

Gearhart Planning Commission Minutes for May 11, 2023

MEMBERS: Virginia Dideum, Russ Taggard, Don Frank, Terry Graff, Paulina Cockrum, Judy Schector, and John Mesberg

STAFF: Chad Sweet, and Angoleana Brien

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Gearhart Planning Commission for Thursday, May 11, 2023, was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Vice President Russ Taggard. *Members and staff were present, except Virginia Dideum, who was excused.*

CONSENT AGENDA

On **MOTION** by Graff, 2nd by Schector, the consent agenda with future amendments of the consent agenda. Said agenda approved the financial report for April 27, 2023. There was no correspondence.

The April 20, 2023 minutes will return for approval to the June meeting after names have been edited.

5 - Approved (Taggard, Frank, Graff, Schector, Mesberg), 1 - abstained (Cockrum)

STAFF REPORT

Sweet spoke about how the City of Gearhart has been searching for police officers since Vince Yokoyama left two years ago. They received a couple of applications and are considering them closely. Meanwhile, the city council has made an offer to a potential candidate for the position of police chief. They used GMP consultants to involve the public in the selection process, and after narrowing down the initial pool of applicants, they conducted interviews with panels consisting of city council members, residents, and staff. The leading candidate for the police chief position is Joshua Gregory, a detective from the city of Seaside, who has extensive experience and specialized training. The city is excited about the potential of having Gregory as the new police chief, but there are still some steps remaining, including a thorough background check and psychological tests. If everything goes well, they hope to have Gregory start by July 1. In the meantime, they have our city officer Ian Brown and interim arrangements with the Clatsop County Sheriff's Department to cover police duties. The city's budget is tight, so they will need to explore additional sources of revenue or budget adjustments to hire more officers. In other news, the City of Gearhart recently passed an overnight camping ordinance, allowing camping in designated areas for certain hours but with certain restrictions. The city has been working with the affected individuals and will begin the process of removing the homeless encampment after giving them a 72-hour notice. The ordinance is aimed at managing camping in Gearhart while respecting the rights of the homeless population.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT - None

GOALS LIST - No new additions, corrections, or concerns.

VISITORS COMMENTS - None

PUBLIC HEARINGS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion on a tree planting and cutting ordinance in city right-of-ways. The planning commission has been asked to discuss these matters and determine their involvement. There is a need for a tree-planting plan in Gearhart, as currently there is no organized approach to tree maintenance or replacement. Some residents have expressed a desire to plant more trees in the area, while others are unsure about the direction the community should take. The city council has requested the planning commission's assistance in crafting a policy and conducting public discussions to gauge community interest. The commission is asked to research other cities'

approaches, gather community input, and provide recommendations to the city council. The staff seeks guidance from the commission on how to proceed, but they do not have a specific plan to propose at this time. The commission discusses the possibility of conducting surveys to gather community preferences regarding tree types. The discussion highlights the need for public feedback and the lack of resources within the staff to handle this task alone. The staff seeks input and ideas from the commission regarding their involvement and the direction to take moving forward.

There was also discussion focused on the current tree-permitting process in Gearhart. Under the current ordinance, property owners can cut down up to five trees per year without a permit. This has led to concerns from residents who question the lack of oversight and the need for a permitting process to track tree removals. Some residents are in favor of stricter regulations, while others argue for property rights and fewer restrictions. The Planning commission has taken up the issue and is considering the possibility of implementing a more comprehensive tree permitting process. The staff is seeking direction from the commission on whether they should proceed with developing a new permitting process and potentially revising the current ordinance. The importance of communication and public input is emphasized, as well as the need for clear guidelines and boundaries regarding tree removals. Various suggestions were made, including defining tree sizes, setting limits on the number of trees that can be removed, and implementing a permit system for larger tree removals.

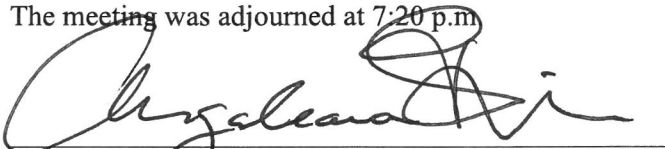
Commissioners Mesberg and Taggard have volunteered to take on the task of conducting initial research and gathering information on the tree planning ordinance and tree permitting process. They will spend the next few months working on this and will return to the commission with their findings and ideas for further discussion.

NEW BUSINESS - None

CONCERNS OF THE COMMISSION - None

QUESTIONS FOR LAND USE ATTORNEY - None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



Angoleana R. Brien, Secretary,

7/13/03

Approved