**CITY OF MORO**

**NOTES OF THE JULY 13, 2021**

### VACANT LAND IN MORO TOWN HALL

There was a community town hall Tuesday, July 13, 2021, 7:00 PM at Moro City Hall. The following were present: Council President Andy Anderson; Councilors Seth vonBorstel, Council James Alley via Teleconference, Erik Glover-City Administrator (CA), John English-Director of Public Works (DPW);Kirk Fatland City Planner with Tenneson Engineering, News Media- Steve Allen with the Condon Times Journal, Visitors – Scott and Donna Belshe, Mark Corey, Tyler Dearborn, Ray Mabe, Austen Martin, Kevin Stuart, Teleconference-Devyn Phillips, Steve Nelson, Liz Kennedy, Amy Huffman (Wasco) David Stelzer with Azure Standard/Azure Farms

The topic of discussion was vacant land in Moro, and property owner’s goals for that land.

***These are not official minutes, no decisions are made in a town hall. It is a forum for community members to share their thoughts. These notes are generalized reflections of discussion taken during the meeting.*** *If clarification or additional specific information is desired, please reference any available audio recording*

* Council President Anderson opened the meeting, explained the ground rules and advised it was subject to audio and/or video recording and broadcast.

1. Planner Kirk Fatland provided a summary of the goal of providing more housing in Moro, following the completion of a housing needs analysis an shared a map of current built, and currently undeveloped land in Moro. He provided a summary of the Urban Growth Boundary rules in Oregon, and a 20 year supply of land to meet expansion needs. Portland State University projects Moro’s population to decline by 5% over the next 20 years, and the City cannot expand until the internal areas are filled up. The goal of the meeting was to hear from landowners who hold vacant land, on their long term plans for that land.
2. Community member inquired about possible re-designation of a zoned agricultural lot in Moro, from 1 acre to less. It was indicated that may be possible.
3. Mark Corey mentioned that he owns a zoned agricultural lot, and it wouldn’t make sense to give up that, as it could never be got back. Planner Fatland advised it is not about convincing anyone, just sharing possible options, and hearing what property owner’s plans are for their vacant lands.

4. Council President Anderson shared that some people outside of the City have an interest in developing land for more housing, it would require an Urban Growth Boundary expansion. The City Council goal is new businesses, helping the school, more customers for existing businesses but wants to know the goals and desires of the citizens of Moro are.

5. Scott Belshe shares that there is nothing here for kids to work at, many of them leave the area due to challenges in employment and housing. He currently owns commercial zoned property and would be interested in working with the Council and developing it.

6. Council President Anderson shared that the current project of focus is the Vista Apex Pinkerton Lane sewer, but the Council is looking for ways they can help developers reduce barriers.

7. Councilor vonBorstel shared the problem is 77 acres within the Moro City Limits are currently undeveloped, and until the City uses that expansion is essentially impossible. If that land is never going to be developed and kept vacant, that presents a problem.

8. Bruce Melzer shared that infrastructure capacity, especially water system capacity, is a concern to growth. Moro has always had problems with Water supply. DPW English added that the City currently has the capability/capacity, but if the primary well goes down the City does not have the ability to supply demand with secondary wells, especially when it is hot. Councilor vonBorstel shared he didn’t think water was really an issue in Moro with current system.

9. Scott Belshe added that there is a lot of property not being used, he remembers previous years with a gas station and more business.

10. Ray Mabe shared he owned 16 acres in Moro, and is not opposed to developing the land, but he would be against a UGB expansion.

11. Austen Martin shared that he has put in 4 homes in Sherman County, he would do more, but a lot of the undeveloped land is not available for purchase.

12. Mark Corey shared that Sherman County recently purchased a vacant trailer previously owned by Larry Hoctor for $128k and tore it down, reducing available inventory of housing, and he wasn’t happy. He owns some land in Moro, and would be interested in selling it for the right price, or developing it with park models.

13. Brief discussion on what bare land lots are selling for in Sherman County right now, with $35,000-$40,000 for a standard 5000 sq foot lot being reasonable, and the fiber optic internet added a lot of value.

14. Mark Corey shared that it seems reasonable that people are going to have to go smaller on home sizes, and how creative can the City be in facilitating that. Councilor President Anderson shared a mix of small sizes, up to 1 acre or larger parcels would be needed to open up inventory on both sides of the spectrum. Austin Martin shared that a lot of people that move to the country want larger properties, if they wanted 5000 sq foot they could get that in other areas of the state with more amenities.

15. Brief discussion on Highway 97 speeds in Moro.

16. Ray Mabe shared that he understood roads, sidewalks, and infrastructure to be a requirement for land development in Moro, he understood that Apex/Pinkerton/Vista Area of Moro to have been approved without meeting these requirements, and a precedence was set with this move.

17. Council President Anderson clarified that the required installation of those items by a developer is why the City expects developers to pay for that, and not to have a repeat.

18. Austen Martin clarified that he has put 7 houses in, in Sherman County and would not have done it had he been expected to pay all those development costs, and what the problem was at Pinkerton drive?

19. Councilor vonBorstel shared that it had no sewer, and the streets were gravel and developments around the state have paved roads for a reason. On-site septic disposal is an issue because the City has maintenance and upgrade costs associated with existing sewer lagoons, and those costs need to be shared amongst those that live in Moro.

20. Austin Martin shared that he didn’t see a requirement to build paved roads making building homes feasible, due to the cost.

21. Further discussion on roundabouts on HWY 97/traffic speed.

22. Planner Fatland shared he learned it is possible for cities to swap land within the UGB for land outside of the UGB, but it would require a person to agree to that move/for the property to leave the City limits.

23. Brief discussion on workforce housing, Steven Allen with the Times Journal shared that Waste Connections in Gilliam County is doing some work there.

24. Brief discussion about the State of Oregon mandating accessory dwelling unit approval, Planner Fatland clarified that standard is only mandated for cities over 10,000 population.

25. David Stelzer with Azure Standard added that he would be interested in looking at some development work maybe apartments or workforce housing, on his land near Columbus, the aspect of having to pay for streets would be overwhelming.

26. Council President Anderson shared that there are still guidelines for development, the City cannot fund it, but it can target funds for infrastructure in areas that will do the most good, or technical resources to assist developers overcome barriers.

27. Councilor vonBorstel shared the City is interested in doing what it can to help, but wants to know what the citizens want to do to help the housing situation.

28. Steve Allen of the Times Journal shared that Senator Lynn Findley did some work on bills to help build housing in Ontario, cost of materials is a big barrier right now, but may be an option for the City to look at. Crime, cost of living and other factors are pushing people to leave big cities right now.

29. Councilor vonBorstel shared he purchased his house a number of years ago, and due to market conditions he can list it for a big return on that price due to people wanting to leave cities.

30. Austen Martin added it is hard to predict what will happen with markets in the future, and is a big risk for developers.

31. Councilor vonBorstel added that he encouraged landowners to attend the next council meeting, and bring other residents in.

32. Council President Anderson clarified that he also hopes the attendees would share the discussion with other residents and landowners, encourage them to come in and get a bigger turnout.

33. Scott Belshe inquired about how does a property owner know where zone changes occur on a property. Planner Fatland shared it typically is the property lines.

Meeting ended at 08:11