



City of Leavenworth
Planning Commission Meeting
February 7, 2018 (Wednesday)
7:00 PM
City Hall – Council Chambers

MINUTES

Larry Hayes called the meeting to order for the city of Leavenworth planning commission meeting for February 7, 2018 at seven o'clock.

Planning Commission Members in attendance: Pete Olson; Anne Hessburg; Andy Lane; Scott Bradshaw; and Larry Hayes

Commissioner Lane: moved to approve the minutes of January 3rd; and Commissioner Hessburg: Seconded. All approved.

The Planning Commissioners did not receive the 2018 Docket, and such will be added to the next meeting agenda.

Developer Service Manager Pate opened the discussion of defining affordable housing. Affordable housing is priority one. Manager Pate relayed that the search conducted, most jurisdictions do not have any other change in definition except for what Hud says, which is 30%. Very few venture forward in trying to redefine affordable housing.

There are a lot of jurisdictions that have incentive programs, and Developer Services will come back with definitions. Or at least a starting point for staff to gain more research or start crafting the appropriate code changes that are necessary to complete the task.

Developer Service Manager Pate presented in the information to date:

- a few of the articles of point counter-point included discussion on the definitions of affordable housing and whether or not they're still applicable. What they found was the 30% still acceptable, but it begged for changes.
- a few of the articles discussed transportation, and the cost of transportation.
- a few discussed if in fact affordable housing does to the quality of housing.
- a couple of the articles gave a history of where that 30% came from.
- almost all of the articles concluded that the current national accepted definition doesn't really reflect the reality. It's a standard that's been upheld through time. It's an okay standard, it works for a lot of things, but they almost all say it could be, or should be, re-evaluated and monitored or changed in some way.

The Planning Commissioners relayed that rather than saying "affordable housing," because that has a lot of connotations of specific definition and language that has strict regulations, the Planning Commissioners discussed "workforce housing."

The Planning Commissioners reviewed information on workforce housing, including some history of another tourist community that is having similar problem where workers didn't receive enough income to live where they work. So they were struggling with what worker housing was, and they coined the definition "essential workers"--police, school teachers, nurses--and that part of the program they started developing was that these people were actively working, but they couldn't qualify for the "affordable housing" definition, but the housing cost and the burden were to the point where they couldn't afford anything else except the cost of their housing. Every dollar earned goes into shelter, and not much is left over for example – childcare and medical expenses. Over 30% of income was used for housing (rent, sometimes insurance, utilities excepting phone)

The Planning Commissioners discussed the idea of moving the number from 30% to 30-50 as the range to classify workforce housing. The Planning Commissioners discussed the folks that work here in town and want to live here in town regarding how this definition would serve (them). The Planning Commissioners discussed transportation costs regarding housing choices, and housing burden levels. The Planning Commissioners discussed the "BERK needs analysis."

The Planning Commissioners discussed the phrase of "affordable housing" - what they think of is low income housing. What affordable housing means, is that it is housing that is to an individual or to a household is what they can pay for, and generally that's been if their housing costs, principle or interest, taxes, insurance, plus utilities minus phone, is 30% or less of their household income, then it is affordable. In a community, what is affordable is based on, not household, a specific household income, but the median which may be misleading or not the task of addressing "workforce housing."

The Planning Commissioners discussed the median income of \$43,000; and any housing that is 30% or less of 43,000 a year, as affordable housing. Affordable housing needs to be defined as when the category of housing costs and income are unique to Leavenworth. If the workforce indeed has income that is insufficient to find housing here now that is affordable, then what is it that we are trying to target? Is there an income group, what exactly are we trying to do? The Planning Commissioners desired to hold defining, and work on incentives that can lead to the definition of affordable housing; examples like Palo Alto, California. The Planning Commissioners discussed some general details of such example

The Planning Commissioners desired to review "service workers" that work in town that can't afford to live in town.

The Planning Commissioners discussed state and federal differences in definition and amounts of incentives used to qualify for affordable housing; and the Planning Commissioners discussed a housing authority scenario.

The Planning Commissioners discussed common wall codes and construction

Commissioner Hayes: Motioned to adjourn; and Commissioner Lane: Seconded. All approved