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**MINUTES
CITY OF LAUREL
CITY/COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2021
5:35 PM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Public Input: *Citizens may address the committee regarding any item of business that is not on the agenda. The duration for an individual speaking under Public Input is limited to three minutes. While all comments are welcome, the committee will not take action on any item not on the agenda.*

1. Roll Call

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:35PM

Jon Klasna
Ron Benner
Gavin Williams
Evan Bruce
Roger Giese
Dan Koch
Judy Goldsby
Nick Altonaga (City of Laurel)

The Chair announced the agenda change to place Chens Express before the North Western Energy Discussion.

General Items

2. Approve Meeting Minutes: November 17, 2021

Board members reviewed the minutes.

Ron Motioned to Approve the minutes from the meeting on November 17, 2021.
Evan Seconded.
Motion Carried.

3. Public Hearing: Lucky Louie's Special Review

The Chair called for Proponents.
The Chair called for Proponents.

John Johnson, 1917 Rusting Court, Casper, Wyoming.

Owner of the Building, and also a partner of Louis Carrano with Tavern Partners.

Want to speak in favor of the project. Would like to have the 3rd condition of approval be changed to "Have started within 6 months of special review approval."

Another issue with the timeframe is that we still have to have approval by the state. The Department of Justice and the State need to sign off and approve it as well.

Ron: Will there be any food service?

John: Very limited kitchen and food service. Want to make sure that it will be limited to bar and casino and not a bar, casino, restaurant. It will be very limited, not a restaurant with full service. Limited service area of about 8 seats.

Roger: One of the recommendations and discussion items has it as ingress and egress. Will there be additional ingress and egress created to the neighboring site?

None planned at this time. No major site work is being done.

The Bar in this location will be a service bar, not a full-on bar for customers. It will have full beverage service available but limited seating.

Judy: What will the hours of operation be?

Hours of operation will be 8am-12am.

Ron: The Bar downtown will close? What will be done with it?

John: We have a verbal agreement with a gentleman down the street who will take over the space.

The Chair Called for Proponents.

The Chair called for Opponents.

The Chair called for Opponents.

The Chair called for Opponents.

There being none, the Chair closed the public hearing.

Forrest Sanderson, KLJ: Suggest taking up the 1-year limit and impose the ability of an extension.

Board members discussed amending the recommendation of a 1-year development timeframe.

Gavin Motioned to Approve the Special Review for Lucky Louie's with the amended Recommendations as discussed.

Evan Seconded.

Roger Giese Opposed.

Motion Carried.

4. Plan Review: City-Brew / Chen's Express

Nick Presented the amended plan for the City Brew / Chens Express

Ron: Will there be a pedestrian walkway to the ATM? This is very problematic as not everyone has a car. Also problematic for Larger vehicles heading into the parking areas.

Ron: Trash Enclosure? Nick explained the encroachment permit that was approved last night

Ron: Parking issues, ATM Island, and multiple lanes of traffic will be very problematic. I think cars are going to get all over.

Can we put an addendum that the Police won't have to attend to any accidents here? Not sure how they will deal with traffic here.

Where is the overflow parking for large vehicles or how will the developer deal with vehicles with trailers?

Ron Motioned to table the plan review until January and invite the developer to present it then.

Jon Seconded.

Motion Carried.

5. Staff Update

The Planning Director announced that his last day with the city of Laurel will be January 21st, 2022.

Karen Courtney the Building Official will be taking over the day to day items with Forrest Sanderson at KLJ assisting with the larger projects.

6. Discussion: Northwestern Energy Zone Change

Ron Motioned to Adjourn the meeting to hold a work session.

Evan Seconded.

Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm.

Ron recommended to send our standing decision back to City Council. We should not be forced to make the decision.

Ron left the meeting due to a prior engagement.

Forrest Sanderson, KLJ. Inc. was present to summarize the findings regarding the NW Energy Zone Change.

You have a comprehensive record. We did not yet address the statutory criteria in the MCA. (Just those in the LMC). We MUST address the items in MCA regarding the zone change. There is no proof that those 11 items were addressed.

In 32 years, it is the first time a AGB has decided to NOT go through the official process and build the record. Through a quick run-back through the record I have prepared a comprehensive list of findings for each. The public is entitled and should be invited to participate in the public process and the findings.

Even through a quick search we have prepared a significant list. I recommended that the City Council remand the review of the item to the Planning Board. We must review the Zone Change criteria and findings and adopt conclusions.

We must prove that we have reviewed the record, we have reviewed the findings, and can state that our decision is based upon those.

Tasking for Nick: Is NWE still interested in the zone change process?
They must affirm or drop the zone change.

If they don't respond to us, assume they are still interested. We must invite them to the Public Hearing in January.

Request to the Board is in two parts:

1. I need you to review the record (Summary of findings)
2. If you have additional findings, SEND THEM TO NICK

We want to have all findings available for the Public Hearing. Charge the public: Review the summary of findings, email Nick with any further findings. We will come to a conclusion for each and every one of those 11 questions.

Next issue to address: After the public hearing, Councilman McGee. Councilman McGee asked the question whether the Council or Commissioners were the appropriate body. Who is the appropriate body? There is a statutory process for amending the zoning jurisdiction and it has not been followed.

