



Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025
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_TwYIDm78RrOEN--9kRvL8g

ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 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 16, 2025, at which time the following business was transacted.

Committee members present included: David Converse, Mike Kennedy, Drew Webb, Scott Stewart, Nataly Handlos, and Doyle Baker.

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

Board of County Commission present included: Jody Shadduck-McNally

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Member Webb moved, and member Kennedy seconded the motion to adopt January 16, 2025, agenda of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee as presented. Motion carried (6-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Former Chair Rex Poggenpohl acknowledged for leadership and contributions to the committee.

Committee members expressed gratitude for Rex Poggenpohl's wisdom, guidance, and experience.

Commissioner Shadduck-McNally thanked Rex Poggenpohl for leadership and participation, encouraging continued engagement.

Rex Poggenpohl thanked Commissioner Shadduck-McNally and the committee for support.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Webb moved, and member Kennedy seconded the motion to approve October 17, 2024, minutes of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee. Motion carried (5-0), with Committee Member Baker abstaining.

Member Webb moved, and member Kennedy seconded the motion to approve November 14, 2024, minutes of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee. Motion carried (6-0).

COMMUNICATION ITEMS

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Community Development Director Everette reported that several county officials, including Commissioner Shadduck-McNally, Commissioner Stephens, the County Clerk, and the District Attorney, were officially sworn into office earlier in the week. Commissioner Stephens was appointed Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, as part of the Board's annual rotation of leadership roles.

STAFF UPDATES

Community Development Director Everette presented two significant updates. First, new land use regulations were adopted concerning natural medicine facilities, following the state's implementation of the voter-approved Natural Medicine Care Act. These facilities are now limited to Industrial Low (IL) and Industrial High (IH) zoning districts, must be licensed by the state, and must maintain a 1,000-foot distance from marijuana facilities. The county's regulations prohibit home-based natural medicine operations and took effect immediately.

Second, staff reported changes to the county's outdoor lighting code. These amendments expand requirements for shielded, downward-directed fixtures to include single-family and duplex residences, taking effect on February 13, 2025. While the new rules do not apply retroactively, they will govern all new development and fixture replacements. Staff clarified that these changes do not alter Article 13, which governs lighting in the Estes Valley specifically.

Staff also discussed a recent county policy shift to action-style meeting minutes, which will now be used for boards and commissions. The Committee raised concerns about whether these new formats would still capture key discussions and conclusions, and staff welcomed feedback on improving the process.

COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

None.

STATUS OF CASES PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED BY THE ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Staff Member Whitley provided status updates on two items previously reviewed by the Committee. The Serrell Resort Cottage Administrative Special Review, recommended for approval by the Committee in October 2024, is scheduled to be considered by the Board of County Commissioners on January 27, 2025. The proposed mountain coaster, which received a 5-1 recommendation for approval with conditions from the Committee in November 2024, was ultimately denied by the Board on December 9, 2024, in a 2-1 vote. The denial was attributed to concerns that the project exceeded the 50% expansion limit in the land use code. Staff acknowledged that while mitigation efforts addressed traffic and noise concerns, the Board viewed the scale of the project—particularly the proposed parking expansion—as exceeding allowable thresholds.

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM NO. 1 – POSTING OF PUBLIC MEETING

MOTION

Member Stewart moved, 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 Administrative Services Building at 200 West Oak, Fort Collins, Colorado, in accordance with Colorado's open meetings laws. Member Webb seconded the motion. Motion carried (5-1).

ITEM NO. 2 – ELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND SECRETARY

Chair: Commissioner David Converse elected (6-0)

Vice Chair: Commissioner Doyle Baker elected (6-0)

Secretary: Commissioner Drew Webb elected (6-0)

ITEM NO. 3 – ADOPTION OF THE BY-LAWS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE LARIMER COUNTY ESTES VALLEY PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee reviewed proposed revisions to its by-laws, which were developed in collaboration with other county planning advisory committees and supported by the Board of County Commissioners. Discussion centered on clarifying the Committee's legislative versus quasi-judicial roles, the correct designation of "Estes Valley" as the planning area name, officer term lengths, and the county's stance on recording roll call votes under the new action-minute format.

MOTION

Member Baker moved, the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee adopt the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure of the Larimer County Estes Valley Planning Advisory Committee as proposed with the exception of substituting Estes valley for Estes Park as a meeting location. Member Webb seconded the motion. Motion carried (6-0).

DISCUSSION ITEM(S)

ITEM NO. 1 – COUNTY CODE AMENDMENTS FOR ACCESSORY LIVING AREAS IN ESTES VALLEY

Planning staff initiated a discussion on proposed updates to ALU regulations within the unincorporated Estes Valley Planning Area. This conversation was framed within the context of discrepancies between County, Town of Estes Park, and Estes Valley standards. The Committee reviewed differences in unit size limits, occupancy rules, lot size requirements, and long-term rental permissions. While the Town and County allow detached ALUs, the Estes Valley currently permits only attached units. The Committee discussed potential loopholes in the current code, such as property owners residing in ALUs while using primary homes as short-term rentals.

Committee members highlighted the importance of applying consistent health and safety standards and ensuring that ALUs are permitted through a building permit process. Some members expressed concerns about over-regulation, suggesting that administrative approvals with appropriate size thresholds could streamline the process. Staff reiterated that the proposed changes would apply only within the unincorporated Estes Valley and confirmed that ALUs must comply with building code standards and be permitted appropriately.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Deb Duffy, Fred Barber, Rex Poggenpohl, and John Lynch

Comments

- Some existing housing used for workforce purposes lacks safe infrastructure—examples include poor plumbing, inadequate power, and overloaded septic systems—posing health and safety risks for both occupants and nearby neighbors.
- Many properties in the area rely on aging or undersized septic systems, which may not support increased occupancy. These constraints, along with zoning and environmental concerns, could limit the viability of new or expanded ADUs.
- Higher-density housing types like ADUs are seen by some as incompatible with traditional residential zoning in the Estes Valley, where expectations center around single-family homes and low-density neighborhoods.
- Regulatory loopholes may allow for workarounds—such as renting out the main home as a short-term rental while occupying the ADU—leading to over-occupancy and unintended strain on local resources.

- Some view modern planning approaches that encourage mixed-use or higher-density housing as unsuitable for the rural, residential character of Estes Valley, where commercial access is already sufficient, and zoning changes are not desired.
- ADUs, including older cabins, provide affordable, long-term housing for individuals, families, and the local workforce—supporting broader housing goals and aligning with state policy initiatives.
- ADUs offer practical options for multigenerational living, allowing elderly family members or caretakers to live independently while remaining close.
- County standards that scale unit size with lot size are well-suited for the unincorporated Estes Valley, allowing more functional, family-sized units on larger properties.
- Strong community support exists for ensuring that both new and existing units meet building and health standards through inspections, ensuring safety for occupants and neighbors alike.

ITEM NO. 2 – ANNUAL WORK PLAN

The Committee agreed to postpone discussion of the 2025 Annual Work Plan to the April 17 meeting. Staff encouraged members to consider two key themes in preparation: the Committee's workload is largely directed by the Board of County Commissioners and the Community Development Department, and there is a growing need to improve public visibility and engagement. A short survey will be conducted to help identify priorities before the April discussion.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

With there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.