



## **BENICIA PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**City Hall Council Chambers  
Thursday, April 9, 2015  
7:00 P.M.**

### **I. OPENING OF MEETING**

#### **A. Pledge of Allegiance**

#### **B. Roll Call of Commissioners**

Present: Commissioners Birdseye, Cohen-Grossman, Oakes,  
Sherry, Sprague, Young and Chair Dean

Absent:

Staff Present: Christina Ratcliffe, Community Development Director  
Heather McLaughlin, City Attorney  
Amy Million, Principal Planner  
Gina Eleccion, Recording Secretary  
Mark Boehme, Contract Attorney

#### **C. Reference to Fundamental Rights of Public**

### **II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

On motion of Commissioner Oakes, seconded by Commissioner Sprague, the agenda was adopted, moving Item VII (Election of Officers) prior to Regular Agenda Items, by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Birdseye, Cohen-Grossman, Oakes, Sherry, Sprague,  
Young and Chair Dean

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

### **III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

**A. WRITTEN**– None.

**B. PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.

### **IV. PRESENTATION:**

**A. OPEN GOVERNMENT PRINCIPLES**

Heather McLaughlin, City Attorney, provided a training on open government policies. Commissioners asked clarifying questions.

**V. CONSENT CALENDAR**

Item V.B was pulled by Commissioner Cohen Grossman.

On motion of Commissioner Cohen-Grossman, seconded by Commissioner Oakes, the consent calendar was approved, by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Birdseye, Cohen-Grossman, Oakes, Sherry, Sprague, Young and Chair Dean  
Noes: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: Commissioner Birdseye (Item V. A)

**A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 12, 2015 REGULAR MEETING**

**VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR)**

Commissioner Sherry nominated Chair Dean to continue as Chair. Commissioners Oakes and Young both expressed an interest in being Chair.

The nomination of Chair Dean to serve as Chair for another year was supported by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Cohen-Grossman, Sherry, Sprague, and Chair Dean  
Noes: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: Commissioners Birdseye, Oakes, and Young

Commissioner Sherry nominated Commissioner Oakes as Vice Chair. Commissioner Cohen-Grossman nominated Commissioner Young as Vice Chair.

The nomination of Commissioner Oakes as Vice Chair was supported by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Oakes, Sherry, Sprague, and Chair Dean  
Noes: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: Commissioners Birdseye, Cohen-Grossman, Young

The Chair and Vice Chair to take effect at the Commission's next regularly scheduled meeting on May 14, 2015.

**VII. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. AMENDMENT TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE FOR MINOR CLEAN-UPS TO CLARIFY TEXT AND ELIMINATE DISCREPANCIES; AFTER A DETERMINATION THAT THE TEXT AMENDMENT IS EXEMPT FROM CEQA**

Commissioner Cohen-Grossman stated that she would like the tables left in the Zoning Ordinance. Amy Million noted that staff intends to maintain these tables as stand-alone documents as a resource to the public and staff. They will continue to be available on the City's website and at the public counter. Copies will be provided to Planning Commissioners.

The Commission recommended that "cleanups" be changed to "edits".

There were no additional comments on this item.

**RESOLUTION NO. 15-3 OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BENICIA RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO THE BENICIA MUNICIPAL CODE FOR MINOR EDITS TO CLARIFY TEXT AND ELIMINATE DISCREPANCIES**

On motion of Commissioner Cohen-Grossman, seconded by Commissioner Sherry, the above Resolution, as amended, was approved, by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Birdseye, Cohen-Grossman, Oakes, Sherry, Sprague, Young and Chair Dean  
Noes: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: None

**B. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 6.32.030 OF THE BENICIA MUNICIPAL CODE TO PERMIT URBAN BEEKEEPING WITHIN THE CITY, AFTER DETERMINING THAT THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT FROM CEQA**

Mr. Boehme gave a presentation on the proposed text amendment.

Commissioners asked questions regarding the hives, screening, registration, locations, enforcement, and permitting.

The public hearing was opened.

Laurie Cannon, resident, spoke about colony collapse disorder. She questioned how many people in Benicia are allergic to bees. She commented on the screening of hives.

Charles Maddux, 126 East D Street – He recommends having a bee expert in attendance. He would like to see a permit required so that the public can have input. He stated he is allergic to bees.

Sue Kibbey, resident – She would like to see a permit for liability issues. She provided copies of a St. Helena Bee Keeping permit.

Claudia Claverie, 441 York Drive – She supports bee keeping. She would like to see a no-fee permit for this.

Elena Karoulina, Benicia Community Gardens – She would like to see food production and permaculture. She commented that the City of Napa and County of Napa have separate ordinances. She noted that barriers need to be solid. She has offered to bring experts to the City meetings to educate the public. She stated that people are concerned with charging a fee for a permit.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioners expressed interest in additional information from Napa or St. Helena regarding permit requirements, bee-hives, and neighborhood input. They would like an expert present at the meetings. City liability was discussed.

It was noted that the Police Department prefers the no-permit option. It was suggested that this could be removed after a period of time to see if there are issues.

Christina Ratcliffe noted that there are processes for other types of permits that only require notification of adjacent property owners. This could be done.

Commissioner Young moved to recommend allowing beekeeping with a permit in all zoning districts with best practices as listed, with requirement that adjacent neighbors are notified by the permittee, an over-the-counter permit process with minimal fee, revisit in 1 year (to determine number of permits, complaints, etc...), and limit the use in multifamily and trailer parks, and the number of hives as stated in the draft ordinances.

**RESOLUTION NO. 15-4 OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BENICIA RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 6.32.060 OF THE BENICIA MUNICIPAL CODE ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR HONEYBEE MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE CITY OF BENICIA**

On motion of Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Sherry, the above Resolution was approved, as amended, by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Birdseye, Cohen-Grossman, Oakes, Sherry, Sprague, Young and Chair Dean  
Noes: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: None

**VIII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF**

Christina Ratcliffe, Director, introduced herself.

**IX. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

Chair Dean welcomed Commissioner Birdseye. Commissioner Birdseye looks forward to working on the Commission.

Commissioner Young provided a reminder of his question from last month on the public hearing process for the Crude by Rail project and how it will be handled. He noted that he would like the Commission to discuss the Rules and Procedures in terms of how meetings are handled. He would like a revision to the Rules and Procedures. Amy Million noted this could be agendaized in May.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Dean adjourned the meeting at 9:50 p.m.