

GEM Committee Minutes – November 3, 2010

1. Attendance: Jim Ormsbee, Rob Thomas, Scott Blank, Cindy Beger, Kent Lyons, Sharon Holmstrom, Ross Mertlich, Kim Wheatley, Kathy Allen, Richard Webb, Steve Clarke.
2. We are pleased to announce the intention of Janet and David Muir and Chord Pack to participate with the GEM Committee. All were excused as the Muirs had a medical emergency and Chord has to work Wednesday evenings but will join in as possible.
3. Minutes of the October 6th meeting were approved as written.
4. Announcements:
 - a. Note the November Planning Commission meeting will be on November 30th at 5 pm because the County Commission will hold their public budget hearing on November 23rd at 5 pm.
 - b. The Snowbasin rezone to DRR-1 zone was approved with staff directed to prepare the development agreement.
 - c. Proposed amendments to the Edgewater Beach Resort PRUD were tabled by the Planning Commission to review the landscaping and amenity plan. There was considerable discussion on this item:
 - i. Trail Plan – it is important that the trail easements of the original approval continue with this new application, as the trail around the reservoir could become discontinuous. An asphalt trail was recently installed on the property and the Committee is unsure about how it fits in to trail plans.
 - ii. Water and Sewer – Comments were made during the application review that water and sewer support for the new application is not firm. The Committee observes that the existing 4-plex must have some service, and the prior application must have had a “will serve” letter.
 - d. The Home Occupation draft ordinance was distributed to the Committee for study and feedback as to whether the GEM Committee should take a position with the County Commission. For the information of those not in attendance, the draft is on the Planning Division website homepage.
 - e. The Conditional Uses draft ordinance was also distributed for feedback as to whether the Committee should take a position with the County Commission.
 - f. The Board of Adjustment chapter may be discussed in the Nov. 30th meeting. A draft was not available to the Committee.
 - g. The December Planning Commission Work Meeting will be training for the Planning Commission on rules of order and expectations. This training will be valuable for all GEM Committee members to help us better communicate with the Planning Commission.

5. Steve Clarke reported on a recent Planning Commission visit to the Black Island Farms. The Farm has produced onions, carrots, and pumpkins on 500 acres for 50 years. About 6 years ago the farm became uncompetitive and unprofitable and the owners decided to try “agri-entertainment” as a way to increase revenue. They have now developed a 6 week business which returns a very substantial profit and permits them to remain in business as a farm. In 6 weeks they have 40,000 visitors to their corn maizes, pumpkin hay rides, and entertainment area which includes straw slides, fire pits, a performing stage, and a farmer’s market. Issues such as traffic, lighting, noise, and supporting ordinances were discussed. Ogden Valley currently has a family discussing a similar opportunity which is oriented more toward events.

6. Richard Webb and Steve Clarke reported on the discussion of the Sign Ordinance by the Planning Commission during the Nov. 2nd Work Meeting. The following were observations:
 - a. Planning Staff adequately described the concern with the following questions:
 - i. Can internally illuminated signs comply with the General Plan’s goal of maintaining a rural atmosphere?
 - ii. Do the existing internally illuminated signs in the Ogden Valley currently create a distraction or pose a safety hazard?
 - iii. Is there a noticeable aesthetic difference between internally and externally illuminated signs?
 - iv. Would it make a difference if additional standards were imposed on internally illuminated signs for type of light, color of light, brightness of light, size, etc?
 - v. How do business owners in the Ogden Valley feel about internally illuminated signs?
 - vi. Should internally illuminated signs continue to be allowed in the Ogden Valley?
 - b. Staff sent an email to members of the Utah APA organization asking if any rural Utah communities have restrictions on internally lit signs, if so what are the restrictions? Three responses were received, Brigham City, Saratoga Springs, Ephraim. All support internally lighted signs. It is debatable whether Brigham City and Saratoga Springs can be classed as rural however.
 - c. Staff researched sign ordinances in Summit, Cache, Davis, and Wasatch Counties. Only Summit County had any sign illumination regulations, which restricted light pollution and permitted internally lighted signs with light transmitted through only the letters in the sign.
 - d. Staff asked several local sign companies for input. Following is the summary:
 - i. The type of lighting is usually fluorescent or LED and can be made as dim or bright as requested by the customer. The sources for internal and external lighting are generally the same. External lighting can be made to look internal (like the Elk Run Commercial Sign) but design costs are increased.
 - ii. Internally illuminated signs generally cost more than externally illuminated signs of the same size, due to the extra materials needed to construct the sign. However, maintenance costs are generally greater for the externally illuminated

signs because they are not enclosed with plastic/plexi-glass material, and are constructed of less weather resistant materials like wood.

