

ALPINE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Alpine City Hall, 20 North Main, Alpine, UT
May 5, 2020

I. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Welcome and Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairwoman Jane Griener. The following were present and constituted a quorum:

Chairman: Jane Griener

Commission Members: Ethan Allen, Alan MacDonald, John MacKay, Sylvia Christiansen, John MacKay (arrived late)

Staff: Austin Roy, Jed Muhlestein, Marla Fox

Others: Paul Kroff

B. Prayer/Opening Comments: Sylvia Christensen

C. Pledge of Allegiance: Ethan Allen

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

III. ACTION ITEMS

A. Final Plat – The Ridge at Alpine 3

The Ridge at Alpine development consisted of seventy-two lots on 189.5 acres, with Phase 3 being nine lots on 6.26 acres. The development was in the CR 40,000 zone, west of the Alpine Cove subdivision and Northeast of Heritage Hills Plat A. A map was attached showing Phase 3 and how it correlated to the rest of the development. The Ridge at Alpine was approved as a Planned Residential Development (PRD).

Phase 2 of The Ridge at Alpine was approved by the City Council on August 13, 2019 and Phase 1 on October 23, 2018. Trails, open space, and conservation easement were approved with the Phase 1 Plat. The applicant was now seeking approval for Phase 3 of The Ridge at Alpine Subdivision.

Austin Roy showed on a map where Phase 3 was located. He said all the open space for the development was in Phase 1 as was the Conservation Easement. He said Phase 1 was approved in 2018 and Phase 2 in 2019.

Austin Roy said this development had a PRD status because of the open space and designated park making the lots a little smaller than a normal 1-acre lot. The lots ranged in size from .47 acres to .88 acres. He said all the trails noted were recorded with Phase 1 but were still being worked on. The applicant's plans were consistent with the General Plan.

Austin Roy said there were two roads that serviced this development: Elk Ridge Lane and Grove Drive. He would recommend approval as far as planning and zoning was concerned.

Jed Muhlestein said this development was pretty low-key in terms of adding extra infrastructure, and engineering. He said the applicant needed a temporary turn-around at the end of Zachary Way. School house piping needed completion when they worked on their pond installation, and a regional detention pond for the entire development needed to be built as part of Phases 1, 2, and 3. He said when Phase 3 was recorded, they needed to record the easements for the offsite improvements to the pond.

Jed Muhlestein said Phase 3 did not include any of the hazards that were in Phase 1 and 2. He said the City had an ordinance that stated an applicant could not record a phase until the previous phases were completed. Trails and the Fort Creek Booster Station (needed for pressure and water supply to this development) were not yet completed. Jed Muhlestein said off-site requirements needed completion before Phase 3 was recorded. He said redlines on plans and plat needed to be corrected, and the developer needed to submit a construction cost estimate to the engineering department so they could create a bond letter. They also needed to meet the water policy. Staff would recommend approval with those conditions.

Paul Kroff, the developer, said that depending on market conditions there could be up to three more phases in the development. He said next week curbing and guttering would be completed, and Grove Drive would be paved the week after. Mr. Kroff asked why there was a need for a circular turn-around on Zachary Way. Jed Muhlestein said there may not be enough frontage on Elk Ridge Way. They needed to survey the area, but likely would require a turn-around. Mr. Kroff said it would be better to not put in a temporary turn-a-round because of cost. He did not see the need if there was room on Elk Ridge Lane (South corner of lot 48). Jed Muhlestein said the City required a circular turn-a-round for the snowplows, as well as the asphalt and gutter improvements for future homes. Jed Muhlestein said he did not think it would cost too much and would rather see it be completed now. Jane Griener was concerned about the safety of residents as well because of the lack of sidewalk. Mr. Kroff said they would complete the turn-a-round.

Jane Griener clarified that the Fort Creek Booster Station needed to be completed before Phase 3 was recorded. Jed Muhlestein said that was correct.

