

Date: Thursday, January 18, 2024
Time: 3:30 PM
Location: Hybrid - In-Person: Estes Valley Community Center Classroom, 660 Community Dr, Estes Park, CO 80517 or
Virtual, Zoom Link: https://larimer-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gveRevTiSryOXOULPtYOxw

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ADDENDUM MINUTES

The Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee met in the Estes Valley Community Center Classroom as well as virtually by Zoom video at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at which time the following business was transacted.

Committee members present included: Rex Poggenpohl, David Converse, Mike Kennedy, Drew Webb, and Scott Stewart.

Staff present included: Rebecca Everette, Matt Lafferty, Amy White, Michael Whitley, and Christina Scrutchins.

Board of County Commission present included: Jody Shadduck-McNally

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

AMENDMENT

Staff proposed that Discussion Item No. 2 - Countywide Board & Commission Policy Update be placed under the Communication Item No. 2 – Staff Updates.

MOTION

Member Converse moved, member Kennedy seconded, the motion for Discussion Item No. 2 - Countywide Board & Commission Policy Update be placed under the Communication Item No. 2 – Staff Updates. Motion carried (5-0).

AMENDMENT

Committee proposed to add a discussion regarding the Larimer County Estes Valley Comprehensive Plan Action Item and Online Questionnaire under Discussion Items.

MOTION

Member Poggenpohl moved, member Webb seconded, the motion to add a discussion regarding the Larimer County Estes Valley Comprehensive Plan Action Item and Questionnaire under Discussion Items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 16, 2023

Member Kennedy moved, member Stewart seconded, and member Converse abstained, the motion to approve the November 16, 2023, minutes of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee as presented. Motion carried (4-0).

ACTION ITEMS:

ITEM NO. 1 - POSTING OF PUBLIC MEETING

MOTION

Member Poggenpohl moved, member Kennedy seconded, the motion for the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee designate www.Larimer.gov as the place for posting notice of public meetings, and if exigent or emergency circumstances prevent the online posting at such location, public notice shall be physically posted at the bulletin boards located at the north and south entrances to the Larimer County Courthouse Offices Building at 200 West Oak, Fort Collins, Colorado, in accordance with Colorado's open meetings laws. Motion carried (5-0).

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

The Commissioner provided an update on various happenings in Estes Park and Larimer County. She mentioned the certification of the Mills Bill levies for taxing entities throughout the county, which was done in January due to changes in timelines caused by a special legislative session called by the Governor. She highlighted the need for increased services, particularly in light of a nearly 300% increase in jail costs, primarily attributed to medical and food expenses. However, she clarified that while the budget increased, it doesn't necessarily mean that tax bills will increase proportionally. She informed about upcoming meetings in February and her meetings with the new superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park to discuss partnerships and collaborations. She also mentioned the opening of the Behavioral Health Center, which saw a significant number of patients in its first 36 days of operation. Additionally, she discussed her upcoming engagements, including speaking at a legislative conference in DC and participating in the Pew Charitable Trust Disaster Reliance Round Table and the Colorado Water Congress. She emphasized the importance of water-related conversations and mentioned the progress of the county water master plan. Furthermore, she touched upon ongoing conversations regarding Short-Term Rental (STR) regulations, mentioning opposition from STR providers and platforms, who have hired lobbyists. She expressed the need for potential amendments to related bills and uncertainty about the current status of discussions on the matter.

STAFF UPDATES

Staff announced that Steve Careccia is the new Community Development Director for the town of Estes. Careccia had started his role the previous week and was in the process of familiarizing himself with the town's affairs. Plans to introduce him to the group will hopefully be in place soon. Additionally, the Community Development Department had been working on a work plan for the next few years, which was to be presented to the county commissioners for input on project priorities for 2024 and 2025. Efforts were also made to ensure consistency in the operations of all advisory boards and commissions appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, including updates to policies such as attendance and scheduling. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally mentioned ongoing discussions regarding a code of conduct and rules clarification for boards and commissions, aiming for consistency and clarity. Furthermore, there were vacancies on EVPAC, and interviews were being scheduled for potential candidates, with an emphasis on diversity and critical thinking skills. The deadline for applications was flexible, but interested individuals were encouraged to apply promptly.

COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

None.

DISCUSSION ITEM(S)

ITEM NO. 1 – GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES - PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The discussion revolved around the concept of a 3-mile plan, growth management strategies, annexation policies, and cooperation between municipalities and counties in Colorado, particularly focusing on the Estes Valley area. The staff had initiated sharing information and resources regarding various agreements and plans through the DOLA and county websites. Members expressed concerns regarding growth management strategies, emphasizing the need to understand the vocabulary and definitions related to such strategies. They highlighted the importance of proactive planning rather than reactive measures.

