

**PLANNING AND ZONING MINUTES**  
**MINUTES OF THE BENSON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**  
October 17, 2016

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Randy Robichaud opened the meeting at 9:12am.

2. PLEDGE

Chair Randy Robichaud led the pledge.

3. ROLL CALL

Andrew Abernathy, Barbara Thompson, Angie Roberts, Tom Sanor and Randy Robichaud were present. Debbie Braatz and Jim Thelander were absent. A quorum was present.

4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There was no answer to the call.

5. WORK SESSION

Discussion, review and planning related to the update for the Zoning Regulations

The work session opened with discussion about off street parking, chapter 14. Commissioner Andrew Abernathy and Planner Michelle Johnson commented that parking needs are tied to zoning districts and that suggestions to the parking chapter would be expected to change again once the concepts and standards of the various zoning districts are created.

This led to a discussion about the redevelopment and revitalization of town- downtown, the north side of the town and the south side of the town. Topics brought up included the impact of the railroad (both freight and passenger trains) on the town, the importance and the potential of the airport, and ideas for improving transportation through town. Ideas included relocating the Amtrak station so trains do not block intersections; incorporating alternative transportation methods through town in order to accommodate Vigneto's low speed vehicles and the golf cart users currently in town; redesigning Fourth and Fifth Streets for slower vehicle speeds and increased pedestrian traffic; and the general need to engage the public and business owners in the process.

Discussion also touched on where the division of responsibility lies between local government, private property owners and third party organizations, including those organizations that provide grant funding. It was agreed that community involvement is essential to the successful creation of a revitalization plan. The potential for encouraging grassroots organizations to become the driving force behind change was discussed; rather than top-down planning coming from the local government and planning commission, though the government entities may be the ones that initiate the change discussion.

It was agreed that the Commission would work on sketching out their redevelopment ideas, in order to open the discussion with community members about the needs of Benson and the desires of the residents.

Additionally, the Commission will continue to work on the Zoning Regulations document, specifically on chapters are not tied to specific zoning districts or standards.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Barbara Thompson motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Tom Sanor seconded. Motion passed 5-0 and the work session adjourned at 11:15 am