

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES - JULY 15, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by chairperson Jenny Irvine.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Walt Mixon, Rod Lowe, Christine Lundquist, Jenny Irvine, Paul Williams, Victor Senk, Phil Bontrager.

AGENDA: The agenda was approved on a motion by Paul with support by Rod.

MINUTES: Christine noted that Paul Williams needed to be added to the members present at the June meeting. With that correction, the minutes of June 16 were approved on a motion by Rod with support by Paul.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None at this time.

BITCOIN MINING OPERATIONS: The Commission discussed the article Christine had forwarded to members related to a Bitcoin mining operation that was started in Dafter near Sault Ste. Marie. The article described issues with the operation being very noisy which is creating problems at a neighboring school. Discussion ensued related to the possibility of addressing this type of business in the zoning ordinance. Possibilities might include not allowing them at all, or requiring significant distances between them and other properties. It was noted that the news article indicated even people a mile or two away were complaining about noise. There was also concern expressed related to the amount of electrical power it would use. The system in Dafter appears to utilize a series of large shipping containers as opposed to an actual building. Victor suggested we contact Alger Delta Electric to ask about potential power issues and the local assessor to ask about tax ramifications.

DRAFT ZONING ORDINANCE: Victor passed out and reviewed two spreadsheets he put together. One compares permitted uses of property in the current R-1, R-2, and Bay districts with the proposed Rural Residential (RR), Neighborhood Residential (NR), and Bay districts. The second compares “by right” vs “by right with conditions” in proposed article 4.

Definitions of “By Right” on page 2-7 and “Conditional Use” on page 2-10 were reviewed. Victor questioned if it should be solely left to the Zoning Administrator to determine if a conditional use should be permitted. After significant discussion, it was agreed that the Zoning Administrator should not be solely responsible to decide on right by condition. As a result, Section 10.3 on page 10-1 will need to be updated on the 4th and 7th lines to replace “zoning administrator” with “planning commission”.

Victor reviewed the comparison of permitted uses in the current R1, R2, and Bay districts with the proposed Bay, Neighborhood Residential (NR) and Rural Residential (RR) districts, noting the proposed RR would allow many uses not currently allowed in R1. Following significant discussion, a motion was made by Paul with support by Victor to reinstate the R1 district north of Ridge and Webb Roads up to where it meets the NR and/or Bay districts or Public Land or

Recreational Forest. On a roll call vote there were 4 yeas (Senk, Williams, Irvine, & Bontrager) and 3 neahs (Mixon, Lowe, & Lundquist). Motion carried. With this change an additional column will need to be added to Table 4-2 for R1 allowing only uses currently allowed in that district. This will also require a review of other sections of the proposed ordinance to make sure other things are not affected. RR will be maintained in areas south of Ridge and Webb Roads.

On page 5-3, Phil proposed adding #5 to Section 5.3 adding stricter green space requirements in waterfront areas. Discussion ensued related to Table 5-1 and difficulties Phil's proposal might create for someone with a smaller lot. It was decided to hold off on taking any action at this time.

Rod noted that there are still definitions that need to be reviewed and questioned where shooting ranges would be allowed. He continues to prefer a separate article for short-term rentals rather than incorporate it into Article 10. Some of the consultant's responses to previous questions on these items still need to be reviewed.

Rod suggested and the commission agreed that "growing facilities" be added to examples on page 4-10 with medical or recreational marijuana dispensaries. The Commission agreed to this addition.

OTHER: Jenny noted that the Park & Recreation surveys have been distributed. Jenny then read a letter from the Naves family indicating they are against a proposed campground in the Inland Buffer zone.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Tim Jenkins indicated when looking at the Parks & Recreation surveys and writing the next Recreation Plan, we should be looking back at the current plan as there are a number of things in it that have not been accomplished, like the proposed bike path. He also noted that the bitcoin discussion needs to be continued as we may want to allow it under some circumstances.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 19th at 6:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Paul with support by Rod.