

**KETTLE FALLS PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 13, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jody Emra called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Chair Jody Emra led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members in attendance included Jody Emra, Nick Gourlie, and Joe Owens.

STAFF

Staff in attendance included Raena Hallam, Council Member Chris Shurrum, Council Member Michael Weatherman, and Mike Manning (SCJ Alliance).

GUESTS

Ben Leighton, Josh Judd, Robyn Westergard and Ken House.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MAIL RECEIVED

There were no announcements or mail received.

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MINUTES OF DECEMBER 10, 2024, MEETING

Commissioner Nick Gourlie made a motion to approve the minutes of December 10, 2024 with no amendments. Commissioner Joe Owens seconded the motion. Commissioner Joe Owens – YES, and Commissioner Nick Gourlie – YES. Motion passed.

CLOSED

PUBLIC HEARING

MAPLES INVESTMENT PROPERTIES LLC – SHORT PLAT

Chair Jody Emra reviewed the public hearing purpose (Short Plat – one parcel to 4 parcels, Parcel #1918901 at the junction of Highway 395 and State Route 25 – C-2 Zone) and protocol.

Mike Manning stated there has been no agency or public comment received. The short plat conforms with all of the provisions of Title 17 and the C-2 zone. There is no reason why the planning department or other city staff would recommend denial of this short plat.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie reported he had a copy of the railroad easement and the warranty deed refers to the abandoned right-of-way.

Mike Manning stated he received confirmation the property is not impacted by the railroad easement.

Chair Jody Emra opened the public hearing for public comment at 7:06 p.m. No public comment was presented. Chair Jody Emra closed the public hearing to public comment at 7:07 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

TAXIDERMY BUSINESS – 510 W. 5TH AVENUE

Chair Jody Emra stated the proposed taxidermy business would be located at 510 W. 5th Avenue which is in Panorama RV Park (PNW Investments LLC). Josh Judd, owner and operator of High Mountain Tannery distributed a packet of information to the planning commission. (copy on file)

Josh Judd stated he doesn't do any taxidermy but does perform tanning for taxidermists. He explained as an example someone shoots a deer, and they take it to a taxidermist. The taxidermist will then flesh and salt the hide until it is to a storage state. Then the taxidermist will ship the hide to a tannery. He explained he has outgrown his garage and needs a larger space for his business.

Josh stated the hides come to him already salted and cleaned and can have a shelf life of a year. He then finishes the hide to the state where it can be used for things like a couch throw, dressing item or sent back to the taxidermist to be mounted.

Chair Jody Emra stated she thinks the main concern of the planning commission is the chemicals used in the tanning process. She stated the proposed location is in a park where people are living and there could be noxious fumes etc.

Josh explained nothing he uses is shipped as a chemical and the smell is similar to a beauty salon. The chemicals are safe to handle and are not going to burn you. He stated he uses gloves in the process mainly to keep his hands from drying out. It is not hazardous if some splashes on you. There is one chemical that can't be directly disposed of in a septic system. That chemical is used to turn the hide into leather. When the hide is placed in the chemical it absorbs 100% of it. It doesn't matter if there is 4lbs in the vat or 12lbs, the hides will absorb 100% of the chemical. When the water is drained there is no chemical left in it. The PH levels are kept around 7, which is neutral and not acidic. He stated he is currently using a septic system, and the RV Park has a public sewer. He will not be putting any chemicals in the drain because the hides absorb all of the chemicals.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie asked if he was using any respirators, hoods or needed special venting? Josh replied no, there is no special equipment required.

Commissioner Joe Owens asked if he was all set for chemical containment. Josh stated yes, most of the chemical containers are five-gallon buckets and are water soluble. It is made to be mixed with water.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated some of the chemicals listed in the packet he provided have a flash point of 200 degrees. He asked if he had a plan for fire suppression. Josh responded yes, but the largest quantity of the chemicals is a five-gallon bucket. A fire extinguisher will be adequate. Josh explained the maximum amount of chemicals would be about 6 lbs. in 100 gallons of water. A five-gallon bucket of chemicals will tan approximately 1000 hides.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie asked if there would be any smells or odors outside of the building. He further asked if he currently received any complaints from his neighbors. Josh stated no he works in his garage on a one-acre piece and most of his neighbors don't realize he does tanning. He stated if someone brings him a hide that hasn't been properly taken care of and bacteria has already set in it is turned away and the owner of the hide must dispose of it themselves. The whole idea is hair on tanning, if something stinks something has gone wrong. If there is any fleshing involved it is minimal. The discarded flesh goes into the freezer and is disposed of on garbage day. It is anticipated he will have his own dumpster at the RV Park but hasn't yet discussed it with the property owner.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated tanning and curing of animal hides isn't allowed in any zones of the zoning code. He stated he is guessing when the zoning code was written much harsher chemicals were used. Now tanning can be done with a much cleaner process without harsh chemicals.

Chair Jody Emra stated since tanning is not on the zoning matrix it would require an ordinance.

Mike Manning stated it would require a zoning code amendment with public hearings at the planning commission and city council levels.

Josh Judd stated there are many types of tanning and some processes would be too harsh for the wastewater system. Such as making leather for a saddle or something.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated he would also like Public Works Superintendent Dave Willey and Fire Chief Phil Adams to review.

Mike Manning stated that amending the zoning code can be initiated at any time and planning commission can decide about tanning processes using harsher chemicals.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated adding language to the definitions along with the matrix would be helpful.

Chair Jody Emra stated the planning commission will move forward with the process.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie suggested to Josh he contact Public Works Superintendent Dave Willey to determine the impact on the wastewater system.

Robyn Westergard stated she had spoken with Public Works Superintendent Dave Willey and his concern was about the chemicals used in the process.

Chair Jody Emra asked if Josh's business would be getting a lot of customer traffic. Josh replied no, he may have 40 to 50 walk-in customers per year. Most of his business is done with taxidermists

who will deliver several hides once or twice a year and he mails the hides back when completed. Most people will not even know the business is there. He doesn't plan to hang a sign or advertise the business.

Commissioner Joe Owens asked if the Citric Acid appears to be the most acidic. He stated it says in the packet it comes in a solid form.

Josh Judd stated it's a powder and is shipped nonhazardous. He explained it's not considered food grade because of how it is packaged but before it's packaged it is food grade. It's used in sour candy etc.

Chair Jody Emra stated she uses citric acid in canning processes.

Commissioner Joe Owens stated it says it can be hazardous to the respiratory system. Josh stated that it is a powder and depending on grain size will determine the hazard level. He stated when you open a package it doesn't emit a bunch of dust or anything to be inhaled.

Chair Jody Emra thanked Josh Judd for the information he provided and for attending the meeting. She found it very fascinating.

OPEN

MAPLES INVESTMENT PROPERTIES LLC – SHORT PLAT

Commissioner Nick Gourlie made a motion to approve the Maples Investment Properties Short Plat. Commissioner Joe Owens seconded the motion. Commissioner Joe Owens – YES, and Commissioner Nick Gourlie – YES. Motion passed.

Mike Manning stated he will email Ben Leighton notifying him of planning commissions approval and it is moving on to City Council.

CLOSED

OLD BUSINESS

LINTON ANNEXATION UPDATE

Mike Manning, SCJ Alliance, stated he had received the required SEPA checklist, and it is currently open for public comment. To date no comment has been received. The public hearing is scheduled for the next planning commission meeting in February.

OPEN

UGA UPDATE

Mike Manning reported there is no precedence set for using the land swap method to include land within the UGA. He recommends a land capacity study be performed as part of the comprehensive plan update process next year.

Mike stated there is grant money available to do the comprehensive plan update.

Clerk/Treasurer Raena Hallam stated the city has secured some grant money, but she isn't sure which update process it is for. Mike stated he would investigate it.

OPEN

PLANNING COMMISSION BYLAWS

Chair Jody Emra stated elections will be on the next agenda.

OPEN

TITLE 17 ZONING UPDATES

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated he is waiting for feedback regarding the proposed updates and the questionnaire in the back of the packet.

Chair Jody Emra stated she has some things circled but hasn't read everything in the back.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated the underlined text is the proposed changes.

Chair Jody Emra stated there are three levels for Electrical Vehicle charging stations. Level three is not allowed in residential and asked what the difference is between levels 1 and 2 compared to level 3.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated he isn't sure that is how it was in the matrix. He doesn't know when that language was put in, but it is definitely something to look at.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated he did not delete any rows in the matrix. Anything highlighted is just how the row would change. He also pointed out the industrial uses are not included in the proposed updates since it has no effect on residential uses. Industrial will be what it is now.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie stated the goal is to convert the current seven zoning districts we have down to three zoning districts. He suggested discussing one section and coming to an agreement on that section and keep moving forward.

Chair Jody Emra stated a lot of her questions were answered at the last planning commission meeting.

Mike Manning suggested discussing the proposed zoning district updates at the next planning commission meeting. Chair Jody Emra stated she thought they agreed on reducing the number of zoning districts.

Commissioner Nick Gourlie asked the other commission members to make notes and/or write down questions to discuss. This would be very helpful.

OPEN

HOMEWORK

Chair Jody Emra will:

- Title 17 - Zoning Updates

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Commissioner Nick Gourlie will:

- Title 17 - Zoning Updates

- Bylaws

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Commissioner Joe Owens will:

- Title 17 - Zoning Updates

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PUBLIC COMMENT

TAXIDERMY BUSINESS – 510 W. 5TH AVENUE

Council Member Chris Shurrum asked when Mr. Judd planned to open his tanning business.

Josh replied, the sooner the better and asked if there was anyone, he could talk with to speed up the process.

Mike Manning stated he should reach out to Secretary LeAnne Sanders and Public Works Superintendent Dave Willey.

Clerk/Treasurer Raena Hallam stated a public hearing will be required by the planning commission and with the city council. It takes two city council meetings to adopt an ordinance. She stated adoption can happen in March if all goes smoothly.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jody Emra adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Approved:

Jody Emra, Chairperson

Attest:

Raena Hallam, Clerk/Treasurer