- iii. Internally illuminated signs make up the majority of requests for commercial business signs.
 - iv. ***The sign companies believe that it is the sign design and materials, rather than the light source that have the biggest impact on aesthetics and community feel.***
- e. Staff offered the Planning Commission 3 options from which to choose:
- i. **Maintain the status quo.** If the Planning Commission feels comfortable with the internally illuminated signs in the Valley, continuing with the current ordinance may be beneficial. Staff has not received specific complaints about internally illuminated signs, nor has staff received information about traffic or other safety hazards due to these signs. Aesthetic concerns are addressed by the existing design standards in Chapter 32B.
 - ii. **Allow internally illuminated signs, but create additional standards.** Changes to the Zoning Ordinance could specifically address design requirements for internally illuminated signs. These changes could include new provisions for lighting types and wattage, lighting colors, sign materials, etc. This option would require additional research and consultation with lighting and sign experts. In addition, it will be important to consider the feelings of property owners who may want to build these signs in the future, or maintain existing signs.
 - iii. **Eliminate internally illuminated signs from Chapter 32B.** This option would not eliminate existing signs, which would be grandfathered as nonconforming uses. Staff would have to address how maintenance, additions, and remodels of these signs would be handled in the future.
- f. After considerable discussion, primarily about brightness of signs and policy related to modification of existing signs, **the Planning Commission recommended pursuing option 2, allowing internally illuminated signs, but creating additional standards.** No public comment was allowed, primarily due to the need to vacate the room.
- g. In the opinion of Richard and Steve the Planning Commission took great stock in (and some comfort from) the advice of the sign companies. Since the sign companies should be viewed as “the fox watching after the chickens” it would seem prudent to ask for substantial validation of their claim that “it is sign design and materials, rather than the light source that have the biggest impact on aesthetics and community feel”. The experience of all who have provided input to the GEM Committee does not support the thesis that internally lighted signs can create the rural atmosphere desired.
- The Committee concluded that we should:
- i. Meet with the staff to discuss the plan to proceed.
 - ii. Do additional research independently, looking at areas which are attempting to preserve a rural atmosphere and may have “dark sky ordinances”.

h. Kim Wheatley and Steve Clarke invite other Committee members to join in this effort to meet with staff and do research. Please contact Steve Clarke.

7. Recreation Planning Committee report – Jennifer Graham was unable to attend the meeting at the last moment but continues to work on designing and implementing the Ogden Valley Recreation Planning Committee/Board. Of relevance and interest is a report discussed by the Planning Commission in their Nov. 2nd Work Meeting titled **Weber County Cooperative Pathways Master Plan**. This plan was developed by Planning Staff who invited representatives from each city, Weber Pathways, the U.S. Forest Service, and many other groups (about 24 groups total) to work together to prepare a pathways master plan for the entire county. The plan takes the form of a map as well as a document of about 40 pages. The plan is available on the Planning Division web site.

Steve Clarke attempted to make the point to the Planning Commission that this work demonstrates a needed and important process, a process which has been recommended by the GEM Committee for the last two years. GEM has recommended the process be applied to master plan development for the many types of recreation facilities for Ogden Valley using a team very similar to that employed for the pathways effort, but in our case including private recreation interests like the resorts and private camps. The success of the pathways effort is not lost on Jennifer, who plans to explore this with the County Commission and Director Scott.

The Planning Commission pointed out the need for consideration of funding to support construction and maintenance of pathways and additional safety concerns. After considerable discussion they concluded that it was the process of the planning effort which was most important and recommended the work be adopted as part of the General Plan. In addition staff had asked them to recommend the Ogden Valley Pathways ordinance be adopted County-wide and the Planning Commission agreed with the proviso that staff look at the requirement for each subdivision to include a pathway. This proviso raises red flags with those who have experience in trail planning. Kim Wheatley agreed to discuss with Planning Staff the potential impact of the suggested modification, as it could easily cause discontinuous and useless pathways.

8. Sewer Planning Progress Report – Ron Gleason reported that Sunrise Engineering has delayed the schedule for producing the report for review due to additional work requested by the County. They now predict the report will be available in late November or early December. Huntsville Town expects to make the report available on their Town web site. Steve Clarke will call a special meeting to discuss the report if/when it seems necessary.

The USU Water Quality study work was discussed and the need to have the best science possible available to those making sewer decisions seems apparent. Steve Clarke will see how tight the linkage is between the two efforts. Kim Wheatley volunteered to have his set of wells studied by USU as he is in the mouth of South Fork Canyon and the wells go to 300 feet in depth.

9. Water Rights – Richard Webb raised the issue of those of us in the Valley losing access to water as growth occurs. We are all advised to document in writing the volumes and flow rates of water we now have rights to and use.
10. The Powder Mountain Development Agreement status was reported by Steve Clarke as of a month ago when the owners felt ready to proceed but work had not yet begun on the agreement. The County will use the donated services of an independent attorney experienced in development agreement law.
11. The Committee agreed to plan on skipping the regular December meeting and have our next meeting on **Wednesday January 5th at 5 pm** in the Huntsville Library.
12. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm.