

On Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 7:06 p.m., a regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order by Acting Chair Steve Munson, the meeting was in person and via Zoom. Roll Call. Present in person: Doug Freed, Steve Munson and Joe Strabala-Bright Absent: Rene Morris, Skip McCloud, Jamie Schwingle and Aurelio Gallardo.

Also present were: City Planners Dustin Wolff, Brian Carranza, and Mark Sauer of Mead and Hunt, Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, City Manager Scott Shumard, Alderman Retha Elston, Alderman Jim Wise and City Clerk Teri Sathoff.

Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, Acting Chair Steve Munson, Doug Freed, Joe Strabala-Bright, City Manager Shumard, City Planner Dustin Wolff and City Clerk Sathoff were present in the Council Chambers, all other members attended via Zoom.

Since there was no quorum a motion to approve the minutes from the March 18th 2021 was not made.

Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt advised the commission that the Annexation of Steelton Group 15 was approved by the City Council at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 5, 2021. On Monday April 19, 2021 the City Council will hear a resolution to refer Steelton Group 16 to the Planning Commission. Group 16 consists of three parcels. Group 16 will be the final group for annexation.

City Planners Dustin Wolff, Brian Carranza and Mark Sauer opened up the discussion on the Comprehensive plan.

Mark Sauer stated this discussion would focus on 3 main topics, feedback on the comprehensive plan, the Vision for 2040 and the adoption process.

Joe Strabala-Bright stated he felt the plan was very thorough. Strabala-Bright did question why the plan specifically stated to avoid modern architecture. Dustin Wolff, said that you want the architecture to be attractive and not a great departure from the historic downtown. City Manager Shumard added that a few years ago he and Amanda Schmidt attended a meeting with the City of Peoria about revitalization and their main bit of advice was to "keep it Sterling."

Mark Sauer stated they could clean up the language and focus on the positive. Sauer stated they could word it to state the architecture should be complimentary to the history of Sterling with modern touches.

Steve Munson questioned who would be receiving the comprehensive plan, Dustin Wolff stated that the plan should be accessible to developers and the general public, the plan should function well for the City decision makers and the City staff. The document needs

to celebrate all of the accomplishments while also showing the items that need to be addressed as well as the things we would still like to accomplish.

Dustin Wolff stated that the Comprehensive Plan should be action oriented and evolving with the community. The planners have earmarked housing as a top priority because this is affecting businesses ability to recruit employees.

Steve Munson is hopeful that investors will see this as a brutally honest plan and they will see that we are a progressive and thinking community. Steve insisted that the community have access to this plan for it to be a success. Steve also stated that the City as a whole is better today than it was 15 years ago. This plan shows we know where our weaknesses are and that we would like to improve on them.

Joe Strabala-Bright stated that he noted preserving green space and sustainability were woven into the plan and he appreciates that, however it is never says that Sterling will be sustainable. Dustin Wolff said he would like to avoid the term sustainability as it can be polarizing. Dustin stated that he would like the focus making better long term decisions that will align with sustainability. Strabala-Bright is concerned that unless it is stated that it may be forgotten. Wolff stated a side bar can be added to show a focus on sustainability and the City is cognizant of sustainability.

Steve Munson would like to make a commitment to critique and revisit this document every sixty to seventy two months. There is a need to critique the vision every couple of years.

Mark Sauer advised the group that the main change or addition that was made to the plan since the last meeting was better alignment of the vision statements for each element with specific projects related to land use.

The purpose of tonight's meeting was to button up the document and answer any questions. On April 23rd we will invite stakeholders to review this draft document and answer a ten question survey. We will hold virtual meetings May 1st through May 14th with stakeholders. At the May 20th Planning Commission meeting we will discuss the feedback and make a recommendation to the City Council if the Planning Commission is ready. June 7th we will have a work session with the City Council. The plan is scheduled to be adopted at the June 21st City Council meeting.

The next Plan Commission meeting is May 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Teri Sathoff
City Clerk