

**TOWN OF MANHATTAN
Thursday, March 15, 2023
Special Meeting
MINUTES**

Council President Betsy Mancuso called the meeting to order in the Town Meeting Room. Council members present were Ryan Engbretson (by phone), Josh Powell, and Morgan Taylor. Also present were Town Attorney Jane Mersen, Town Planner Scott Hazelton, and Clerk/Treasurer Pam Humphrey. Twenty-eight members of the public were present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Brian Grimshaw, 2000 Nixon Gulch: He stated that wanted to go on record that the developers on Nixon Gulch Rd do not have his written permission to go into the ditch easement. They are in litigation over the matter.

Allissa Farley, 205 S 5th St: She asked someone to address the Town website being down.

MANHATTAN GROWTH POLICY:

Motion- Taylor; Second- Powell; Vote- For 3 (Mancuso, Powell, Taylor), Against 1 (Engbretson): Motion passed to approve the language provided by the planner on housing availability with the edits by Josh Powell.

Motion- Powell; to approve the Manhattan Growth Policy with the edits that have been approved by the Council.

Amendment - Motion- Powell; Second- Mancuso; Vote- Unanimous: Motion passed to approve the Manhattan City-County Growth Policy with the edits that have been approved by the Council.

Kristen Swenson: She asked for a Point of Order to restate the edits approved by the Council.

Scott Hazelton, Town Planner: He read each of the changes that the Council had discussed and approved.

Discussion/Decision

Councilwoman Mancuso stated that since a Public Hearing had already been held on the Growth Policy, no more public comment would be allowed.

Scott Hazelton, Town Planner: He clarified that the planning jurisdiction has been in place since 1978. The current map has been in place since 2014. It does not grant the Town the authority to zone the area, just make recommendations. He described the changed that he and the Town Attorney made to the Housing Attainability section. They added the definition and made that portion clearer. The Growth Policy does not require the Town to do anything. The Growth Policy is something for the Town to use when reviewing land use applications. He submitted the updated policy with comments from the previous meeting.

The Council discussed the Housing Attainability section. They discussed eliminating it altogether or editing it with suggestions made by Councilman Powell.

It was determined that since the section being discussed was re-written differently than the draft document, and that there is significant public interest, that public comment would be allowed on that section.

Dan Ryan, 314 S 5th: He asked why the Council is closing their eyes to the future. The planner gave a general direction the Town could move.

Elaine Skinner-Hale, 203 N 5th St: She stated that the Council needs to understand that 40% of the population is under the poverty level.

Jennifer Carr, 200 Lund Lane: She asked for the definition of affordable housing. She encouraged the Council to follow the survey responses.

Beth Gorder, 101 W Washington: She asked if this is a guiding document or a legally binding document.

Callie Hamilton, 505 Milwaukee: She stated that she is in support of the changes prior to Powell's edits because they are subjective, not objective. It does not require the Town to develop, just to consider more options that come before them.

Rocky Hamilton, 505 Milwaukee: He stated that he is in support of the document as amended without Powell's edits. This is a huge issue in Montana. The community needs to work together to figure out how to help people out. People are asking the Council to listen to their concerns. The wording is important for grants. Without grants there is a larger burden on the taxpayer. He stated that the Council needs to look into the future and listen to the people.

Brian Grimshaw, 2000 Nixon Gulch: He asked to please keep agriculture in mind when looking at growth.

Ryan Miller, 707 Madison Ave: He stated that he is late to the details but knows some of the folks involved. There were a lot of people involved in the Planning Board and the creation of the Growth Policy. Some voices were missed. There are a lot of changes occurring after the document was created.

Connie Boucher, 218 S Broadway: She stated that she agrees with Miller's comments. People worked hard on it to make it a quality document for the people in the community. The Council is looking at their own interests but need to represent all the people. The aging population is going to be gone and affordable housing will be needed for the younger generation to afford to live in Manhattan. There needs to be a way serve all the community.

