

Planning and Zoning Committee of the Town of Patagonia
David Budd, Chair

Annual Report:
May 2011 through May 2012
Approved and submitted May 21, 2012

The Planning and Zoning Committee currently has six members with one vacancy. It has met an average of twice weekly for most of the last year. The major activities of the Committee for the past year can be summarized in three categories:

A) Response to Requests for Use Permits, and Public Hearings. As per Town Code (14- 2) all requests for new construction intended to be anything other than single-family homes must apply to the town for a Use Permit, and the first stop is the P and Z. Two requests for a Use Permits were processed by this committee in the past year, one for the Red Mountain Foods building on McKeown Ave. and another for an apartment building along Mendoza Alley. The RM Foods permit process went quickly, uncovered no opposition or unusual issues, and the building was completed and occupied by the end of 2011. The proposal for the Shelton Apartment Building was somewhat more complex, involving discussion at several meetings as well as the Open Hearing on April 9th, 2012. The process revealed substantial public opposition and a number of issues related to town development. The Committee finished its formal deliberations on the issue, and issued a report to the Town Council, on April 16th.

B) Code and Enforcement Issues. A careful look at existing Code, as well as questions from citizens, reveal that parts of the Patagonia Town Code and Town Plan may be somewhat out of date, or may need clarification. To that end, the P and Z Committee made a number of recommendations to clarify, or modernize the language of Chapter 14, which focuses on Planning and Zoning, Use Permits, Signage, and related issues. Of particular importance was to clarify that the town planning process does not include "zoning" in the sense most communities use the term, but rather case-by-case assessment of certain types of new uses and projects, and general recommendations for favored use in certain areas. A number of issues regarding Chapter 7, the Town Code related to Building, have also been discussed by the Committee and referred by P and Z and the Town Manager to the Town Attorney, or the Town Council, for further assessment.

C) Pro-Active Planning for the Town. One of the areas of frequent citizen comments has been concern over the environmental, and quality-of-life impacts of heavy industry, in particular open-pit mining, near the town with implications for town roads, town water supply, and town health, safety, and quiet. Accordingly, the P and Z Committee considered issues related to the weight and volume of truck use of town roads for some months, and held a Public Hearing on November 14th, 2011 related to the issue. In early 2012 recommendations of the Committee were referred to the Council. Additionally, work is ongoing related to the transportation of hazardous materials across town roads. As of this writing the Committee is exploring, with the advice of the Arizona Department of Transportation and with the help of

Town Counsel, the possibility of restricting the transport of certain materials, and permitting charges for moving hazardous materials when necessary. The P and Z Committee is beginning to explore, as well, the feasibility of a light-controlling, or "Dark Skies" ordinance consistent with the Town Plan and citizen requests to consider the issue. Some time this year P and Z recommendations on the matter will be passed to the Council.

In April, 2012, the Committee agreed upon and forwarded to Town Council a brief list of recommended priorities for future Capital Improvements, as the Committee is asked to do, annually, as per Chapter 14 of Town Code, among them improvements to the primary town park, and to town roads where appropriate.

***Future Issues for the Planning and Zoning Committee.**

During the coming year, the P and Z Committee will respond to relevant community issues and requests as they arise, and also go deeper into long range planning.

The Town Plan involves a comprehensive section concerned with Circulation—the movement of people by cars, bicycles, trails, pedestrians on sidewalks and the like, and no major follow-up since the publication of the Plan has taken place. The Committee hopes to look at the Circulation issue in some depth and report to Council on the progress of implementing the Plan in this regard.

The second mandated section of the Plan involves Land Use, and the Committee will work toward current maps, and where appropriate recommendations related to Land Use. Town-lands will be inventoried, and any relevant recommendations regarding the improvement of Town Parks or other Town properties forwarded to the Council.

Thirdly, the Plan included significant attention to environmental resources (in a section termed Energy and Water Resources) such as energy sufficiency, water quality and clean air, and the Committee will cooperate with other local groups in studying ways to protect water and air quality, and secure an adequate local energy supply. Lighting issues are already under study. It is hoped that by May, 2013, the annual report of the Planning and Zoning Committee can include significant movement toward achieving the goals of the Plan regarding these basic mandates.