

Town of Twisp

Council Minutes – 3/8/22

Mayor Ing-Moody called the video conference meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

Council Members present via phone/video: Mark Easton
Aaron Studen
Hans Smith
Katrina Auburn

Absent: Alan Caswell

Pledge of Allegiance:

Council Member Easton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda:

Deletion: Discussion/Action: Tree Board Interview/Appointment – Nick Crimp

Public Comment:

Verbal public comments were given by Susan Ernsdorff and Ellen Aagaard regarding nightly rentals and housing, respectively.

Susan Ernsdorff submitted her comment in writing:

Susan Ernsdorff

427 Twisp Ave, 206-914-5217

Hi! Thank you all for being on the town council.

“My name is Susan Ernsdorff. I live at 427 Twisp Ave. I am here regarding the recent application received by the town for a nightly rental permit for the house at 510 Twisp Avenue. I represent myself as well as several other community members, who have all submitted written comments for your consideration. Thank you for your extra time to review these.

We have numerous concerns regarding this permit application. We want to emphasize that our concerns are primarily not about this specific permit for this specific house, rather about the entire topic of permitting nightly rentals in the town of Twisp. We have issues about the process of notification we have experienced regarding this application, as well as a larger concern about the tradeoff between nightly rentals and affordable housing for locals. I was surprised to find out that all houses in the Town of Twisp are eligible to be permitted for nightly rental as long as the applicants meet the checklist of requirements.

I was made aware of the application as several of my neighbors received a letter in the mail from the Town. I did not receive the letter and don't know how it was determined who did. I understand that those that did, received it on Friday, February 25 with comments due Thursday March 3, which is 6 days later. The letter stated that the application had been reviewed and the permit would be granted providing the owners fulfilled a checklist of requirements. Town guidelines state that 14 days are allowed for public comment, which had not been met. The deadline has since been extended to March 10, based on written comments quickly submitted. We are still concerned about this rushed timeline. The letter states that the proposed nightly rental use supports Town of Twisp Goal #3 of the Comprehensive Plan. A quick check shows that Goal #3 is "Secure safety from Fire". We don't see a connection. Also, the letter states that the property was reviewed according to an "impact assessment checklist", but that checklist is not shared.

Aside from our concerns about specific process issues, we are most concerned about the issue of affordable housing in the Town of Twisp, and in the whole valley. There has been much in the local news lately about the crisis of affordable housing in our area. Numerous local non-profits (such as Methow Housing Trust, Room One, Methow Housing Resilience) are working overtime to develop and implement strategies for providing affordable housing to locals. Yes, tourism is a large part of our economy, and nightly rentals support tourism, but without housing for local workers, the businesses that support tourism as well as all the local businesses that we residents depend on suffer and may not survive . Many local business are currently being forced to limit how much they can be open, due to staffing shortages, largely as a result of the shortage of affordable housing.

Another consideration is that Twisp is a town of neighborhoods. I love my neighborhood. A single nightly rental in a neighborhood won't have much impact on neighborhood cohesiveness... but several locations would. Knowing your neighbors is a big part of what makes a house a home. We know each other, we take care of and watch out for each other. This is ever more important in this era of fires and extreme weather events, and especially considering the number of older, less-abled people in our community.

We are requesting that Twisp put a moratorium on accepting any new nightly rental permit applications to allow time to develop a thoughtful policy with town-wide community input. Winthrop put a moratorium on new nightly rental permits a couple of years ago, and after consideration, created a policy for that does not allow new permits in residential areas.

Thank you for your work taking care of our town."

Mayor's Report:

N/A

Staff Reports:

Planner Danison gave an update on Nightly Rental Application 22-01, to which numerous comments had been received as part of the review process. As a result of an internal error on dates, the comment period had been extended to make sure that neighbors in the comment area were given the designated time to

submit comments. As the Administrator, Planner Danison revised the draft permit and resent the information to neighbors within 300 feet of the application property, per established procedure.

Director Denham reported that current projects on the Civic Building, Biosolids, and Lift Station 2 are all going well. He noted that it has been time-consuming to coordinate all three projects, and that public works staff are transitioning from snow removal to parks/street cleanup as the weather begins to change to spring.

Committee/Commission/Board Reports:

Council Member Smith reported on the Civic Building Committee meeting. The committee reviewed the funding status and draws made to date on the Civic Building construction project. Staff presented the committee with a comparison of available funds on the project to remaining contract amounts on the project. It is anticipated that a portion of the previously awarded USDA loan for the Civic Building will need to be accessed to complete the construction and outfitting of the Civic Building. At this time the Town is in possession of but has not drawn on a Note Purchase offer for North Cascades Bank / USDA. This offer expires May 11th, 2022, at which time NCB may reissue the offer with an updated interest rate/fee structure. The minimum amount that may be drawn is \$50,000. Council Member Smith recommends that the Town move forward with accepting the Note Purchase Offer and draw from these funds to lock in the offered rates. Mayor Ing-Moody added that these funds will be used to leverage other grant funding to add components back into the Civic Building project which had previously been removed, and to fund some of the “owner-furnished” portions of the Civic Building Project. This includes the plan for 3rd Avenue improvements, courtyard plaza, security system, and decorative art panels.

Council Member Studen reported on the Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting. Public outreach sessions are planned for the draft Parks & Recreation Comprehensive plan. A community outreach meeting as a part of the Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will be held March 28 to offer the community an opportunity to comment on the Draft P&R comprehensive plan. The Commission’s goal is to have a final draft ready to present to Council at the end of April, and hopefully ready for adoption shortly after. He related that much discussion had been about the inclusion of desired trails on privately owned land in the draft P&R Comp Plan. Council Member Easton questioned if the Parks & Rec Commission had engaged Methow Trails for assistance or insight in approaching private landowners for potential future public trails. The Council agreed that it is not critical to the plan that specific parcels or trails be identified, but that the plan and maps should identify “NODES” of desired connectivity for existing unofficial trails.

Discussion/Action: Parks & Rec Board Interview/Appointment – Jim Brennan:

Jim Brennan was present at the meeting to be interviewed by the Council regarding his application to the vacant “At Large” position on the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Council Member Smith asked Jim if he had identified any priorities in the plan that he feels the Town should be specifically focused on.

Jim related that he had joined the Parks & Rec Commission meeting the night before and listened to the discussion but had not yet had a chance to review the current draft plan. He feels that the trails are an important but challenging and time-consuming component. He noted that in the meantime, time could be spent identifying river access points and creating less established volunteer maintained public trails. He also noted that “pocket sized” parks are something he’d like to see on future plans.

Council Member Easton questioned if Jim had any thoughts on items not included on the plan that could be added.

Jim responded that looking into an enclosed pool facility with a longer lifespan would be worthwhile for the town. He also related that while RCO grants are appropriate for many of the identified projects, there are other funding sources available that he would be willing to explore and write grants for as a member of the commission.

Council Member Studen moved to appoint Jim Brennan to Position #5 (At Large) of the Parks & Recreation Commission. Council Member Auburn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Public Purpose Segregation:

Council Member Smith questioned if the legal descriptions had been reviewed and were consistent with the Plat. Planner Danison confirmed that they had been reviewed by a separate survey and confirmed to be the same. He has approved the BLA. Ms. Appel has provided the Town a Statutory Warranty deed, awaiting execution upon approval of the Public Purpose Segregation. This Statutory Warranty deed is drawn up under the “Plat Description” as opposed to the “Meets/Bounds” description but has been reviewed and found acceptable by the Town’s legal counsel. She stated her willingness to have the deed be drawn up in the way the Town desires.

Council Member Smith moved to Public Purpose Segregation. Council Member Easton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Department of Commerce Housing Action Plan and Implementation (HAPI) Grant:

Mayor Ing-Moody gave an overview of the application. She related that the application is intended to be a collaborative effort with the Town of Winthrop with the intent that combined grant funds could be leveraged to hire one consultant for both towns to develop a housing action plan for each town, while taking into consideration the general considerations of the valley and the specifics related to each town. The Council discussed the application’s draft proposal deliverables and objectives comparing with how they align to Twisp’s needs surrounding housing.

Council Member Smith noted that step one of the application seems very fitting for the Town; gathering data and facts on the housing stock and identifying gaps instead of basing plans on conjecture. He feels it would be beneficial for the Town to participate in this program. He questioned who would be the recipient of or be administrative lead for the grant?

Mayor Ing-Moody responded that details need to be worked out on administrative responsibilities, and that the committee had discussed needing to refine details of the application, particularly with part 4.C for desired outcomes as some of the listed outcomes were discussed by Council to be vague or difficult to measure.

Council Member Smith moved to proceed with refining and submitting the HAPI grant application. Council Member Easton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Resolution #22-688 – SRF Loan Wastewater Treatment Facility Design:

Council Member Smith moved to adopt Resolution #22-688 – SRF Loan Wastewater Treatment

Facility Design. Council Member Studen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: BPI/Town of Twisp Biosolids Agreement:

Council Member Smith moved to approve the BPI/Town of Twisp Biosolids Agreement. Council Member Auburn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: TIB Consultant Agreement – Cascade Drive – Varela & Associates:

Council Member Smith moved to approve the TIB Consultant Agreement – Cascade Drive – Varela & Associates. Council Member Auburn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Complete Streets Grant Award -3rd Ave, Glover Street Crossing Improvements

Council Member Smith questioned what the overall cost for the project would be, as the award workplan describes design and implementation.

Mayor Ing-Moody responded that \$50,000 was the amount TIB will award for the Complete Streets program, and that staff would be working with the current Civic Building project contractor to find some economy in design and hopefully add portions back in. Transportation Benefit District funds might also be used to support the 3rd Ave crossing improvements project.

Council Member Easton moved to accept the Complete Streets Grant Award for 3rd Ave, Glover Street Crossing Improvements. Council Member Smith seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Council Meetings

Clerk Kilmer reported that staff had been instructed to research requirements and possible locations for Council to resume in person meetings. Given that no current town facilities could accommodate these meetings, he had reached out to other local venues to determine availability and feasibility but was waiting on responses. He reported that the largest issue is the current requirement that all Open Public Meetings be remotely accessible even if they are held in person. From the venues he had researched up to this point, none of them had hardware that would make hosting “hybrid” meetings a viable option.

Council Member Smith felt that with this information he was discouraged from returning to in-person meetings until the Town has adequate hardware to accommodate, and that purchasing hardware for the interim until the new Civic Building is in use did not provide much value.

Council Member Easton requested that this matter be revisited at the next meeting once staff has had time to determine if there are any venues in town that could accommodate hybrid meetings.

Clerk Kilmer will compile a report and present at the next meeting.

Consent Agenda:

- Accounts Payable/Payroll
- Minutes 2/8/22, 2/22/22

Vouchers audited and certified by the auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing, which

has been made available to the Town Council. The following voucher/checks are approved for payment by a majority vote on this 8th day of March 2022.

Accounts Payable	EFT# 623-643	64,345.88	3/8/22
Accounts Payable	Warrant# 36345-36378	576,130.82	3/8/22
Payroll	EFT# 620,674	4,564.25	3/8/22

Council Member Easton moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Auburn and passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

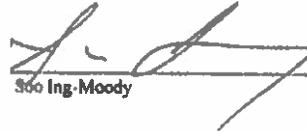
There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Ing – Moody adjourned the meeting at 7:20 pm.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:



Clerk/Treasurer Randy Kilmer



Soo Ing-Moody