

**TOWN OF PATAGONIA**

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEETING MINUTES**

**NOVEMBER 7, 2023, 6:00 P.M.**

**Zoom Meeting I.D. 957-511-4862 Password 338501**

1. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Laurie Monti at 6PM.
2. ROLL CALL: Present: Steve Finch, Gerry Isaac, Laurie Monti, Georgette Laurouy, Nancy McCoy.

Absent: Patrick O’Neal, Kevin McKay. A quorum was present.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 3, 2023, MEETING

Motion to approve the October 3, 2023 minutes was made by Steve Finch, seconded by Georgette Laurouy, and approved unanimously.

1. CALL TO THE PUBLIC A. R. S. §38-431-01(H): AT THIS TIME, THE PUBLIC WILL ONLY BE RECOGNIZED TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS LISTED FOR PUBLIC INPUT PURSUANT TO TOWN CODE SECTION 2-5-6. ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC IS ALLOWED TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE, SUBJECT TO A REASONABLE TIME SET BY THE COMMITTEE PURSUANT TO THE ARIZONA OPEN MEETING LAW. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CALL TO THE PUBLIC, INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE MAY RESPOND TO CRITICISM MADE BY THOSE WHO HAVE ADDRESSED THE COMMITTEE, MAY ASK STAFF TO REVIEW THE MATTER, OR MAY ASK THE MATTER BE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA. HOWEVER, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE SHALL NOT DISCUSS OR TAKE LEGAL ACTION ON MATTERS RAISED DURING AN OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC UNLESS THE MATTERS ARE PROPERLY NOTICED FOR DISCUSSION AND LEGAL ACTION.

The meeting was attended by Debbie Robinson. There were no speakers for Call to the Public.

**OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. DISCUSS AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF QUALIFYING INCOME LEVELS FOR PERSONS RENTING TOWN OWNED RENTAL PROPERTIES, AS WELL AS RENTS TO BE CHARGED FOR THOSE UNITS.

HUD’s Santa Cruz County low-income rental guidelines used by the Nogales Housing Authority were discussed. This document reports that the median income in Santa Cruz County is $59,000 and the low-income limit (80% of the County median income) for a family of four to rent an apartment is $45,250. HUD also has guideline limits for very low-income and extremely low-income households. Rents can vary based on the number of people in a household and the household’s income.

The Town would like to simplify the income guidelines to include low to moderate household incomes that would have a bottom and top income range. For example, if a family of four had an income within a range determined by the Town, then that family would qualify for a two-bedroom apartment at a fixed rent set by the Town. Income brackets would be determined by the number of people in a household. The lower range of the income bracket would guarantee that the household has sufficient income to afford the rent

The 2020 census showed that the median household income for Patagonia was $33,000, which means that half the households in Patagonia make less than $33,000. (Sonoita’s median income was $82, 000.)

Town Manager Robinson would like Town employees to have first right of refusal for Town rentals regardless of their income. This would need to be verified by the Town attorney.

Using money from HUD requires that the loan recipient follow all HUD guidelines. There would also be restrictions using Section 8 housing vouchers. Ms. McCoy will bring some information about Section 8 housing in Nogales to the next meeting.

Rental housing should be meant for Town residents, employees, and community members rather than encouraging other people coming here primarily to seek inexpensive housing. Therefore, having income guidelines with a specific low end is important. The Committee felt that an income range of $25,000 to $40,000 for a family of four would be a good place to start.

Moderate income guidelines should be appropriate for Patagonia. Rent for an apartment will be the same no matter where the renter’s income falls in the guideline range. Rent should be 25% - 30% of a household’s income. The senior apartments no longer have an income limit and the rent is going up 12.5% next year.

Town rentals could include floor plans of one, two or three bedrooms. Currently the Town has 633 buildings of which 546 are residences. Research may find information about what percentage of a community’s housing stock should be in the affordable range. It may help the Town’s long-range vision to think about how many affordable units it would like to eventually build. Would a needs assessment be helpful in determining what to build and/or useful for grant applications?

On the corner of Second Avenue and Sonoita, Town Manger Robinson is thinking about possibly four units for families, two units with two bedrooms and two units with three bedrooms. At $175 per square foot, the cost would be about one million dollars or about $250,000 per unit. The Town Manager thought they could be built for less. A berm may be needed to prevent flooding from Harshaw Creek.

The Town currently has $1.5 million in reserve. The Town Manager would like to keep $1 million in reserve. Using Town funds for building eliminates the restrictions that come with government funding. Although building one unit is less expensive than building multiple units, money is saved in the long run by building more than one unit at a time.

The Committee needs to develop a draft document presenting our vision of this project that can be shared with the community. This draft could include possible floor plans, income guidelines, building guidelines, etc., that can be changed depending on community input. A look at Coronado Builders’ proposal would be helpful, as well as floor plans from an architect. Mr. Finch and Ms McCoy will prepare a draft document for the next meeting.

1. STAFF OR MEMBER REPORTS: AT THIS TIME THE TOWN STAFF OR A COMMITTEE MEMBER MAY REPORT ON ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE. SUCH ITEMS MAY NOT BE ACTED UPON BY THE COMMITTEE AT THIS TIME, BUT MAY BE SCHEDULED AS A FUTURE AGENDA ITEM.

The Nature Conservancy and volunteers are trying to eradicate invasive plant species in Town, especially along Harshaw Creek.

Nothing has been heard from Martin Short about working with the Town to build affordable housing on Coronado owned lots.

The Town’s offer of $80,000 on the Rivera property was turned down.

1. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: AT THIS TIME THE COMMITTEE MAY BRING FORTH TOPICS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS AND SET THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

Laurie Monti would like to discuss public safety, specifically concerning the safety of cyclists on Harshaw Road. She will get in touch with the County about this.

Nancy McCoy and Steve Finch will share a draft document about proposed Town owned low-to-moderate income housing rentals.

1. ADJOURN: A motion to adjourn was made by Gerry Isaac, seconded by Georgette Laurouy, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17PM.