MOTION: Alan MacDonald moved to recommend that the plat amendment, The Ridge at Alpine Phase 3, be approved with the following conditions:

1. Phase 3 cannot be recorded until all offsite improvements of Phase 1 were complete unless otherwise approved by City Council;
2. The Developer provided a temporary turn-a-round at the end of Zachary Way that met City Specifications;
3. The Developer provided access and maintenance easements for all offsite infrastructure to be recorded with Phase 3;
4. The Developer either removed existing buildings or provided a bond for the removal of them prior to recording the plat;
5. The Developer addressed redlines on the plat and plans;
6. The Developer submitted a cost estimate;
7. The Developer met the water policy.

Sylvia Christiansen seconded the motion. There were 4 Ayes and 0 Nays (recorded below). The motion passed.

Ayes:

Ethan Allen
Alan MacDonald
Jane Griener
Sylvia Christiansen

Nays:

None

B. Business Commercial Setbacks – Ordinance 2020-04

The PC discussed Ordinance 2020-04 at the April 21, 2020 meeting and decided to table the item for the next meeting and address concerns regarding the sign ordinance and site triangle.

Most new buildings in the Business Commercial Zone requested an exception to the setback requirements, with the front setback being the most common exception request. With so many requests for setback exceptions, it was recommended that the City reevaluate the current setback requirements.

Staff reviewed setback requirements in neighboring municipalities, which include Lehi, American Fork, Highland, and Pleasant Grove. Given the unique nature of Alpine City Main Street and Business Commercial Zone, the current setbacks for existing buildings, and number of exception requests that were received, Staff recommended reducing setback requirements for the Business Commercial Zone.

Austin Roy showed on a map what it would look like and explained that the City allowed commercial buildings to have a 15-foot setback on a corner. He said the building would go into the sight triangle and would need at least 17 ½ feet on both sides of the corner in order to work.

Austin Roy said if a monument sign were in the sight triangle, it could not be higher than three feet, however it could be taller if it was outside the sight triangle.

Austin Roy explained that the City ordinance noted one requirement (30-feet for the setback, and 20-feet on the sides), but the building ordinance noted something different. This issue was brought forward because of how many requests for exceptions the Planning Commission (PC) received for construction to occur closer to the street. He suggested making the ordinances match to what was actually built in practice.

Ethan Allen said he thought 17 or 18-feet would be better than 15-feet. Sylvia Christiansen agreed; she said she did not like giving a 15-foot exception.

Jane Griener asked if they had given exceptions for side yards in the past. Austin Roy said there were some areas that were given exceptions and some that were not. He said they tried to leave more space where the buildings bordered a residential property.

Sylvia Christiansen asked if the Fire Chief was in favor of a 10-foot side setback. Austin Roy said he was aware of it and said it depended on the building code which they followed, but that generally he would accept it.

John MacKay entered the meeting.

Alan MacDonald asked what the right length setback would be to cut down on the exception requests as it pertains to parking in back. Austin Roy said 15 to 20-feet would be consistent to what was requested but said 15-feet would be better.

Alan MacDonald said 15-feet on all lots and 18-feet on corner lots seemed the most reasonable. John MacKay agreed with Alan MacDonald's comments.

Austin Roy said this was a business zone and could be closer and more intimate with less walking in-between. He did not think it needed to be spread out.

MOTION: Ethan Allen moved to recommend that Ordinance 2020-04 be approved as follows:

1. Front setback not less than 15-feet from the property line on all streets.
2. Corner lots not be less than 18-feet from the property line on all streets.

3. No portion of the setback area adjacent to a street shall be used for off-street parking.
4. In commercial developments adjacent to other commercial areas, the side yard and rear yard setbacks will be not less than 10-feet unless recommended by the Planning Commission and approved by the City Council where circumstances justify.
5. Where commercial zone abuts a residential zone, the side yard and rear yard setbacks will be not less than 20-feet unless recommended by the Planning Commission and approved by the City Council where circumstances justify.
6. Accessory buildings shall be set back not less than 5-feet from the main building.

Alan MacDonald seconded the motion. There were 5 Ayes and 0 Nays (recorded below). The motion passed.

Ayes:

Ethan Allen
 Alan MacDonald
 John MacKay
 Jane Griener
 Sylvia Christiansen

Nays:

None

C. Discussion – Sign Ordinance

In April 2020, the Planning Commission discussed an ordinance to reduce setbacks within the Business/Commercial Zone. During that discussion it was noted that building setbacks impact signs and the location of those signs. The Planning Commission decided that they should review the sign ordinance in the next meeting to reconsider sign sizes (height, width, etc.) and if the sign ordinance would need to be updated if building setbacks were reduced in the Business/Commercial Zone.

Austin Roy said an individual must get a permit to install a sign. He said there were different standards depending on what type a sign it was (permanent or temporary). He explained, for example, that if a sign were on the side of a building it could only be 15% of the area of any side of the building. Jane Griener said the Planning Commission needed to let applicants know these rules when they came in to get approval of their building. She said they needed to address this issue earlier in their permit application.

Austin Roy said the ordinances did allow neon signs, but they must be hung within the building in the window. The only buildings that could have electronic flashing signs were schools. He said there were different requirements for temporary signs, monument signs, upright, and signs on buildings.

Jane Griener noted that the discussion was meant to focus primarily on monument signs. She was concerned with the size allowance (nine feet by eight feet) if they adjusted the building setbacks to only 15-feet, leading to an eight-foot-wide sign (more than 50%) in the frontage of the 15-foot setback.

Austin Roy said the City Council wanted to avoid having another Alta Bank sign situation. Therefore, they addressed the height of monument signs, the size of the setback, and whether the signs were necessary. Alan MacDonald said the concerns were that Alta Bank was a large building, pushed close to the street, and then they wanted a large sign which was very close to the sight triangle. He said the Madsen and Madsen sign did not seem as large because there was more space around it allowed by the ordinances.

Alan MacDonald said the sign size should depend on the size of the surrounding area, the building, setbacks, and parking. If they had more room, the sign could be bigger.

Jane Griener asked Austin Roy to ask the City Council for their recommendations on the sign ordinance. She mentioned setbacks, height, and width of the sign. She wanted their feedback before making a recommendation to City Council.

D. Discussion – Criteria for Exceptions

The Planning Commission discussed exception criteria on April 21, 2020. It was decided that there was no interest in creating a list of exception criteria, but the Planning Commission would like to discuss in the next meeting the possibility of charging a fee for exception requests. Staff verified with the City Attorney that this was a possibility if the City chose to do so.

If the City were to charge a fee:

- Cannot be a form of punishment or a penalty.
- Cannot be used to make a profit.
- Must only cover the cost of the actual service or cost to process.

If the goal was to reduce the number of exception requests, Staff would advise that the ordinance be changed to not allow exceptions and that the variance process be used for those who needed an exception to the rules.

Alpine City allowed for exceptions in the Development Code, including setbacks, lot lines, etc. Exceptions were typically looked at based on whether the request would be compatible with the zone, if they were consistent with past decisions, and if the exception would overall benefit the community. Exceptions were not common in most municipalities; in fact, most just had appeals and variances.

The Planning Commission discussed this issue and decided to leave things as they were.

IV. Communications

Austin Roy said it sounded like the Planning Commission would continue to have Zoom meetings until further notice.

Someone asked if anyone knew what the impact of COVID-19 was on the Alpine community. Austin Roy said a few police officers had caught the virus and it had a long incubation period. There were no deaths in the City from it so far.

V. APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES: April 21, 2020

MOTION: Sylvia Christiansen moved to approve the minutes for April 21, 2020 as written. Ethan Allen seconded the motion. There were 5 Ayes and 0 Nays (recorded below). The motion passed.

Ayes:

Ethan Allen
 Alan MacDonald
 John MacKay
 Jane Griener
 Sylvia Christiansen

Nays:

None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.