

JOINT WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL/ PLANNING COMMISSION
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE
FEBRUARY 10, 2011

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lon Kellstrom	Mayor
David Asson	Councilor President
Sharlene Weed	Councilor
Pat Thompson	Councilor
Wendy Holzman	Councilor

STAFF PRESENT:

Eileen Stein	City Manager
Pauline Hardie	CDD Director
Paul Bertagna	PW Director
Eric Porter	Principal Planner
Kathy Nelson	City Recorder

PLANNING COMMISSION:

Alan Holzman	Chair
Daryl Tewalt	Vice Chair
Steve Auerbach	Commissioner
David Gentry	Commissioner
Darren Layne	Commissioner
Ed Protas	Commissioner
Doug Roberts	Commissioner

ABSENT:

Lisa Young	Finance Director
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GUESTS:

Bill Anthony	Sisters District Ranger
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The joint meeting was called to order by Mayor Kellstrom at 5:33 p.m.

A. USFS Concept Plan Status Report

Manager Stein reported the joint meeting was being held to give the City Council and Planning Commission an opportunity to provide input with regard to concept plans being prepared by the consultant team working on the USFS property redevelopment. She asked the councilors and commissioners to consider two fundamental questions; should the downtown area begin at Pine Street or Barclay Drive and what should the Forest Service property look like when fully developed? She introduced Bill Anthony, Sisters District Ranger, to provide historical perspective on the property and what the Forest Service hopes to achieve.

Ranger Anthony thanked the Council and Planning Commission for allowing him the opportunity to frame a win-win solution for the City of Sisters, community and Forest Service. He stated the property was highly visible, attractive and a gateway to the community. He stated the property could be used to fill the long term needs of the community and sale of the property would allow the Forest Service to build its new facility and maintain its presence in the community.

Ranger Anthony explained a new facility would be important in meeting the long term needs of the Forest Service in that it would shrink the Forest Service footprint and allow all the employees to work together in one building as opposed to being housed in several buildings as they currently are. He explained how essential barracks are to house the additional 20 to 50 extra summer employees employed in Sisters and stated the ones standing on the property have been condemned and cannot be used. He stated the Forest Service is looking to have an energy efficient building

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with modern visitor facilities, adequate workspace, conference rooms, storage and to be fire safe. He stated building the new facility is dependent on the sale of the property at fair market value.

Ranger Anthony stated when the property goes on the market again it will include a minimum bid amount. He stated when the property initially was marketed it was just as the market was slowing and potential bidders were uncertain as to what they might be allowed to do on the property. He stated providing a concept plan will make it easier for a prospective buyer to envision the property's potential. He stated the Forest Service was evaluating the property again to look at the possibility of breaking the property into smaller parcels to sell. He expressed development of the property offers an important opportunity to the community and would allow the Forest Service to stay in Sisters.

Councilor Weed asked about the cost to build the new facility. **Ranger Anthony** replied the first time the property was marketed the minimum bid price was \$14 million but noted that construction costs have changed and that number would need to be reassessed prior to putting the property on the market again. He added that any funds received in excess of the cost of the new facility would stay in Oregon for other Forest Service projects. **Councilor Holzman** asked what the Forest Service would do if the property does not receive a minimum bid. **Ranger Anthony** replied the Forest Service would reassess the situation but as the existing buildings continue to decay, the risk of the Sisters District closing would need to be considered. **Commissioner Roberts** asked how the Forest Service could build if the property were broken into smaller parcels as funds would likely not come in all at once. **Ranger Anthony** replied it would depend on what the Council decides with regard to the property and the number of parcels involved.

Principal Planner Porter gave a PowerPoint presentation that provided key steps that had occurred relative to the property and a description of how the Quick Response program works and information was collected. He presented the two concept plans (Plan A and Plan B) that were the outcome of the process. He also presented Concept Plan C, the result of staff concerns along with those of USFS representatives and Central Oregon developers that the placement of the building footprints as shown, could limit creativity that might otherwise result from a plan created by a potential developer of the property.

