

PLANNING AND ZONING MINUTES
MINUTES OF THE BENSON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
September 19, 2016

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Randy Robichaud opened the meeting at 9:05am.

2. PLEDGE

Chair Randy Robichaud led the pledge.

3. ROLL CALL

Andrew Abernathy, Barbara Thompson, Jim Thelander and Randy Robichaud were present. A quorum was present.

4. WORK SESSION

Discussion, planning, strategizing and delegation of tasks regarding updates to regulatory documents, potential task force liaison assignments, and long term direction of the Commission.

Planner Michelle Johnson opened the work session by explaining what documents Commissioners are receiving and providing a brief history of the past attempts to update the Zoning Regulations. Documents distributed to Commissioners included the currently adopted Zoning Regulations, topic/chapter comparisons between Benson and several other jurisdictions, and the consolidated draft updates from past attempts. Michelle Johnson explained that even though the most recent update attempt was only several years ago, there are still multiple items that could be improved; she provide a list of specific items that likely need reconsideration since the 2012 draft. She further noted that a Supreme Court case decided in July 2015 created a need to update the Signage section, which she explained was her priority due to potential legal ramifications.

Michelle Johnson noted that because her workload had increased, she would be leaning more on the Commission to research and draft the update, rather than doing the drafting herself and asking the Commission to review it. She stated that several sections of the Zoning Regulations would be updated by other groups, namely the Historic Preservation Commission would be working on their chapter, the Board of Adjustment on their chapter, and a new outdoor lighting code task force would draft the lighting chapter. She noted that the Commission would receive status/progress reports on each of these chapters and the final drafts will all come before P&Z for recommendation to Council. Michelle Johnson acknowledged that Commissioners having interest or knowledge about topics, such as animal control or downtown revitalization, will be asked to lead the research and drafting regarding those topics. She stated the intent to delegating work out is to complete it in a timely manner while getting more public involvement, rather than piling all activity on one department and one Commission. She noted that the process of delegating out was new for the P&Z Department as well as City Hall in general and she hopes that it will prove beneficial so additional task forces can be created.

Lastly, Michelle Johnson explained that she would like to begin tracking costs associated with the Zoning Regulation update so she will have a sound basis to request funding for the 2017-

2018 fiscal year. She explained that even though many P&Z documents (not just the zoning regulation update documents) are reviewed by the attorney at \$175/hour, she had never seen the invoices to know how many hours were being billed for what type of work. Michelle Johnson explained that she was working with both the attorney and the Finance Department to identify P&Z costs and begin charging those costs to P&Z, rather than paying them out of the general operating account. Charging fees to P&Z will demonstrate a need to increase the professional service line item in the 2017-2018 budget in order to cover the costs of an attorney and potentially other planning professionals.

It was questioned why the 2012 draft wasn't passed to the attorney for review since it seemed to be acceptable back in 2012. Michelle Johnson reiterated that there are issues still needing to be addressed from the 2012 version and that her current funding wouldn't support a full review of an entire draft document. She stated that she hoped to get multiple short sections completed and sent to the attorney for review, plus at least one large section, within the next few months so she could set the stage to request funds for a comprehensive legal review of the entire draft during the next fiscal year.

The Commission then looked through the consolidated documents from the 2012 update. There was some discussion about the numerical order of the sections and subsections, but since it is unknown if or when the Zoning Regulations will be incorporated in the City Code, titles and numbering are a minor issue at this time. In looking through the topics, the length of each section, and the degree that each seemed complete from the 2012 draft, it was agreed that the first four sections would be sent to the attorney for his review regarding general direction and content. Attorney-recommended changes will be incorporated by the Commission and Commissioners themselves will also review these sections prior to the next work session in order to discuss changes they feel are necessary (so long as Commissioner suggested changes do no conflict with attorney-recommended changes).

It was also agreed that Commissioners would review sections 7, 8 and 9 to discuss at the next work session, should sections 1-4 not be returned by the attorney.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Andrew Abernathy motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Jim Thelander seconded. Motion passed 4-0 and the work session adjourned at 11:26 am