Bob Logar, 95 Bridger Ridge Run Rd: He commented that a lot of work went into the document. He thanked everybody for their input. He thanked the Town Planner for blending the documents at the Council's request. He stated that at the last Planning Board meeting, no one spoke in opposition to the document.

Dan Simser, 1155 Yadon Rd: He stated that he agreed with Logar's comments. He voted for the document as written. As for the attainability document, he is in favor. He is for section 8 housing but understands that is not what the community wants.

Buck Buchanan, 315 N 5th St: He stated that he is in favor as written without Powell's edits.

Lindsay Schack, 302 N Broadway: She stated that it is misinformation that the Town must comply with or reflect the document in all decisions. All the original document was under a different planner. It is a guiding document but does not remove the ability of the Council to turn down applications. The document says in the ag section that if ag land

is in Town, it would be open space. The need is to focus growth inside Town. Having affordable housing in a Growth Policy does not just make those things happen. It just makes it possible if landowners want to develop. There is a misunderstanding of what the Growth Policy is. She would like it to be on record the reasons why areas are struck. She asked that all meetings be Zoom meetings. She supports the updated version of the attainability section without the edits from Powell.

Alissa Farley, 205 S 5th St: She stated that she supports the attainable housing section as written, without edits. The Town needs teachers to be able to live in this community. The section should be kept in to get grants.

Councilman Engbretson: He stated that he agrees with Dan Ryan, the Council needs to take off the blinders and see the big picture. It is important, the Town needs affordable housing verbiage in the document to get employees here both for the Town and the school. He stated that the Council should have been working with the Planning Board from beginning. He asked the Planner to remind everyone why the language is in there. It is not promoting high density housing, it just gives options.

Scott Hazelton, Town Planner: He stated that the verbiage needs to be in the policy. He gave an example where someone has land and wants to do attainable or employee housing. Service availability will still need to be met. It would allow the person to come and have the conversation and help obtain grants to remove some construction costs for the infrastructure through grant funding. There is no direct action, it just allows the option. He stated that the section that Councilman Powell would like removed will probably not decrease the ability to get grants. The paragraph related to communicating with other jurisdictions helps to avoid problems others have made and get ideas. The projected lifespan of the plan should be for 20 years. The parts are in there to provide ideas for 15-20 years out.

Councilwoman Mancuso: She stated that when managing the Town and resources, the current limitations need to be kept in mind. The water and sewer capacities are limited, as well as the police department and fire department. There was a survey done and it conveys that the people want to keep Manhattan small and as it is. The ag community is opposed to the higher density.

Councilman Taylor: He stated that he read all the survey comments. He only found six references in favor of affordable housing. The rest were for large lot size and low density.

Scott Hazelton, Town Planner: He stated that limiting the document would limit the ability to pursue grant funding. Ultimately, the Zoning Codes are the requirements that need to be followed. He went through the changes from the draft document that were discussed at the previous meeting.

MAYOR VACANCY DISCUSSION:

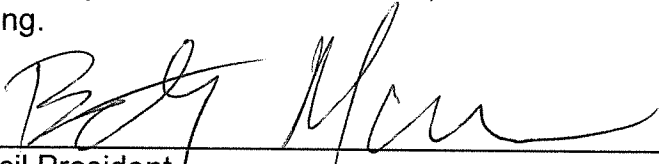
Mayor Clements has resigned.

Jane Mersen, Town Attorney: She stated that the statutes require that the Council appoint someone to fill position within 30 days. She suggested that the interested parties come and present themselves to the Council for the Mayoral appointment.

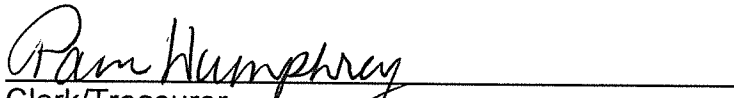
A special meeting was set for March 29th at 6:00pm to appoint an interim Mayor.

ADJOURN:

Motion- Taylor; Second- Mancuso; Vote- Unanimous: Motion passed to adjourn the meeting.



Council President



Clerk/Treasurer