

Town of Twisp

Council Minutes – 4/12/22

Mayor Ing-Moody called the video conference meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Council Members present via phone/video: Mark Easton
Aaron Studen
Alan Caswell
Katrina Auburn

Absent: Hans Smith

Pledge of Allegiance:

Council Member Caswell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda:

N/A

Public Comment:

The following Public Comments were given verbally at the meeting:

Barry Stromberger said he is requesting the City Council to immediately place a moratorium on nightly rentals as the housing crisis is not getting any better than it was 2 years ago when he first approached the Council about a nightly rental in his neighborhood. He thanked everyone for their hard work on the subject.

Susan Ernsdorff said that she is speaking for residents all over town when she says that there is a need for a moratorium. She said she collected 57 signatures that she submitted to the Town staff and collected another 10 more after that who are residents that are in favor of a moratoriums on nightly rentals. She feels this is a complex issue that needs to be developed into a correct policy. She went on to read various newspaper clippings.

Kelly Graham spoke on placing a moratorium on nightly rentals so that it would allow a broader conversation with the community on rental shortages where they need long term rentals. He feels that it is impacting businesses who cannot grow as they cannot adequately staff due to a shortage of housing for staff to live here. He feels that becoming an amenity town will decrease our quality of life as neighbors and neighborhoods; while the need to rely on neighbors is expected to increase in times of crisis. He said that the cost and lack of available housing is spreading across the west and he would like to see the town get ahead of the issue now before it becomes a larger one.

Morgan Sicilia wanted to thank the town for considering a moratorium on nightly rentals and is asking for an all out ban except for B&B's and owner-occupied rentals. She believes that it impacts the character of a neighborhood, and she is thankful for her neighbors.

Paula Mackrow agreed with the comment earlier which included the newspaper clippings and said that the Seattle Times had an article that said that Twisp is the place to go and she feels that it would cause an

immediate housing boom. She said that our Comprehensive plan says that businesses that are permitted are supposed to benefit the community and she feels that it does not. She would like to see an immediate moratorium and then do more research to allow the community to provide input.

Isabella Spohn wonders why there is a need for nightly rentals in Twisp? She said that there is a big concern as there are no employees for local businesses to operate due to a lack of housing. She would like to learn from other towns that have already gone through this. She is urging a moratorium now and suggested the creation of a citizens advisory right away to begin working on this.

Mindy Irvine introduced herself and said she is speaking for both herself and her husband Doug. She said that she is applying for a nightly rental for a bedroom in their home. She said she supports the idea of a nightly rental moratorium except for owner occupied locations.

Mayor Ing-Moody thanked everyone for their comments, and said she appreciates the community's input. She said that this topic is on the agenda for this evening, and they will continue the conversation then.

The following Public Comments were sent in writing:

Greetings Twisp Council and Mayor Soo

This is in regards to the proposed development at the old Blackbirds property as well as addressing short term rentals (STR). Like a lot of folks I believe we need more housing. But I also believe we need to really consider how more housing could have an adverse impact on our community if new housing isn't within reach of working families. The proposed Blackbirds project could well address the affordable housing gap. But strictly building market rate housing that's out of reach of working families will only place more strain on a community already struggling with the lack of local workers. Ideally there would already be policies in place to ensure that units of housing, be they deed restricted, possibly in partnership with the Housing Trust or otherwise are not just market rate units. But perhaps this proposed development can be a test case for what our community needs going forward.

Other communities with similar housing struggles have adopted policies to protect working families. I don't see why communities here in the Methow can't do the same.

STR's, while currently not super prevalent in Twisp, pose the potential to be a scourge. While the current number, eight if I remember correctly, doesn't seem like a ton, they all at one time or another housed a local family. Prohibiting future nightly rentals at the Blackbirds development seems a necessary step.

Also, I strongly believe that a moratorium on STR's is absolutely necessary to give the town time to adequately address the issue. I believe prohibiting STR's in residential areas going forward, plus high licensing fees that could help fund housing projects such as ADU incentives, affordable housing subsidies... are necessary permanent steps.

Do we really want to be a community that prioritizes the convenience and comfort of transient visitors over the quality of life of it's permanent residents? I'd surely hope not.

