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that the material that was provided to them is The draft of Art in Public Places Ordinance. It is basically taken from the Community of Temecula Ca. and has been reviewed and discussed previously by the Commission. A public workshop has been held with a total of four in attendance. It is back before the Commission for any further input, feedback, or comments before it is taken to the City Council.

Chairman Tom Greer said that he felt it needs to proceed to the Council the way it is. The Planning & Zoning Commission has already reviewed this on many occasions and it now needs to proceed to the City Council. It is to the point that the Council needs to review it and make their comments known.

Steven Tomita said that there are two choices, it can go to Council for review and comments sent back to the Planning & Zoning Commission or it can be presented to them for final review and approval.

Commissioner Steve Ethridge asked if the sections should be numbered differently instead of all the same.

Steven Tomita said yes and that he would go back through the Ordinance and change them.

Commissioner Claudine Montano moved to have the Ordinance sent on to City Council with a recommendation for approval.

Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves seconded the motion.

Motion Carried.

Vote was as follows:

Commissioner Claudine Montano	Yes
Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves	Yes
Commissioner Steve Ethridge	Reluctant Yes
Chairman Tom Greer	Yes

OPEN COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Commissioner Steve Ethridge asked if Steven Tomita or Lisa Miller could check on a few Commissioner workshops to help them with protocol.

Steven Tomita said he would. The Council meeting on the Noblin case and handled by the City Attorney, was a very formal meeting, and the Attorney informed not only the Council but the Commission on how these meetings should be handled. Leona will check with the Municipal League to see if Randy Van Vleck will come down and offer training for the City Council and the P & Z Commission on how this is done. He requested that Leona try to get him down here sometime in the latter part of February towards the middle of March.

Chairman Tom Greer felt that the Attorney should be attending all meetings so that they are available to guide us through some of these things.

Steven Tomita said that is why they would like to bring Randy Van Vleck here for training.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City of Belen Planning & Zoning Commission, Vice-Chair Gordon Reeves moved to adjourn.

