

MOAB CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
October 12, 2023

The Moab City Planning Commission held its regular meeting on the above date in Council chambers. Audio is archived at www.utah.gov/pmn and video is at www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGGxYMM8VK8.

Call to Order: Planning Commission Chair Kya Marienfeld called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. Commission Members Jill Tatton, Machael Layton, Miles Loftin and Carolyn Conant attended. City Planning Director Cory Shurtleff, Planning Administrator Anna Anglin, Assistant Planner Bryce Rogers, Community Development Director Michael Black, Sustainability Director Alexi Lamm, Sustainability Intern Melissa Zinge and City Council liaison Luke Wojciechowski also attended.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: Commission Member Tatton moved to approve the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting of September 14, 2023. Commission Member Layton seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commission Members Marienfeld, Tatton, Conant and Layton voting aye. Commission Member Loftin abstained.

Moab Area Affordable Housing Plan Update—Positive Recommendation Approved

Presentation and Discussion: Chair Laura Harris, Vice Chair Kaitlin Myers and Housing Authority Secretary Noelle Gignoux represented the Moab Area Housing Task Force. Harris presented data establishing the need for affordable housing in Moab. Factors discussed included loss of workforce due to lack of affordable workforce housing, high real estate prices for residential units, low wages and the high percentage of short-term rentals. It was explained that of 379 new residential units in Grand County built between 2017 and 2020, only 105 units were deed or occupancy restricted to benefit the workforce. Data was presented on projected needs including vacancy rates and demand for rental units and owner-occupied units; it was stated that by 2030, 260 more rental units would be needed. Myers presented annual household income data. Harris outlined goals including meeting housing needs projections, increase diversity of the housing stock and increase accessory dwelling unit (ADU) and infill development. Action steps were presented with an eye toward collaboration between the City and County and included zoning code revisions, developing housing developments on publicly owned property, revising density limits, promoting alternative housing models, and more. Stability for the workforce was expressed as a goal. Improving the ratio of primary homeowner occupancy rather than second home ownership and increasing the number of income and occupancy restricted units were mentioned. Harris presented the prospect of developing a community-wide cooperative deed restriction administration. She also spoke about voluntary deed restrictions, a “good landlord” program to improve and preserve long-term rental units, and exploring ways to mitigate loss of housing stock due to demolition of existing housing. Harris presented an aim of funding efforts from local governments as well as perpetrators of the affordable housing crisis. Commission Chair Marienfeld asked about existing municipal revenues streams. Sustainability measures were presented regarding net-zero buildings, water conservation and more. Commission Chair Marienfeld asked for input regarding recommendations for the eventual consideration of the Plan by City Council. Councilmember Wojciechowski suggested edits regarding percentages of primary residences with a goal of increasing stock by ten percent. Commission Member Loftin mentioned the increase in remodels and several examples and scenarios were discussed. Wojciechowski also brought up competition for housing between low-income renters and middle-income renters, with a resulting effect of higher rent prices. Commission Chair Marienfeld pointed out the great contributions of the volunteer Housing Task Force members along with the paid staff. Commission Member Conant brought up the potential for collaboration between entities.

Motion and Vote: Commission Member Conant moved to forward a positive recommendation to City Council for the 2023 Moab Area Affordable Housing Plan. Commission Member Loftin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Water-Efficient Landscaping Ordinance Update—Workshop

Presentation and Discussion: Sustainability Director Lamm explained the directive from City Council regarding water feature definitions to be added to the recently adopted water-efficient landscaping ordinance. She said it was difficult to identify existing code in other municipalities for examples. Wind shutoff, evaporation issues and enforceability were discussed. Commission Member Loftin described his effort to research costs for wind-shutoff systems. Planning Director Shurtleff expressed his concern regarding controls for residential versus commercial water features. He also clarified existing water features are grandfathered unless new site development triggers compliance with revised regulations. Commission Member Tatton expressed her concern regarding the rarity of residential water features with large waterfalls or spraying water. Commission Member Loftin mentioned ponds and surface area and difficulty to estimate evaporation rates. Four feet of freefall was mentioned as a trigger for a wind shutoff requirement, as well as a surface area greater than four square feet. Commission Member Layton asked about enforcement of irrigation overspray. Planning Administrator Anglin presented proposed changes to various code sections to reflect code revisions during the municipal code rewrite. Community Development Director Black gave further explanation of the process of the overall code revision. He said the process for hiring a code revision consultant was underway. Commission Member Layton acknowledged the immense amount of work reflected in a code revision.

Outdoor Lighting Dark Sky Ordinance Update—Workshop

Presentation and Discussion: Planning Director Shurtleff explained the tight timeline for advancing recommendations to City Council regarding amending the approved **Ordinance 2019-03**, to include additional regulations required through the International Dark Sky Association Certification and resolve outstanding discrepancies within the existing regulations. Shurtleff explained concerns regarding directed illumination intentions versus actual illumination conditions. He explained concepts of emergency and safety lighting versus aesthetic lighting. He mentioned temporary lighting such as bistro lights and said conditions on temporary lighting could be included in the code amendment. He also brought up lumen exemptions for safety lighting and other approaches to overall lumen output. Councilmember Wojciechowski described discussions of the Dark Sky working group involving the amortization period for compliance, maximum allowed illumination levels and light trespass. Planning Director Shurtleff mentioned a major change regarding amortization and a shift to legal nonconforming existing lights. He further explained an approach to regulating indirect illumination. Wojciechowski brought up possible limitations for safety lighting. Concerns about complaint-based enforcement were discussed and a desire for compliant fixtures at the design phase. Commission Member Tatton brought up increased density and a desire to focus on the intention of the Dark Sky ordinance for decreased skyward illumination and the inevitable light trespass between residences. It was suggested that light trespass issues should become a proactive nuisance enforcement issue, while taking into account the staff workload for a complaint-based system. Incentivizing compliance was discussed, as well as complications of a legal nonconforming designation. Loftin brought up the difficulty of retaining an electrician for upgrades required for compliance. Grants for retrofits were discussed along with public education, timeframe for compliance, methods of enforcement and clarification of the purpose of the Dark Skies ordinance. Scientific research and quality of life issues were mentioned. Working with local retailers to improve availability of compliant fixtures was discussed.

Future Agenda Items:

Planning Director Shurtleff announced upcoming consideration of master plan documents as well as public hearings for ordinance amendments. Commission Chair Marienfeld mentioned the upcoming municipal election and urged others to register to vote.

Adjournment: Commission Chair Marienfeld adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.