Manager Stein asked if the community should be presented with concept Plan A and Plan B as created or should the City should pull back. She stated with the buildings shown so close to Highway 20 she wondered how well the plans might be received by the community. She stated she felt that many citizens would want to know who made the decision to develop the property as presented in the concept plans. She asked if the Council and Planning Commission wanted to direct staff to feed Plan C back to the consultant prior to the community forum in March. She explained the renditions showed the maximum density that would be allowed without triggering the Transportation Planning Rule (TRP) but noted if a developer chose to develop more densely, the developer would be responsible for the cost of mitigating the increased traffic.

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Commissioner Protas asked if there had been discussion on the potential impacts if a roundabout is selected for Barclay Drive. **Planner Porter** stated there had not been specific conversation in the Quick Response process, but noted the company that performed the traffic impact study was the same company that prepared the Transportation System Plan (TSP) for the City and it was aware of the consideration.

Councilor Thompson stated he was interested in the market study that was performed adding that what needs to be recognized is that development of the property will be controlled by the individual or group that purchases it. He stated the property would not sell if it doesn't pencil out for a buyer. He stated the plans represent a good idea of what the property could look like. He discussed the 6.3 acre East Portal parcel. He noted it did not seem reasonable to expect a buyer to purchase the property and give it to the City. **Manager Stein** explained the City had attempted to purchase the property previously but was unable to receive the necessary grant. **Planner Porter** added the parcel is included in the City Parks Master Plan. **Councilor Thompson** stated the parcel would provide no return to a buyer and asked which parcel it could be tied to if the property were split. **Ranger Anthony** replied that has not yet been determined.

Manager Stein reiterated her initial question of whether the downtown area should begin at Pine Street or Barclay Drive. The **Council** and **Commissioners** discussed the property at length providing a number of ideas for consideration including that while requiring a setback would likely be the choice of community members it would diminish the value of the remaining property. **Commissioner Roberts** stated he felt identifying Barclay Drive as the beginning of the downtown area made sense since Ray's Food Place, McDonald's and Ponderosa Best Western are already there. He reminded everyone the City needs to be looking to the future. There was discussion on how the property serves as a gateway into Sisters and Central Oregon and how any development at the property would not be consistent with Sisters pedestrian friendly atmosphere since development on the property would produce people that drive, not walk. There were concerns about hurting the existing downtown core and discussion that at present there was no need for additional downtown commercial buildings or residential housing since the City has a surplus of both. The **Council** and **Commission** agreed that it was exceedingly important to keep the Forest Service District in Sisters and the family wage jobs that accompany the facility.

The **Council** and **Commission** discussed the feasibility of purchasing the Forest Service property to allow it to remain as open space. **Councilor Weed** stated she had heard of several ideas about purchasing the property such as an earmark, grant or as a private donation.

Manager Stein asked if the community meeting should include all the concept plans and **Commissioner Holzman** noted since the plans are only just that, concepts, it made sense to let community members provide feedback on all the plans. **Councilor Thompson** stated the purpose of the concept plans is to help the Forest Service sell its property and move forward and the plans do serve to answer questions for potential buyers. He advised there was still a lot of public process left to work out details for the property and any developer would need to demonstrate

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proof of a need prior to any zone change. **Commissioner Protas** noted purchase of the property by the City, if a funding source could be found, would likely be the shortest and easiest way to help the Forest Service and make certain the Ranger District remains in town. **Manager Stein** stated she was unaware of any government based grant programs that could assist the City in purchasing the property at this time.

Mayor Kellstrom directed staff to proceed with presenting the four concept plans at the upcoming community meeting: Concept Plan A, Concept Plan B, Concept Plan C and the fourth option of keeping the property as open space.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Nelson, City Recorder

Lon Kellstrom, Mayor