Thanks

Andy McConkey

Twisp Town Council

I am writing to register my objection to nightly rentals in the town of Twisp. As everyone seems to have become aware, there is a serious housing crisis in the Methow Valley. Most businesses here struggle to keep employees when there are so few affordable rentals within reasonable commuting range, to say nothing of the high cost of buying even a modest home. I work as a baker at the Mazama Store and I

see first hand the struggle my employers experience trying to keep staff. The best kind of community we can have is one where those who want to work, can, without spending half their day's pay driving to work from far down the valley. People who actually live here are invested in this place and contribute to the cohesion of the community in ways that visitors do not. (There are motels and campgrounds for visitors). At the very least, I hope the town council will consider a moratorium until this matter is studied further.

Thank you
Mary Sharman

Twisp Town Council

I am writing to express my concerns about nightly rental and the housing shortages occurring here in Twisp and the Valley as a whole. I believe the Town should put a moratorium on nightly rentals at least while the problem of affordable housing for local workers can be studied and some conclusions can be drawn. It seems there are motels and campgrounds for visitors while the few available homes should be for folks who live and work here.

Thank you
Jerry Cole

Dear Council Members,

In your last meeting there seemed to be some confusion regarding the house on Burgar St. owned by Bryan DePlace and Hannah MacIntosh of Seattle. The house is still under their ownership and is currently being rented to Kelsi Potvin, single mother and owner of Twisp Spa.

Bryan and Hannah were granted a nightly rented permit by the town of Twisp. After more consideration of the housing crisis, Bryan and Hannah decided to rent their home as a long term rental instead of a nightly rental. Prior to housing Kelsi and her two sons, the home was rented to Ben Hunsdorfer who was hired to teach 6th grade at MVES. He resided in the home with his wife and toddler until he eventually found a home to purchase.

I am frustrated that some council members do not seem to see the connection to nightly rentals and the housing crisis. I also spoke with Salyna Gracie who was relieved to have found a rental on Glover St. at the last moment. Fortunately, she was able to recently buy a home through the Methow Housing Trust. If these properties were being rented nightly for maximum profit, these people would have struggled to find housing. These are people that are committed to our community, owning businesses, teaching kids and working to keep art alive. These people add long term value to our community and should be prioritized over short term visitors.

I understand that the council has other projects that they are working on, but it is time to make people and housing the priority. We can simply adopt the same policy as Winthrop. The work has been done. It is simply a matter of the council being proactive, listening to your community members and investing in humans for long-term community preservation.

Thank you,
Brynne Edwards

To the Twisp Town Council and Mayor Ing-Moody:

I am writing to you in support of immediately enacting a temporary moratorium on new nightly rental approvals within the boundaries of the Town. Current housing stock is far below what is required to support existing residential needs, and further dilution only exasperates the problem. A

moratorium will give municipal leaders the time needed to evaluate the depth of the issue, collect public comment and find thoughtful and creative solutions.

Last month, the world's new hero, Volodymyr Zelenskyy (referring to the critical need for international sanctions against Russia) said, "Peace is more important than income". Here in the Methow Valley our motto needs to be, "Housing security is more important than income". Stated another way ... if no one can afford to live here, there will be no one to service the tourists ... and then we won't need nightly rentals anyway.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Thank you in advance for listening to the voices of your community members.

Sincerely,
Claire Bunney

Hello Twisp Town Council and Mayor Soo!

I am writing to add my voice to the urgency of the housing situation in Twisp, the Methow Valley and across the country. You can help mitigate this problem in Twisp by immediately enacting short term rental policies to help protect and preserve the character and quality of this community. Time is of the essence to address short term rentals in the Town of Twisp and help protect working families in this valley. It is no secret or surprise to this community that we need more housing. Look no further than the businesses that now have limited hours or days due to lack of staffing. Every short term rental is a home that once housed a local family. The vibrancy and health of our community depends, at least in part, on acting now to impact the housing situation for years to come.

There is no one, easy answer to the housing crisis we are facing but limiting and restricting short term rentals and creating the policies that support this and preserve residential neighborhoods is a step in the right direction.

Thanks for all you do for Twisp and this valley.

Warmly,
Callie Fink

We need proactive nightly rental policies. By the time overnight rentals become a big issue in tourist towns, their people are already facing a problem with housing affordability. Twisp needs strong short-term rental policies immediately.

We are in a housing crisis, we make the problem worse by allowing second-home owners to remove a home from the stock of available housing for local long-term renters and turn the unit into a nightly rental. Local Lodging businesses (who have to follow stringent rules) are hurt by residents putting a home into the nightly rental pool, even for a short period.

A proposed 10-unit development in Twisp is intended to be residential, but the Town has to take action to keep it that way.

Twisp needs more housing and the new project in Twisp will add 10 housing units to the Town of Twisp, an area where housing is both limited and in demand.