Does the City of Laurel have the legal authority to assign zoning?
The City Attorney is going to have to make a decision on that.

It does not matter who the appropriate governing body is, but this is the planning board that has the power over this portion of review process. That is crystal clear. No matter who the governing body is, they will review the findings and conclusions prepared by the Laurel City-County Planning Board. Going through the findings and public process shall show that we completed our requirements.

Does the Board have any questions for it?

Dan: Doesn't the City have authority 1-mile out for zoning?

Forrest: There are some specific prohibitions for zoning outside city limits. There are some specifics for the zoning area.

Dan: Maybe there were some things that were done wrong in the past.

The answers we find for this item.

Our question to Yellowstone County: has YC adopted Zoning under 76-2-2 MCA?

Our record will be complete, defensible, developed through an open, fair, and transparent process, and will be sent to the appropriate governing body.

Judy: The determination of the appropriate governing body would not impact our review of findings?

Forrest: Correct.

Dan: Could the Commissioners override our decisions?

Forrest: Yes

Dan: Then why are we not doing it backwards? To figure out who the appropriate GB is?

Forrest: No, we started the process and must finish it correctly. Assumptions were made during this process that blocked the underlying questions. We are going to find who the appropriate governing body is and shall send our recommendations to them.

We are dealing with Private Property and Private Property rights. This decision directly deals with impacts to private property. Let's navigate the process with this in mind. Dealing with both sides of the issue, both For and Against.

Can we have a meeting before the 19th to meet on the findings?

Must provide notice. Thou shalt not meet in private.

- Make sure the public is aware
- Make sure they are afforded the opportunity to attend
- Ensure that if they are working on their tasking, that you are as well

Want to ensure that things are open, fair, and transparent.

If NW Energy withdraws their application, IN WRITING, we are done. Everything stops.

Evan: Can an EPA or DEQ agent come in and speak with us regarding this issue?

Yes, but the DEQ agent would provide details on a different set of questions than what we have under our review. We would start to mix regulatory mandates, and it is all relevant, but might not all belong as part of this process.

If you believe you have heard testimony that gives you pause, in regard to property values impacted, and the presentation from DEQ would answer that question, they will be required by law to show up and answer your questions. All state agencies are required to attend a meeting when requested in order to answer questions. They are good at attending. But we need to know in advance to invite them.

Dan: There should be a better way of having the public be aware of the hearings and processes. They were not aware of the process and that we did not have sufficient information.

Forrest: We have struggled for years to get people to know about meetings and information. We do more than most communities to get the word out. Follow what the code says, publish the notices.

Dan: The local paper tracks it. It is incumbent upon the public to attend meetings. In all due respect to Dr. Benner, We must deal with this for the city, for the public.

Steve Krum, 249 24th Ave West, Laurel, MT 59044

One thing through the process is that the public has come in and voiced a lot of thoughts and feelings and ideas. It has come through the health and safety and environment.

Dan brought up and I agree that it is the Public's responsibility to attend meetings. The YC News is not the proper location for public notices to be sent. It is not published within the statutory area for the Board. We are missing a big opportunity to reach out to the public by not publishing in the Outlook.

Forrest: The paper of record is set by the Governing Body. We are just living with the decision.

Jon: With that in mind, can we direct someone to request that our notices be put in Laurel's paper?

Nick can forward the request to have our notices in both.

Carol Blades 1805 Denidas Lane.

I DO read the Outlook. I like that you are giving us a second chance for contact on this issue. Asked what is the role for Forrest? Can we contact you directly?

Forrest: No, primary contact is with Nick who then contacts me if necessary.

Jon: Would like to see a specific list of the 11 questions. Where can I find those?

Forrest explained the document with the findings. I-XI findings and conclusions, followed by the 6 questions posed by Nick and Forrest.

The Roman Numerals are the statutory questions, followed by the questions posed by staff.

If we hear about Yellowstone County, WE DO NOT CARE, we only care about our jurisdiction.

To deviate from that puts us on a path that is untenable and indefensible.

Where our decision goes, it does not matter, and has no impact on the decision-making process.

You serve the county and the city of Laurel in equal measure.

We are still going to deal with the application, as we are the appropriate board.

Jon: We need to decide whether NW Energy wants to proceed or they want to withdraw?

If the answer is full-stop, it should be front page above the fold news.

We would want to have a 1-minute comment period per person at the end of the work session. In the interim between the 5th and the 19th, send it in as an email, it is the fastest way to get it into the record.

Carol Blades: Have been prolific in letter writing to the editor, but has not included them with City Council as they were longer than 3 minutes.

New Business

Old Business

Other Items

7. Adjourn

Dan Motioned to adjourn the work session.

Gavin Seconded.

Motion Carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:15pm

Announcements

8. Next Meeting: January 19, 2022

The City makes reasonable accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person's ability to participate in this meeting. Persons needing accommodation must notify the City Clerk's Office to make needed arrangements. To make your request known, please call 406-628-7431, Ext. 2, or write to City Clerk, PO Box 10, Laurel, MT 59044, or present your request at City Hall, 115 West First Street, Laurel, Montana.

DATES TO REMEMBER