

City of Fruita – Livability Commission Meeting Minutes – April 25, 2024

Members in Attendance: Carmen Flores, Anna Harris, Al Condor, Tom McNamara, Jamie Vavra, John Rodwick, Chris Taggart, and Connie Overton

Members Absent: Jessica Ruffule, Dave Karisny, Terri Potent, and Shiela Adamson

Staff in Attendance: Ciara Amann, Shannon Vassen, Kimberly Preisser, and Jennifer Cupp

Guests in Attendance: Jean Rodwick and Jeannine Purser

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Tom McNamara, filling in for Dave Karisny as Chair for the Livability Commission, called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

II. Welcome and Introductions, Anna Harris

Anna introduced herself to the Commission. She said that she is a newer resident to Fruita, living here for about two years, as she and her husband moved from CA. She went back to school and got a master's degree in public administration. She had originally wanted to go into city government, but currently works for a company that develops city products. The Livability Commission then went around and introduced themselves.

III. Public Comment

Mr. McNamara opened the meeting for public comment. After seeing none, or anyone that wanted to provide a comment to the Livability Commission, Mr. McNamara closed this item.

IV. Review and Approve Minutes

a) Regular Minutes – March 21, 2024

There were no changes to the minutes from the March 21, 2024, meeting. Mr. Rodwick made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. McNamara seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Member Reports

No members had anything to report.

VI. Staff Report

a. Open Meeting Laws

Mr. Rodwick asked that the staff liaison, Shanno Vassen, provide an overview of the Open Meetings Law. Mr. Vassen shared that like the City Council, all City Boards and Commissions are required to follow Open Meetings Law, as no more than two members of the Commission can meet to discuss business without it being publicly noticed. Mr. Rodwick brought this up because Mr. McNamara, Ms. Potente, and Mr. Rodwick had coffee to discuss Livability Commission business which constituted a meeting and should have been noticed on the City's website. Open meeting laws require public notice and availability to public who wish to attend the meeting. Public notice must be at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Mr. Rodwick thanked staff for the update.

VII. Discussion Items

a. Officer and Position Appointments

Mr. Vassen let the group know that the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary positions are open. He gave an overview of the positions and asked for 1st and 2nd nominations. Mr. Rodwick nominated Mr. McNamara as Chair. Ms. Flores seconded the motion. The motion was carried with no opposition. Mr. Rodwick suggested asking Ms. Potente, who was absent, if she would be interested in becoming Vice Chair. Mr. Rodwick nominated Ms. Potente as Vice Chair and Ms. Overton seconded the motion. The motion was carried with no opposition. Mr. Rodwick nominated Ms. Overton as Secretary and Mr. McNamara seconded the motion. The motion carried with no opposition.

b. Overview and Discussion on Localism Efforts

Mr. Vassen let the group know that the localism committee was created to talk about the Localism efforts. Jeannine Purser let the group know that when the Downtown Advisory Board (DAB) had reached all its goals, the Council thought that it would be a good idea to focus on localism. They formed a committee to discuss what localism would do for the community. It was discussed and the committee thought that it was a great idea to form a Board. However, when looking at the by-laws it looked like there would be some overlap of ideas between the Livability Commission (LC) and a Localism Board. It was decided to bring the idea to the LC to see what the group thought of that idea. Mr. Rodwick said that the communication piece was one of the eight (8) domains of livability, and the LC focuses on that. Mr. Rodwick said that he didn't want to give up the communication piece. Ms. Purser said that the LC comes up with a lot of good ideas, but the Localism Board would be acting on the ideas. Ms. Harris asked if it was more of a branding marketing piece or was more of an outreach piece. Ms.

Amman said that it would be a lot of two-way communication about what is happening in Fruita. She said that the other piece is finding ways to get more locals to downtown events. Mr. McNamara said he thought it sounded like a broader domain than what the LC is doing now. He thought the Localism Board would focus on residents and getting information out to them. Mr. McNamara said that the agricultural community has been ignored. Ms. Purser said that the City Council really wanted people invested in what happens in Fruita and give them a way to have a voice. She said they would like a large representation of all areas of Fruita. Mr. McNamara asked how many people she saw on the Board. Ms. Purser said it could be anywhere from 12 -18. She said that it would be larger because you are trying to represent groups from all areas of Fruita. Mr. Rodwick said that he liked the idea and the energy that Ms. Purser was presenting. He said that he thought that the Localism Board needed to be its own Board and let the LC work cooperatively with the Localism Board. Mr. McNamara suggested having members from the Localism Board come to the LC meetings. Mr. Taggart said that it sounded like the Localism Board was well beyond the communication of the LC. He suggested having an LC member sit in on the Localism Board meetings to stay connected. Mr. Rodwick thought that the LC doesn't have the time to connect with all the underrepresented groups in Fruita. Ms. Purser said that no one wants to take anything from the LC and the new board would still allow for the LC to do communication in the way that they do, currently. Ms. Flores thought that as long as communication stays open and goes both ways, having two Boards would work. Mr. Rodwick moved that a Localism Board would be formed. Ms. Vavra seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously. Ms. Harris asked if the Localism Board sounds more like community ambassadors and Ms. Purser said yes, it would be more like that. Mr. McNamara asked how that worked with the Fruita Area Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Purser explained that the Chamber of Commerce deals with the local businesses and the new Localism Board will be focused on City of Fruita residents.

VIII. Other Items

- a. Mr. McNamara asked the City if they could print name tags. Mr. Rodwick suggested first names be in big letters and the last names in smaller letters.
- b. Mr. McNamara asked if the City owned corn hole boards. Ms. Amman said the City did.
- c. Mr. McNamara told the group that there is a bridge, the old Fruita Bridge, built in 1907, accessed by 17 ½ Rd, that led from Fruita to the Redlands, across the Colorado River. The new 340 bridge replaced it in 1967. The wooden pipes to provide fresh water from Glade Park to Fruita are attached to the bridge as well. The City of Fruita owns the bridge. The City spent a lot of money to shore up the bridge in 2007, as it was falling down and unsafe. A group of people would like to build a trail from 17 ½ Rd, across the bridge, and connecting it to a trail on the other side. Mr. McNamara has found several funding avenues to restore the bridge, repaint, replace timbers and joists, and knows it will be costly. He is thinking it could be around \$1 million dollars. It is part of the trails

plan of the City of Fruita. The hardest part is to convince the current landowner to vacate the property and allow for the trail. This could take a substantial amount of money. Mr. McNamara thinks it's about a two-year venture at this point. Mr. Rodwick asked if Mr. McNamara thought the LC should take this on as a project. Mr. McNamara said no, he thought the LC should help establish a trail and be part of the conversation or be an affiliate member. Ms. Harris asked if it was just a foot trail. Mr. McNamara said that it was originally a one lane road with a 60-foot-wide easement. Ms. Harris asked if the vision was just a hiking trail. Mr. McNamara said hiking for sure, but he said that the vision is a 15 ft wide compacted gravel trail for bikes as well. Mr. Rodwick said once it is finished a sign could be erected for the historical society. Mr. McNamara said that there is already one made and that it would bring tourists just to see it. Mr. Vassen said the Historic Preservation Board was talking about the bridge and that Councilor Miller had talked about bringing the discussion before Council. Mr. Vassen said that it is mostly on private property and that he thought that the City vacated the roadway.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.