Planning Commission Minutes  
For June 21, 2016

Members Present: Chairman Dwight Freeman, Gene Glover, Wesley O’Rourke and Dixie Diltz - Secretary.

Members Absent with notification: Vice -Chairman Leonard Brown,

Members Absent without notification: Grover Hathorn

Others Present: John Yoder, Melvin Coblentz, Jeffery Fowler, Loma Fowler and Francis Allen

Chairman Dwight Freeman called the meeting to order at 1:35pm.

Gene Glover made the motion to accept the Agenda as presented, Wesley O’Rourke seconded, motion carried unanimously; Due to not having a meeting in May there were no minutes to approve.

First Item of Business: Amendment of Zoning from Rural Residential to Agricultural Estate & Conditional Use Application for a 250 head Goat Dairy to be located at 0104 County Road 11 South, Monte Vista, CO. Application submitted by Melvin & Mary Coblentz.

Dwight Freeman reads application: A 2 part application for a Zoning Amendment and Goat Dairy, its a 6.65 acres parcel of land located 11 miles south, it is a corner of a circle. Melvin Coblentz verifies he is the owner of the “corner” and his father is the owner of the “circle”. Wesley O’Rourke questions if the goats will be pastured on the alfalfa circle at any time. Mr. Coblentz states that it may be a possibility on a short-term basis.

Chairman - Dwight Freeman addresses the Zoning Amendment: Bobby Reinhart-Widger, as the property owner in 1997, carved out a house and about 3 acres from the quarter in a Exempt Division of Land. This divided parcel, being 3 ares was subsequently zoned Rural Residential.

The presumption is that prior to Melvin Coblentz purchase of the land from prior owners, this 3 acres parcel was expanded to the entire corner encompassing 6.65 acres. This resulted in the 6.65 acre parcel becoming zoned Rural Residential. Review of the current zoning in the area shows several other corners that are zoned Agricultural Estate. Approval of the Zone change on the “Coblentz corner” would be within the normal zoning patterns of the area. Agricultural
Estate (AE) zoning district within the County is typically parcels of land consisting of 5 - 35 acres providing areas where continued agricultural or grazing use is practiced on a smaller scale.

Mike Mitchell makes a motion to recommend approval of the Zone Change from Rural Residential to Agricultural Estate. Wesley O’Rourke Seconds. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Dwight Freeman addresses the Conditional Use application for the 250 Head Goat Dairy. Dwight Freeman asks the question “How do you run a goat dairy?” Melvin Coblentz states that it’s “just like a miniature cow dairy.” Discussion continues about the “available” acreage for the penning in of the goats (which is estimated to be approximately 3 acres). Mike Mitchell questions if any of the other acreage would be available if needed. Melvin Coblentz says that if the need arises he could use some acreage on the east side of his house. The Coblentz’s intend to start with approximately 175 goats and work up from there. Discussion continues about the fact that all food will be brought to the goats versus the goats being allowed to graze. Melvin Coblentz clarifies that the goats will be fed alfalfa and grains. John Yoder, representing Melvin Coblentz, comments that the goats milk would not taste good if they graze so the only time the goats would be pastured would be during their “dry” times. The milking cycle of the goats is approximately 300 days and they need to be dried up the remaining time yearly. Melvin Coblentz explains his plans as far as breeding, retention of replacement stock and sell of “cull” animals. The storage of the milk in a Freon cooled bulk tank, as well as the milking equipment, will be housed in the proposed new building on the property. The possibility of a septic system to service the milking barn was discussed. It was agreed that this would be done as required by the building department. The milk barn or “parlor” will be required to be built to Rio Grande County building codes. The “loafing shed” or animal shelter would qualify for agricultural exemption as long as it is detached and separate from the “parlor”.

Disposal of manure is discussed. Mike Mitchell asks about a backup plan for disposal of “waste” milk. Melvin Coblentz hasn’t considered this as of yet, however, believes it could be used as fertilizer as well. Gene Glover question how long the milk can be stored. Melvin Coblentz responds with “about four days”. The Coblentz currently have a contract with a company out of Buena Vista to provide goat milk for cheese production. The Buena Vista Company currently has the milking herd, but wishes to cease the dairy production and only produce the cheese, thus, Melvin Coblentz will raise and milk the goats and the Buena Vista Company will pick up and transport the milk.

Dixie Diltz relates that she has been in contact with Paul Klug, Colorado Department of Public Health, Milk division. Melvin Coblentz, (Lester Yoder, as representative) were provided with Paul Klug’s information and have been in contact with as well. Paul Klug responded with an email verifying that the Coblentz will work with him to assure that they meet all the State’s requirements for a dairy operation.

The applicant has a 40 gpm domestic and stock well currently on property.

Mike Mitchell discussed the possibility of having a review period to re-evaluate the number of goats and impacts of operation. It was decided that Melvin Coblentz would self-regulate the number of animals up to the 250 cap. If it appears that 250 goats in this acreage becomes a
nuisance or generates complaints the Coblentz will adjust the herd as needed. If Melvin feels the land could accommodate more than 250 goats he will contact the Land Use Administrator for review.

Gene Glover makes motion to recommend approval of Conditional Use for a 250 Head Goat Dairy to be operated at 0104 County Road 11 S. Monte Vista, CO with the contingencies that

1. All building codes must be met on Milk Barn or any other buildings not intended for the sole purpose of sheltering the goats.
2. Building Permits will not be issued until after the Rio Grande County Board of County Commissioners has approved the application.
3. The operation cannot commence until the Resolution has been signed and recorded and all required Building Permits have been completed and “closed”.
4. The conditional use is for the operation as approved, any expansion or changes must come back to the Land Use Office for approval.
5. The Goat Dairy will comply with and remain in compliance with all State of Colorado Dairy requirements.

Mike Mitchell seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Public Comment: Francis Allen presents two plans for a project he is considering on his property near the river. The property being discussed is a parcel of land containing 8 acres. Mr. Allen had applied for and been granted an exempt division of land dividing this Eight (8) acres into four (4) two (2) acres parcels. The survey has not been recorded as of yet.

Mr. Allen is considering placing 2 residences on each of the 4 lots. One of the lots he plans to sell to another owner. Mr. Allen states that he has no interest in going through another Conditional Use process. He is here today to discuss his ideas and get some feedback from the Planning Commission. Mike Mitchell states that it is not the position of the Board to assist Mr. Allen is devising ways to circumvent the regulation of Rio Grande County. One of the plans Mr. Allen presented would require a variance from setbacks, as well as, a conditional use to build two residences of more than 1000 square feet each and each two acre parcel. Due to Mr. Allen’s desire to not go through a conditional use the Planning Commission recommends that he go with a plan that would meet the Rio Grande County Land Use and Building Codes. As well as the State of Colorado OWTS and Water Regulations.

With no further business meeting adjourned at 3:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dixie Diltz
Secretary of the Board