



**TOWN OF WELLINGTON
PLANNING COMMISSION
March 3, 2025**

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING – 6:30 PM**

1. CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER – 6:34 p.m.

The Planning Commission for the Town of Wellington, Colorado, met on March 3, 2025, at the Wilson Leeper Center, 3800 Wilson Avenue, Wellington, Colorado at 6:34 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present:

Eric Sartor, Chairperson
Lisa Chollet
Sherman Stringer
Tim Whitehouse
Stephen Carman

Absent:

Linda Knaack
Bert McCaffrey

Town Staff Present:

Cody Bird, Planning Director
Brittany Lenoir, Planner III
Aidan Checkett, Planner I
Patti Garcia, Town
Administrator

3. ADDITIONS TO OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

None

4. PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public comment.

5. New Business

A. Public Hearing to consider amendments to the Land Use Code to increase opportunities for Housing Affordability

Cody Bird, Planning Director, presented the first phase of recommendations based on the Draft Housing Needs and Affordability Assessment (HNA). The recommendations include changes to the Land Use Code to remove barriers to affordable housing and residential choice. The Commission would have the option to adopt the proposed Land Use Code amendments and forward a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, adopt the amendments with revisions, or continue the public hearing to a later date.

Chairman Sartor asked for disclosure of any conflicts of interest or ex parte communications. Commissioner Chollet noted that she had received a communication from Christine Gaiter, resident. Commissioners Whitehouse and Carman and Chair Sartor noted they had also received the communication from Mrs. Gaiter.

Brittany Lenoir, Planner III, introduced the recommended code amendments. She outlined the process leading up to the public hearing, including the Commission's previous discussion of the HNA. She gave a high-level overview of the proposed changes. Aidan Checkett, Planner I, discussed changes related to net density, lot sizes, removing minimum floor areas, and allowing multi-family homes and manufactured homes in additional zoning districts. Commissioner Carman expressed concern about the number of survey respondents and asked if that was the sole base for the HNA's findings. Checkett clarified that in addition to the survey, the HNA contained data from the American Community Survey, Zillow, and Redfin. Commissioner Carman asked if there were any ways to protect existing properties besides removing the floor area requirements. Bird replied that he believed removing the requirements would be the most direct and efficient solution.

Lenoir introduced recommended changes relating to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), parking requirements, and open space dedications for multi-family homes. Commissioner Carman asked what portion of homes could have an ADU. Lenoir noted that, because there are a variety of types of ADU, many homes could. Commissioner Chollet asked what the proposed setbacks for ADUs would be. Lenoir responded they would be equivalent to accessory structure setbacks for any detached ADUs. Chollet asked if there would be any potential conflict with the Building Code, Bird clarified that the Land Use Code works with, but would not preempt the Building Code. Carman asked about access to ADUs. Bird replied access/egress is typically a Building Code matter. Chollet asked if removing owner-occupancy requirements could incentivize short-term rentals. Bird noted there has not been much demand for short-term rentals in Wellington, and any registration program would involve additional Town resources. Carman expressed that the lack of demand for short-term rentals would not be indicative of a housing shortage. Bird responded that short-term rentals can also lead to increases in rental prices. Carman asked about the recommendation to remove functional open-space dedications for multi-family units. Bird responded that this would remove barriers for small duplex-style units or similar housing types, and that Article 5 of the Land-Use Code would come into play for new developments. Chairman Sartor noted that required setbacks would create some amount of open space for smaller or infill projects. Lenoir concluded the presentation.

