

# Town of Twisp

## Council Minutes – 01/24/23

Mayor Ing-Moody called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

Council Members present:     Aaron Studen  
  Alan Caswell  
  Katrin Auburn  
  Hans Smith  
  Mark Easton

Council Member absent:

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Council Member Caswell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Request for Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

None

### **Public Comment Period: Up to Three Minutes**

Ellen Agaard commented the following (verbally and in writing):

In the coming year you will be considering proposals for several developments and annexations. As a future homeowner and resident of the Town of Twisp, I want to share three ideas that I hope will inform your decisions.

#### **1. Concerning zoning for density:**

Residential zoning in the Town of Twisp is codified by lot size. While the town code allows planned developments to modify lot sizes in order to include and preserve chunks of open space, the stated goal of R1, R2, and R3 zoning is to “promote the use, value and enjoyment of property, sleep, and repose, and the quality of the environment in all residential zoning districts.” (Ord. 620 § 5(1), 2010).

Lot size plays an important role in the character of a neighborhood; larger lots also provide environmental benefit, such as handling and filtering stormwater and snowmelt “on site.” Sometimes the land set aside for open space in a planned development cannot provide these environmental benefits (such as when the open space includes steep hillsides), and sometimes the trade-off for larger chunks of open space significantly changes the intended character of a neighborhood (such as when R1 zoning effectively becomes R2 or R3, due to reduction of lot size and inclusion of duplexes).

When deciding whether to approve planned developments that significantly alter the lot sizes and setbacks required by current zoning, Twisp’s planning commission and council need to consider the original goals of that zoning designation, whether the land set aside for open space truly contributes to those goals, and the dangers of creating a precedent for exceptions to lot size requirements.

#### **2. Considering housing affordability:**

More housing does not necessarily equal more affordable housing. Housing affordability depends on many complex and interdependent factors, and this is particularly true in the Methow Valley, where the cost of construction is high.

Some of the ways in which new housing costs can be reduced include the use of partial or complete off-site manufacturing, having a single developer build dwellings on multiple lots (savings in scale and timing of work), and public or private/non-profit subsidies for affordable housing, such as those provided through the housing trust and the county.

Reduced lot size has a relatively minor impact on housing cost for the individual homeowner. It is certainly cheaper for a developer to provide infrastructure (grading, roads, main water and sewer and electrical lines) that serves more lots, but those savings do not significantly decrease the eventual cost of a single home.

When deciding whether to approve a development or annexation, Twisp's planning commission and council need to thoroughly vet claims of affordability based solely on density, reduced lot size, or increased numbers of houses.

### **3. Concerning prioritization of developments and annexations:**

Twisp has limited water and sewer capacity, as well as limited capacity to plow roads, store snow, and maintain streets, sidewalks, trails, and parks. There may not be adequate town services for all of the development and annexations being proposed. Please weigh the overall benefits of proposed developments carefully, in comparison with one another, and prioritize those that provide the greatest benefit, including housing affordability, so that those limited town resources serve the greatest good.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my comments, and, as always, for the good governance and opportunity to participate in it.

Isabelle Spohn, Twisp resident, commented:

I became concerned about local air quality while living in Mazama in the 1970s. Most winter mornings when I drove into town, I saw blue sky - but there was a thick layer of woodsmoke hugging the ground over Winthrop. When the EIS addressing the huge Early Winters ski resort was released, there was no mention of increased woodsmoke. After public comments, the regional forester required that a supplemental EIS address pollution from woodstoves and fireplaces at the resort, and I wound up on that committee. Many drafts of a new air quality ordinance followed; but once the resort failed, officials' concerns over winter air quality disappeared. I'm concerned about significant development proposed for Twisp under the banner of much-needed housing. My concern is that Twisp is unprepared with any policy to mitigate damage to our air shed with increasing use of firewood. At least one of these development proposals states that the proponent is depending upon the Twisp Town Code for adequate mitigations - of which there seem to be none! I looked in the town code under: Health and Safety Vehicles and traffic Building and construction Environment And Land use regulations ....but didn't find much. Am I missing something? Frequent winter inversions in high mountain valleys trap smoke close to the ground during the coldest days of the year. Some of you are aware that woodsmoke contains carcinogenic compounds such as Benzo-A -Pyrene in addition to particulate matter we now experience nearly year-round from wood smoke. Consequently, other recreation-based western resort towns have developed policies to protect their air rather than eventually shutting down all burning during inversions. They consider needs of low-income residents and families who have traditionally used wood heat through the decades. Here are some examples: \*A date of registration for fireplaces and woodstoves. \*Wood cook stoves exempt for

the life of the owner if used for cooking and in place before registration dates. \*Fireplaces in only lobbies, restaurants, etc. and none allowed in new home construction after a certain date. \*Rules for storage of fuel for fireplaces and wood stoves to minimize burning wet wood. \* One wood stove per structure. \* Fireplaces inserts required after a certain date. \*Cap-and-trade policies relieving established wood users. It's time we confronted some of the realities surrounding the rapid construction now proposed for our town. Protection of clean air is one of those. Education is good, citizen action needed, and air purifiers wonderful - but, as with Climate action, policy is essential. At this point, I've seen no proponents or groups supporting such needed policy. Twisp could be a leader of such efforts - or at least protect its own residents.

## **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Ing-Moody reported that there is a lot of work happening at the Town and staff are busy, as is shared in our usual department head meetings. Additionally, staff have been busy preparing for the upcoming council retreat where many things will be discussed.

