

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
HELD MARCH 14, 2024**

REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 PM.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM

PRESENT: Fisher, Ping, Johnson, Kavanagh

ABSENT: None

Also present: City Manager Susan Nicosia, City Attorney Justin Breck, Contract Planner Eric Mulcahy, Public Works Clerk Caleb Sobczak

ORGANIZATION OF BOARD:

Ping nominated Darin Fisher to serve as president, seconded by Kavanagh, with all present voting Aye. Justin Ping was nominated as Vice President by Fisher, seconded by Johnson, with all present voting Aye.

VISITOR OR PUBLIC COMMENT: (An opportunity for the Public to comment on any items not on tonight’s agenda)

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Adoption of By-Laws:

Contract Planner Mulcahy presented a draft set of by-laws from the Department of Commerce and tailored after Kalispell’s and Whitefish’s by-laws. City staff will provide a secretary to take minutes and City staff will be responsible for posting agendas and packets.

Mulcahy presented recommendations on a set meeting date: the 2nd Thursday of the month, the 3rd Wednesday of the month or the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Wednesdays do not work for Kavanagh. Nicosia suggested that the 2nd Thursday would work better since it would loop into Council meetings on the first and third Mondays of the month and the timing for packet publishing would be ideal.

Johnson motioned to adopt the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM as the official meeting time for the Planning Commission, seconded by Fisher. A voice vote was performed with all present voting Aye. Nicosia noted that if the second Thursday of the month is a holiday, potentially only Veterans Day, then the meeting will be held on the following Thursday.

Mulcahy continued to present the draft by-laws to the Commission. Including an option to replace a member if they continue to miss meetings. In amendments if an applicant chooses to amend their application after publication, then there is a re-notice requirement.

Johnson wondered if the number of members on the Planning Commission was in the by-laws. Nicosia said no it is defined as a five-member board in the Resolution adopted by City Council. They are still advertising for a fifth member since there are currently four members. If a fifth member is not found Fisher suggested he could leave the Commission. Nicosia had a question for the attorney if under quorum should they specifically call out if a member can participate via

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Zoom? Historically if a quorum is needed and a member participates via Zoom, they must participate for the entire meeting not just for the action item. The other by-laws do not currently call that out and she wondered if these by-laws should. Attorney Breck recommended language for Section Meetings 1. Quorum A. to read, "A majority of members present at a meeting of the Commission, either physically or virtually, shall constitute a quorum." Johnson clarified that virtual member attendees would need to be present for the entire meeting.

Johnson made a motion to amend draft by laws to allow virtual attendance to constitute a quorum, seconded by Kavanagh. A voice vote was performed with all present voting Aye.

Kavanagh motioned to adopt the by-laws as amended, seconded by Ping. A voice vote was performed with all present voting Aye.

Fisher asked if there was any other official business before adjournment. Nicosia said that the first action of the Committee will be adopting the Public Participation Plan. The Department of Commerce team that helps with these new Planning Commissions will be coming up with some dashboard information and they will have training. Mulcahy said that we can provide examples of the plans adopted by neighboring cities. Fisher noted that he expects that there will be good templates coming from City Staff so the Planning Commission will not be reinventing the wheel and he recommended that all members should print out and read their own copy of Senate Bill 382. He also mentioned that because of the public nature of these meetings there will be no outside of meeting discussion or sidebars allowed; make sure that members do not reply all to emails with your thoughts.

A motion was made to adjourn by Johnson, seconded by Kavanagh. Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM

President

Attest:

Public Works Clerk