

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 4, 2025**

6:00 PM Business Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Graham, Councilors Knauer, Dahle, DuQuenne, Bloom, Kaplan, and Hansen.

Council Absent: None

Staff Present:

Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
Doug McGeary	Acting City Attorney
Alissa Kolodzinski	City Recorder
Brandon Goldman	Community Development Director
Scott Fleury	Public Works Director
Aaron Anderson	Senior Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

- a. Land Acknowledgement**

Councilor Bloom read the land acknowledgement.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Knauer led the pledge of allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

IV. MAYOR'S/ CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

- a. National Women's History Month Proclamation – Graham read the proclamation
b. Applications for the 'If I Were Mayor' contest are due by March 10, 2025

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Minutes of February 18, 2025 – Business Meeting

Motion made for approval of the minutes as amended.

Motion: Bloom Second: Knauer

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Knauer, Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Kaplan, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Ashland Municipal Code Update – Transportation Advisory Committee
Recommendation E-Bike Regulations
b. Request of Council to Initiate Right of Way Vacation – Fern Street
c. Approval of Liquor License for Harana Café

Request to remove item a. from the consent agenda by Hansen and DuQuenne.

Motion made to approve the consent agenda items b. and c.

Motion: Dahle Second: Bloom

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Knauer, Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Kaplan, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed.

a. Ashland Municipal Code Update – Transportation Advisory Committee
Recommendation E-Bike Regulations

Discussion: Councilors discussed reasons for pulling this item for further discussion.

Public Works Director Scott Fleury introduced the topic brought by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC– see attached presentation)

- TAC has received complaints about e-bike usage. TAC would like to consider a two-pronged approach to address this issue through education/outreach, and appropriate regulation as a component of their 2025 work plan.
- Ordinance review would begin with a review of Oregon State Law, Ashland's existing ordinance, and comparison of other municipalities' ordinances (such as in Eugene).
- Staff time required for TAC to develop concrete recommendations for an ordinance update would include Fleury's time as TAC's staff liaison as well as the Legal and Police departments time to research and draft options for Ashland.
- Council clarified that Staff and legal would be responsible for drafting the ordinance.
- Council requested additional data related to crashes and/or near-misses involving e-bikes.
- Council discussed importance of education/outreach and the potential to request enforcement of existing laws.

Decision:

Motion made to direct staff to begin the process of developing updated municipal code regulations regarding e-bikes and micro-mobility devices and to return at a study session when appropriate and time allows for further discussion or review.

Motion: Bloom

Second: Hansen

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Bloom, DuQuenne, Knauer, and Hansen. YES. Kaplan, Dahle NO.

Motion passed.

VII. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

a. Travel Ashland Update – Katherine Kato Director of Travel Ashland shared highlights of the report (see agenda packet for presentation slides and full report.)

- Top visitors come from Portland, Eugene, and Sacramento followed by San Francisco and Seattle with over \$9 Million in visitor spending in Ashland. Kato highlighted specific projects, programs, and events.
- House Bill 2977 – Travel Ashland is taking a position against this bill to remain a competitive destination for group tours and conferences.
- Spoke in favor of the Madrone Ridge concept as benefit for Ashland's mountain bike culture.
- Visitation data indicates that Ashland is resilient and no longer solely reliant on OSF, the average visitor is younger, and tourism is an economic driver and worth continued investment.
- Discussion on effective marketing of Ashland – social media, searchable app and/or calendar.

- Travel Ashland has invested in access to attribution and spending data for the ability to analyze who saw what ad and which of those viewers actually came to Ashland
- General trends indicate hotel occupancy rates are slightly down and vacation rentals slightly up. Discussion on ebb and flow of trends, and Travel Ashland's strategy to promote all lodging.
- Travel Ashland has recognized an issue with restaurant listings on its map - overhauling the site and map to provide an accurate list of restaurants will be completed in the next month.
- Content on Travel Ashland is not limited to Chamber members but promotes all organizations.
- Discussion regarding strategy for attracting younger families as visitors and future residents.

VIII. PUBLIC FORUM - 15 Minutes

Citizens expressed concern about the quality of care and experiences of the homeless population and in opposition of proposed updates to the Enhanced Law Enforcement Area (ELEA).

Mayor Graham called for a five-minute break. Meeting resumed at 7:25PM

IX. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. *Appeal (#PA-APPEAL-2025-00020) of Planning Action #PA-T2-2024-00054 a request for outline plan approval for Kestrel Park Phase III, a performance standards option (PSO) subdivision, Site Design Review, variance to driveway width, and tree removal permit request, within the North Mountain Neighborhood Plan area*

Public Hearing Open

Graham explained the public hearing procedure and asked if any members of the Council wished to abstain, declare a conflict of interest or report any ex-parte contact in this matter. Knauer stated he served on the Planning Commission when this item was brought forward and decided upon but is not prejudiced or biased. Kaplan disclosed an email he received regarding the appeal which he did not respond to. DuQuenne also disclosed having received the same email and is not prejudiced or biased. Graham outlined how to provide rebuttal evidence and then read the eight appeal issues for this matter. Graham asked if the City had received any written challenges to members of the hearing body for bias, prejudgment, or conflict of interest and Kolodzinski replied there were none.

Goldman provided information on the appeal process, the Planning Commission's decision regarding the Kestrel Park Phase 3 that is under appeal, and described the steps taken during this planning action. Goldman explained that three letters received by his department and included in the packet from Deveni, Crawford, and Heman are from previous non-

participants of the appeal and could not be taken into consideration for this hearing as that information is considered new evidence per ORS 197.763. Anderson provided a presentation (in packet) as an abbreviated outline of what was presented to the Planning Commission on December 10th, 2024.