The State of Colorado had limited municipal annexations to three miles beyond the current boundary line, with a requirement for a "three-mile plan" before any annexation. A three-mile plan was described as a long-range planning tool for municipalities to consider future annexations, services, and sustainable development within the designated area. Annexation policies had required contiguity with existing city limits, typically one-sixth of the perimeter of the property. While intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) were considered best practices for cooperation between municipalities and counties, they were not mandatory for annexations. There was a consensus among some commissioners against informal agreements or "backroom deals," emphasizing the need for formal and transparent processes.

The discussions highlighted the need for open communication and collaboration between municipalities and counties, considering the unique characteristics and challenges of each area. There was consensus on the importance of cooperation and collaboration between the town and the county, with an acknowledgment that formal agreements may have been necessary as plans progressed. Secondly, there was an interest in defining Growth Management Areas (GMAs) and understanding their significance in planning, including considerations like infrastructure, services, and land use policies.

Thirdly, questions arose about who initiated discussions regarding future planning and growth management—whether it was the planning staff, commissioners, or community groups—and when it was appropriate to do so. Additionally, there was awareness that readiness was essential, especially on the town's side, before engaging in discussions about growth management areas. Timing, including upcoming elections and changes in leadership, was also considered.

Moreover, there was recognition of the need for public input and engagement in planning discussions, although it was noted that specific topics like the 3-mile plan may not have always involved extensive public input. Lastly, some members advocated for a proactive approach to addressing planning issues, emphasizing the importance of being ahead of potential challenges and involving the community early on. Overall, the discussion reflected a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in planning for future growth and the importance of collaboration, timing, and community engagement in the process.

Rebecca Everette provided a gentle reminder about the scope of EV PAC, emphasizing that their role is to advise the county commissioners, as they are appointed by them. She clarified that their work plans are structured around matters related to county policy. Everette suggested that discussions about engaging in town processes or advocating for or against specific projects should take place outside of EV PAC, either as individual community members or through involvement with other organizations. She emphasized the importance of maintaining clarity regarding these boundaries and offered to address any questions regarding their practical application.

Matthew Lafferty proposed that the committee could dedicate time in the upcoming year to understanding the factors influencing the creation of a robust growth management boundary. He suggested that the committee could assess areas such as forests or other natural resources and determine whether they should be included within a growth management area to prevent annexation and redevelopment. Lafferty emphasized that there was value in the committee studying these factors and generating information to provide to the Board of County Commissioners. He acknowledged the desire to stay ahead of potential issues and suggested that this proactive approach could inform future discussions with the town. Lafferty clarified that while this effort wouldn't result in immediate policy formulation, it would provide valuable groundwork for future decision-making.

Member Stewart expressed support for the discussion initiated by David and emphasized the broader scope of the conversation. He highlighted the importance of considering not only the land adjacent to the town but also all the land in the valley. Stewart noted that there could be areas further from town that also warrant attention in terms of land preservation and development. He suggested that the focus should extend beyond annexation details and encompass broader community issues. Stewart emphasized the significance of addressing the larger picture and focusing on the overall well-being of the community as a whole.

Drew Webb expressed uncertainty about how to develop priorities for the committee's work. He identified three key factors: the comprehensive plan, the county work plan, and residents' needs and concerns. However, Webb struggled to reconcile these factors into a cohesive set of priorities. Member Poggenpohl suggested addressing the county action items in the comprehensive plan and encouraged the committee to provide input on priorities. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally clarified the process for developing a work plan and emphasized the need for alignment with the Board of County Commissioners. Member Poggenpohl provided

an example of a recommendation the committee could make regarding joint meetings between planning commissions. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally reiterated the importance of recommendations and work plan items. Drew Webb expressed the challenge of understanding community priorities and requested input from Commissioner Shadduck-McNally. The commissioner highlighted various issues affecting the community and encouraged committee members to leverage their connections to gather input. Rebecca Everette clarified the committee's current work plan priorities and sought feedback from members.

Member Converse emphasized the importance of gathering more input from the community and expressed a willingness to address any concerns brought forward by the commissioners. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally acknowledged the need for clearer communication about priorities and pledged to reflect on the committee's feedback. She highlighted her focus on providing services while preserving and protecting the unique environment of the area. She committed to advocating for the committee's need for feedback and information at the upcoming Board of County Commissioners retreat. She thanked the committee for their dedication to reviewing the comprehensive plan and engaging in thoughtful discussions.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

With there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.