Commissioner Carman asked about potential costs. Bird explained that the proposed changes to the Land Use Code would not have expenses beyond the current staff time. Carman asked if the written comments from Mrs. Gaiter [*ex parte* disclosures] are taken into account. Bird replied that conversations with downtown residents influenced the Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies, as well as specific development standards added to the R-4 Downtown Neighborhood zoning district to protect the architectural character of the area. When the Land Use Code was adopted there was a lot of discussion and the code specifically did not allow many business and commercial uses within the R-4 zoning district. Those considerations are still applicable and reflected in the proposed code amendments. Staff also did not recommend pursuing one of the draft Housing Needs Assessment's recommendations for allowing mixed-use buildings as a permitted use in the R-4 district based on honoring the previous resident feedback regarding limiting commercial uses. Where changes are proposed to allow other types of housing, specific use limitations are proposed to ensure the scale, height and massing of new developments remain consistent with the existing neighborhood context.

There are many existing examples of duplex, 4-plex, and other attached housing units within the existing downtown neighborhood's that have been there for many years and the proposed code amendments are consistent with those existing structures.

Chairman Sartor opened the public hearing.

Christine Gaiter, resident, expressed that she believes the Town is not listening to residents' preference for detached single-family homes in the R-4 District. She referred to the resident survey responses in the draft Housing Needs Assessment pointing out that more residents preferred single-family homes than apartments. She stated that data showed apartments are the locations in Wellington where the most crime is committed. She referenced a 2021 resident petition regarding downtown neighborhood desires [beginning page 8 of July 12, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes].

Jon Gaiter, resident, commented that he was concerned about reducing residential parking requirements downtown and open space dedications. He stated that he hoped the Commissioners were considering all potential long-term implications of the proposed amendments.

Chairman Sartor, seeing no further public comments, closed the public hearing.

Chairman Sartor called for a brief recess at 7:54 pm. The Commission reconvened at 8:02 pm.

Chairman Sartor asked if Staff had any response to the Public Comments. Bird responded to the public hearing comment about the resident survey responses. The individual pointed out that single-family homes were the leading desire of residents to pursue [24% of respondents]. Please also note that senior housing was identified as another leading desire at 26% of respondents, and collectively - duplexes, triplexes, apartments, condos, and other non-traditional forms of housing were identified by 42% of respondents. These responses combined with the needs assessment and the dot exercise visual preference responses obtained through in-person outreach speaks to the need for a variety of housing types and a focus on more affordable forms of housing.

Sartor asked Bird to restate the Commission's options. Bird stated the Commission can advance all recommendations to the Board of Trustees, advance with modifications, or to hold off on making a discussion till the next meeting.

Commissioner Chollet stated that she believes the problem is very serious for young adults, teachers, and seniors. She supported the changes brought before the Commission. Chairman Sartor asked if any Commissioners had any objections or concerns with specific aspects of the recommendations. Commissioner Carman expressed his concern that there needed to be more due diligence done on the interdependencies and costs of the changes. Chairman Sartor clarified that the current vote was just on the proposed Land Use Code changes. Carman replied that this may set in motion future steps the Commission did not understand. Commissioner Chollet responded that there were processes in place for those, and that this first step for the code changes would not obligate the Commission to advance other programs.

Commissioner Whitehouse expressed that the data was very concerning, and that he supported the proposed changes, even if the Commissioners could not identify every possible consequence. Sartor noted that he had concerns about the proposed density changes to R-4. Bird clarified that the proposed changes would predominantly affect net density (the corner-to-corner density of an

individual lot or block), and that the gross (neighborhood-wide) density would still not come close to the existing 12 du/acre limit. However, changing the net density would allow more R-4 property owners the opportunity to choose to develop or redevelop their properties for a wider range of housing types. The Commissioners agreed that the density change would be acceptable with that explanation.

Commissioner Chollet moved to adopt the Land Use Code amendments related to housing affordability and forward a recommendation of approval to the Board of Trustees. Commissioner Whitehouse seconded.

Yeas – Chollet, Stringer, Sartor, Whitehouse

Nays- Carman

Motion carried.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Bird stated that the final draft of the Housing Needs and Affordability Assessment would be brought before the Commission at the April Meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Sartor adjourned the regular meeting at 8:51 PM

Approved this 7 day of April, 2025.

Aidan Checkett

Recording Secretary