Twisp Town is supposed to work for its people, this is an opportunity for our awesome town council members to step up for us. The Twisp Town Code tells us "...The performance goal is to assure that all approved projects benefit the general welfare of the Town of Twisp.

We request the Town of Twisp clearly limit the use of the proposed townhomes to residential use, and develop policies that prevent short term or "nightly" rentals from competing with housing for working people now and in the long-term.

Sheila Coe

Dear Council,

My name is Madelyn Hamilton, and I am writing to voice my concern around the lack of regulation on nightly rentals in Twisp. As you know, we are facing an unprecedented housing crisis in the Methow, and this problem is made significantly worse by allowing second homeowners to open up their spaces to nightly rentals.

Our valley is on a path toward becoming a Sun Valley or Vail, which none of us want. We have the capacity to change this trajectory, but we have to act now and with strong policies. I ask that the town give priority to the creation of sustainable housing for *local* community members first & foremost, and that we create proactive and strict policies around nightly rentals.

Thank you for your time, consideration and good work!

Madelyn Hamilton

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Ing-Moody reported that the town continues to have a lot going on and all the departments are busy. She said there is an exciting celebration coming up that everyone should be proud of and thankful the town has achieved the development of a new Civic Building / EOC. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the new building is slated to take place sometime in mid-July. A committee will be working on the particulars for the event and she invites everyone to join in the celebration. She said that while there are many conversations going on about housing, there continues to be a lot of work being done for a multitude of projects including improving water/sewer infrastructure and the many construction projects. The town has always worked on multiple projects simultaneously and will do so with housing as well.

Staff Reports:

Public Works Director Denham said he would like to provide some updates to some projects happening in town. The SR20 crossing still needs some softscape and sidewalk revisions and the contractor will be coming back out for that. He said the SR20 North sidewalk project has design approval and that there may be a need to request additional funding. Cascade Loop overlay project for the commercial/industrial area is in bad need of improvements that is being funded by a TIB grant. He hopes to have that out to bid within the next month. The Sports Complex contractors will be back out once the irrigation is turned on to finish up any extra projects. He said they have users at the facility now and the PW crew is working on access and barricades to prevent any further damage to the complex. He said the Twisp Park playground will be getting some upgrades that is being paid 100% by ARPA grant funding and to be installed by the PW crew. The Civic Building is going exceptionally well, and he said he is impressed with the completion so far. He said the 3rd Avenue project will be paid for by a Complete Streets grant and will be working with Architects West and Leone and Keeble. He said he has seen 50% plans and is hoping to get a bid estimate while the contractor is still on site. He said the Sewer Collections project for the reconstruction of sewer infrastructure throughout town has preliminary design plans and he is hoping to build next spring. He said the Lift Station #2 project may be delayed due to supplies and the WWTP footings were poured last week. The chipping event will be happening next week. He hopes to hold two events this year. He said that he has provided comments on two Planned Developments, one is more sizable and will provide adequate housing in the town. He said the Pool will be commissioned soon and they have not assessed the damage from this winter yet. He said it takes some time to open the pool and the PW crew will be working on that.

Committee/Commission/Board Reports:

Council Member Caswell attended the recent Tree Board meeting where they announced receiving the Classroom in Bloom grant for \$3000 for the seedling program. He said they are planning for an April 30th Arbor Day celebration in the Commons Park.

Council Member Studen said the Parks and Recreation Public Meeting for the Parks Plan Draft review and comment session has been moved to April 25th and there is still time to review the plan and comment. He said the information is available on the Town's website.

Council Member Studen also attended the Public Safety Meeting where the Fire District 6 annexation discussion continued. He said they've made great progress and there are still a few details to work out. He said they are hoping for a pre-annexation document for Council to review very soon.

Mayor Ing-Moody attended the OCOG meeting last night where WSDOT reported that there is funding available for a bike / pedestrian projects along state routes. She said it might be worth looking into. She also said that the County Commissioners announced that some ARPA funding is available and that Director Denham and herself will be requesting ARPA funding for water infrastructure needs. She also said the RTPO is looking to hire a part time Administrative Assistant and it may be combined with a county position for it to be full time to attract more applicants.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion/Action: Nightly Rentals:

Mayor Ing-Moody wanted to bring back this topic from the previous meeting and advise the Council on what legal counsel has advised the Town regarding a moratorium. She said that according to the attorney, it requires a public hearing within 60 days and it requires findings of fact in support of the need for a moratorium. She said that an ordinance would have to be drafted for the Council to consider adopting which must include clear specifics of the moratorium including any exclusions that the Council desires. Council Member Caswell asked Planner Danison to provide the facts regarding the number of nightly rentals in Town. Danison replied that of the 6 nightly rentals that have been issued business licenses, 4 are currently operating as a nightly rental. Within the town limits there are between 460-490 individual dwellings. He said 460 of those are single family dwellings. If the numbers of issued nightly rentals were all in operation, and considering the number of 460 homes, he said that would make the nightly rental rate .85% of single-family homes currently being used as a nightly rental. He shared that there are 2 significant Planned Developments in the works which would increase the number of homes in town and ultimately improve housing availability. Council Member Caswell said that the facts should be considered prior to moving forward with a moratorium. Council Member Easton said he would like to see one blanket moratorium be adopted and likes the idea of a citizens advisory committee. He thinks this is the perfect opportunity to take the time to review what type of town that Twisp wants to be. Council Member Auburn wanted to thank the community for their comments and concerns. She understands the concerns and hears the urgency. She would like to make sure that this is done appropriately and that it isn't rushed into requiring Council to retreat back at a later time. She feels that the citizens are really speaking to their neighborhoods and not perhaps the commercial zone where she feels that a nightly rental may be appropriate. Council Member Studen is not opposed to a moratorium but feels that you don't need to enact one just to work on a policy in town. He thinks that there should be some sort of percentage cap to trigger a moratorium and thinks that less than 1% doesn't seem high. He also believes that the commercial

zone would be a good exclusion to include if a moratorium were to be adopted. Council Member Easton expressed that he is not comfortable with any exclusions and would like to see a blanket moratorium on all applications submitted to the Town until research can be done.

Council Member Studen made a motion to create an ordinance for a moratorium on nightly rentals for 6 months excluding existing pending and approved nightly rental permits, those in Commercial zones and those in owner occupied premises. Council Member Caswell seconded the motion and it passed with 3 yes votes and 1 no vote.

Discussion/Action: Creative District Grant Contract CD2022-OPS-010:

Councilmember Easton questioned the intended use of the grant funds and the work that the Creative District will use them for. Clerk Kilmer responded that the funds will be used for administrative and advertising costs per the scope of work. The Creative District is working with other Town committees on wayfinding signage, Civic Building art/courtyard, and Third Avenue Improvements.

Councilmember Easton remarked that the Creative District committee hadn't met in almost two years. Mayor Ing-Moody directed staff to follow up with inquiries to the Methow Arts Executive Director, Amanda Jackson Mott, regarding a meeting for that committee to meet and provide updates.

Council Member Easton moved to approve the Creative District Grant Contract CD2022-OPS-010 as presented. Council Member Auburn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: T-O Engineers/Town of Twisp – Contract On-Call Services:

Council Member Caswell moved to approve T-O Engineers contract with the Town of Twisp for On-Call Services presented. Council Member Easton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: T-O Engineers/Town of Twisp – Contract POTW Design:

Council Member Caswell moved to approve T-O Engineers contract with the Town of Twisp for POTW Design presented. Council Member Easton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Ordinance #784 – TMC Chapter 5 – Business Licenses and Regulations:

Clerk Kilmer stated that this language update is to bring us in line with what the Department of Revenue is now currently doing with the Business Licensing.

Council Member Easton moved to approve Ordinance #784 as presented. Council Member Caswell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: American Legion Letter of Support Request:

Council Member Caswell moved to approve a Letter of Support for the American Legion as presented. Council Member Studen seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda:

- Accounts Payable/Payroll

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 12th day of April 2022.

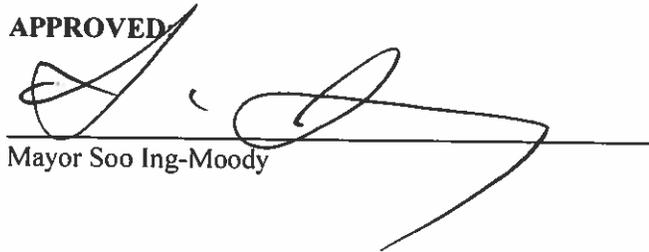
Payroll	EFT# 847-857	69079.55	3/31/22
Accounts Payable	EFT # 883-884	168.32	4/12/22
Accounts Payable	Warrant# 36406-36448	687226.87	4/12/22

Council Member Easton moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Caswell 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:



 Mayor Soo Ing-Moody

ATTEST:



 Clerk/Treasurer Randy Kilmer