

CASCADE COUNTY
PLANNING BOARD

January 19, 2021
09:00 AM
Online Zoom Meeting

Board Members: Dexter Busby, Dan Johnstone, Elliot Merja, and Bruce Moore.

NOTICE: PURSUANT TO MCA 2-3-212(1), THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING IS IN AUDIO FORM, LOCATED AT CASCADECOUNTYMT.GOV AND THE PLANNING OFFICE. THIS IS A WRITTEN RECORD OF THIS MEETING TO REFLECT ALL THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD. MCA 7-4-2611 (2) (B). TIMESTAMPS ARE INDICATED IN RED, WITHIN EACH AGENDA ITEM BELOW, AND WILL DIRECT YOU TO THE PRECISE LOCATION SHOULD YOU WISH TO REVIEW THE AUDIO SEGMENT.¹

THESE MINUTES ARE PARAPHRASED AND REFLECT THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CASCADE COUNTY AND PLANNING BOARD ARE CONSIDERED A DRAFT UNTIL FORMALLY APPROVED BY PLANNING BOARD.

STAFF ATTENDEES: Sandor Hopkins, Destiny Gough, Kevin Nurre, Jake Wilkinson, and Charity Yonker.

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Richard Liebert, Rob Skawinski, Cassandra Soto, and Ken Thornton.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** President Elliot Merja called the meeting to order at 09:03 AM

2. **ROLL CALL:**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dexter Busby, Dan Johnstone, Elliot Merja, and Bruce Moore.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

A. Draft Meeting Minutes for December 15, 2020

1. **Board Discussion & Decision**

Elliot Merja: asks if the Board members have reviewed the minutes for the previous meeting and if the Board has any corrections or changes that they wish to be made to the draft meeting minutes for December. Hearing none, he calls for a motion.

Dexter Busby: moves the draft meeting minutes for December 15, 2020, to be approved.

Ken Thornton: seconds the motion for approval.

¹ Due to technical difficulties, there is no audio recording of the meeting for January 19, 2021. These minutes are only a paraphrased reflection of the proceedings that took place at the Planning Board meeting on January 19, 2021.

Richard Liebert: asks if he may speak.

Elliot Merja: says yes.

Richard Liebert: says that he would like it to be known that he is attending this meeting as a public citizen and not as a Board member. He also asks for clarification on what is an appropriate protocol for Board members whose term has ended but have not been reappointed to the Board yet, such as Ken Thornton, Rob Skawinski, and himself.

Charity Yonker: says Ken Thornton, Rob Skawinski, and Richard Liebert's term expired on December 31st, 2020. Since then, they have been pending reappointment and cannot take any Board action at today's meeting. In the meantime, someone else from the Board will need to act as Mr. Thornton, Mr. Skawinski, and Mr. Liebert cannot take Board action.

Dan Johnstone: seconds the motion for approval.

Elliot Merja: understands and calls for a vote from the rest of the Board members.

All in Favor, motion carries 4-0.

4. **OLD BUSINESS: None.**

Elliot Merja: says that there is no Old Business and moves the meeting to the next agenda item.

5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Board Election of Officers**

1. **Board Discussion & Action:**

Dexter Busby: nominates Elliot Merja to remain as the President of the Planning Board².

Charity Yonker: asks to speak.

Elliot Merja: agrees.

Charity Yonker: says this item was put on the Agenda following the Planning Board Bylaws, which provides that Board officers shall be elected at the annual meeting.³ Due to the lack of a full quorum, she suggests that the Board table the elections to the next scheduled meeting when there is a full quorum.

Elliot Merja: says that he was wondering if that was a possibility and then moves to table the election to the next meeting.

Dexter Busby: says that he is fine if they move the election of Board Officers to the next meeting.

² The Planning Board has three (3) Officer positions, the President of the Board, Vice-President of the Board, and the Secretary of the Board (the Planning Department). Both the President and Vice-President of the Board Officer positions are electives that are to be voted upon at the first annual meeting in January. For more information on the Planning Board Officers please read the Planning Board bylaws or visit <https://www.cascadecountymt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/745/Planning-Board-Bylaws-PDF>.

³ See footnote 2.

Elliot Merja: moves to table the election of Board Officers to the next meeting.

Dexter Busby: seconds the motion to table.

All in Favor, motion carries 4-0.

B. Annual Report

1. Board Discussion

Elliot Merja: moves to the next Agenda item. He asks if the Board has any discussions or comments that they would like to make on the Annual Report.

Dexter Busby: asks if the Planning Director would like to present an overview of the Annual Report.

Charity Yonker: paraphrases “FY2021 Strategic Plan & Goals” in the Annual Report.

Elliot Merja: thanks the Planning Director and moves to the next Agenda item.

C. Growth Policy

1. Planning Director’s Recommendation

Charity Yonker: says that she recommends the Board not change the Growth Policy this year. She explains that the previous year the Board conducted its five (5) year review. During this time, the Board determined that the 2020 Census data is needed to revise Cascade County's Growth Policy. She states that presently the US Census Bureau has not finished synthesizing their data. Furthermore, because they are still in the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not be an appropriate time to start a rigorous public process.

2. Board Discussion

Elliot Merja: agrees with the Planning Director. Hearing no comments or questions regarding the recommendation from the Board; he moves to the next Agenda item.

6. BOARD MATTERS

Elliot Merja: asks if there are any other Board matters. Hearing none, he moves to the next Agenda item.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING MATTERS WITHIN THE BOARD’S JURISDICTION:

Richard Liebert: asks if the County conducts regular meetings with Great Falls City Planning Office and if we were aware of any landuse legislation.

Charity Yonker: replies that the County tries to meet weekly at a Certificate of Survey (COS) review meeting with the City, when the City is involved in the Certificate of Survey's property location. However, due to the present pandemic, these meetings have been taking place electronically. She states she is not currently aware of relevant legislation at this time.

Richard Liebert: thanks the Planning Director. Then he commends the Planning Department on having a photography contest as it was an excellent way to get the community involved. He then asks who the winner of the 2020 Photography Contest is.

Charity Yonker: says the Photography Contest winner is Marla Meyers with her picture "Frosty Mornings at Giant Springs." Her photograph will be featured on the front cover page of Cascade County Zoning Regulations. She says that this photograph won all three (3) places in the photography contest, but they found it unfair to all allow her photograph to be the winner for all three places. So second and third place went to the runners-up. Second place was a tie between Lori Andres with her photograph captioned "Pause and Reflect," Marla Meyers with her photograph captioned "Memorials Falls in July," and Rhianna Robertson's photograph of Giant Springs Park. Third place went to Josh Blystone with his photograph captioned "Sluice Boxes State Park." She says that these photographs may be viewed online on our website.⁴ She says the second place and third place winners' photographs will be featured inside of the Zoning Regulations.

Richard Liebert: says that he will have to check the photographs on the website.

Elliot Merja: asks if there are any other public comments. Hearing none, he moves to adjournment.

8. **Adjournment at 09:24 AM**

Bruce Moore motions to adjourn the meeting.

Dexter Busby: seconds the motion for adjournment.

Elliot Merja: calls for a vote.

All in Favor, motion carries 4-0.

⁴ To view the photographs online please visit <https://www.cascadecountymt.gov/482/Photography-Contest>.