Vida Taylor, Mark Abelle and Daniel DeRoux spoke as the appellant and requested Council to reconsider the decision citing concerns over density, code violations, access to roads, lack of open space, narrow alleys, parking issues, and fire danger. Written statements were submitted and read aloud by Abelle and DeRoux and are attached.

Sydney Dryer Attorney for the applicant Mark Knox and Kyle Taylor spoke on the application and points of consideration (full legal statement available in the packet). Dryer spoke that the area includes 22 dwellings rather than the 46 referenced by the appellant, has been zoned as multi-family since 1997, and that as required, the building design meets at least two the architectural standards as found by the Planning Commission. Dryer spoke that there was no code limiting the number of residences that can take access off of an alley and referenced information from two traffic engineers hired by the applicant during the earlier phases of the project that established that every studied intersection of the project will continue operate at service level B or higher after the project is build out.

Dennis Holdman - spoke about his concern over the growing density of the neighborhood, related impacts on emergency vehicle access, and limited emergency evacuation access to North Mountain Avenue for residents of Mountain Meadows and Skylark subdivisions.

Questions to Staff from the Council:

- Council asked for clarification on what is considered conformity to general design requirements. Goldman spoke that this would include review for conformity to underlying zoning designations and spoke to how proposed elements were approved.
- Council asked about the ODOT emergency access to I-5 from this neighborhood and if there were plans for a bridge crossing over Bear Creek to connect E and W Nevada. Goldman spoke that the I-5 access was installed by ODOT after the Almeda fire for emergency evacuation and that the proposed bridge connecting E and W Nevada would fall within the transportation system plan as a subsequent capital improvement project - as a condition of this application, each property owner in the subdivision would pay a share of that cost.
- Council asked for clarification regarding density. Anderson and Goldman clarified that the minimum and maximum density requirement for this area is 24 and 40 units respectively. This phase plans for 24 units, but as smaller homes count as 0.75 of a dwelling, this number is reported as 22 dwellings in the density calculation.
- The application for Area 7 was voluntarily withdrawn to work with neighborhood concerns and would need to be between two and 18 units to comply with density expectations.

- Alleys are multi-directional but will allow for one car to pass at a time

Dryer spoke on behalf of the applicant that from the legal standard there is substantial evidence to affirm the Planning Commission's decision, and the appeal should be rejected.
Public Hearing Closed

Discussion: None

Decision:

Motion made to affirm the decision of the Planning Commission and reject the appeal for the reasons that there is substantial evidence in the record to support the Planning Commission's decision, that the Planning Commission did not commit any errors of law, and to adopt the Planning Commission's Findings of Fact as the City Council's own.

Motion: Bloom **Second:** Dahle

Councilors spoke to the reasons for their decision.

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, Knauer and Hansen, YES. DuQuenne NO. Motion passed.

X. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND CONTRACTS

- a. *Second Reading – ORD 3256 An Ordinance Amendment to AMC 2.30 Uniform Administrative Appeals Process Designating the Municipal Court as the Administrative Appeal Body*

The change from the first reading was to change the language related fixed fee in Section 2.30.020 Section C to: 'Appeal fees shall be set by Resolution of this Ashland City Council'.

Decision:

Motion made to approve the second reading of Ordinance No. 3256

Motion: Hansen **Second:** DuQuenne

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Knauer, Kaplan, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed.

- b. *Resolution 2025-02 A Resolution of the City of Ashland Rescinding all Former Memoranda of Understanding in Light of the Passage of Ordinance 3248, which Created the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department*

This will dissolve all the prior MOUs and will go into effect 30 days from the approval of Ordinance 3248 to create the Ashland Parks & Recreation Department.

Decision: none

Motion made to approve Resolution 2025-02

Motion: Dahle **Second:** Bloom

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Knauer, Kaplan, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed.

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XII. CITY MANAGER REPORT

- City's OLLI course Show Me the Money: Finances of Local Government is coming online in April.
- Rogue Valley Bike Swap will be April 26th from 12-2:30PM.
- A benefit concert and information gathering for Ashland's Sister City, Sviatohirs'k, Ukraine will be held on March 30th at 2:00PM
- Community Center renovation has encountered additional issues and is over budget with plans to be finished late summer or early fall.
- Pioneer Hall renovation is on schedule for completion for spring.
- Citizen's Self Service Portal is expanding to include additional permitting options.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS/REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISONS

- HHSAC had its Community Resource Fair with approximately 100 visitors.
- Oregon Department of Energy is developing an Energy Strategy and hosting working groups.
- Historic Preservation Week is May 11-17th – Airport Day is coming first Saturday in June.
- TAC is reviewing crash/ near-miss data and e-bike recommendations.
- SERJAC is exploring how to support other committees such as PAAC and HHSAC.
- CEPAC is reviewing energy incentives and supporting the exchange of package terminal air conditioners to heat pumps in those buildings that have them.
- Graham has been named to the Public Safety Coordinating Council for Jackson County

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

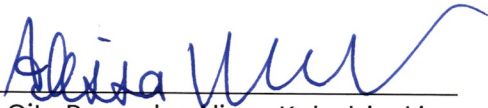
Motion made to adjourn.

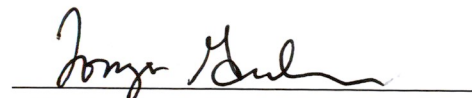
Motion: Bloom

Second: DuQuenne

All ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 PM


City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski


Mayor Tonya Graham