## **Staff Reports**

**Clerk's Office:** Clerk, Kilmer reminded that dog licenses are due no later than January 31, and that after that there will be a late fee added.

**Public Works:** Director Denham reported that Public Works has a lot going on and shared that he found out today from the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) that The Town had not been successful with a crack seal project grant application, but that he did have a conference call today with TIB in which they are willing to include Twisp in Winthrop's successful crack seal project grant application. Director Denham talked to Winthrop's Public Works director who stated that he is very interested in this proposal whether it is self-performed or from the small works roster. Denham shared that if this works that would be great news as TIB will have funded two projects this year. Snow removal is still the majority of the work that is being done by the department at this time, but they are finally catching up with other tasks. Public Works is working with police to take care of blind and trouble spots which will be started in the first part of next week. Vehicles on the street continue to be problem all over town. Director Denham reported that they are getting worse not better, even with the widening of streets as snow is being cleared. He said that they are trying their best to keep right of ways and alleys clear, but people aren't making the effort to park off the street. People are parking their cars on the street instead of in their own parking spots off street as snow accumulates, which is causing a major safety issue as crews are out with loaders and plows in the early hours trying to plow.

Interim Chief Sheehan reported that anything we have going on externally mirrors Public Works. The issues we are running into are the same. The Police Department is going to start giving written notices this week and then moving on to towing if cars continue to park in right of ways and on the street as it is a major hazard. Officer Purtell finished the FTO academy last week and is now certified as a field training officer. The Police Department now has a police clerk which is very helpful. There are also a lot of internal housekeeping and compliance issues which are now being taken care of.

Mayor Ing-Moody reiterated public works and police concerns, stating that it is never a desirable position to have a lot of snow to manage all at once and asked for community cooperation. She expressed that with the mountains of snow needing to be moved by staff, as more snow continues to fall, she asks that citizens be aware, patient, and do their part in remedying the problem of snow accumulation, slick roads, and poor access. She noted that with new snow coming down combined with the fluctuating temperatures resulting in thawing and freezing, the snow this year has posed some new challenges to snow removal operations.

The biggest issue we are facing is that instead of removing piles of snow from personal property citizens are parking on the street which causes Public Works to be unable to clear the streets properly, which in turn causes complaints and safety concerns. She asked the public to please do their part. Mayor Ing-Moody stated that regarding notices and warnings being placed on vehicles, they will be placed on all vehicles that are parking where they are not supposed to. The intention is not to ticket but to bring awareness to how important this really is. Parking in unauthorized areas can cause someone to get hurt because they cannot use the road or walkway properly. It is code that snow removal be done by any means on private property by the property owner. The Town will keep doing what they can to keep roads cleared and safe and asks property owners to do the same.

Interim chief Sheehan stated that if there are people in town who are relying on street parking and don't have anywhere else to go, to contact local contractors and others that can plow a parking spot for residents to park their car. It would help Public Works do their job better as well as make the roads safer for everyone.

### **Commission/Committee/Board Reports**

**Council Member Caswell** reported that he attended the Planning Commission meeting. There was not a quorum, so it was a round table. They were mostly wondering where the Town Council is on the sign code and if they have had time to review the draft. They were also wondering when the public hearing will be. The moratorium for nightly rentals cannot be renewed. They have been speaking with towns such as Leavenworth and Langley to see how they handle nightly rentals.

Council Member Easton asked if Planner Danison said what options there were when the moratorium runs out.

Council Member Caswell responded that he did not but that a plan of action is needed.

Mayor Ing-Moody stated that there an extension of six months to the moratorium as has been authorized by Town Council. We shared that the town is awaiting a draft housing action plan to be completed, which may provide some guidance. The current extension goes into May so it may be a tight time frame.

Council Member Smith asked if staff would be looking at the code.

Mayor Ing-Moody responded that it is the intention that the Mayoral Twisp Economic Revitalization Committee (TERC) review the sign code, as it comprises of business owners that have interest in the Town, which could help with thoughts and comments to assist and inform the Council further regarding impacts on the implementation of the code.

**Council Member Smith** reported the he attended the Twisp Airport Advisory Board (TAAB) meeting. There was a small agenda but long discussion. They reviewed crack sealing for 2023 which is semi dependent on TIB funding, they are still working on a plan for this year. Hanger lease rates were discussed and the TAAB would like to bring a presentation before Council at a future meeting.

**Council Member Easton** reported that he attended the Chamber of Commerce retreat last week. It was a very productive meeting. They decided to put term limits on the board of three consecutive two-year terms. Board members that have already done this have a set term limit. The Chamber also talked about the roles of marketing and event coordinators and possibly separating them. They are planning on having more events going forward. Council Member Easton stated that it was a good meeting and feels they have matured and are moving into a new phase.

**Council Member Studen** reported that there was not a Parks and Rec meeting due to lack of quorum. He did attend the Friends of the Pool meeting and reported that they have contracted with a local non-profit consultant to develop a capital campaign for a new pool. The meeting last week had thirty to forty people in attendance and the discussion is available by email. They talked about things like infrastructure,

location, and funding sources. Friends of the Pool is wanting to hire an Executive Director. There is a job posting out now. They are also looking for office space. Friends of the Pool is also looking into the possibility of a public facilities district which is funded by other means which could include a 2% sales tax increase.

**Mayor Ing-Moody** attended the Methow Watershed Council (MWC) meeting where they did elections for the open positions, as well as for Chair and Vice-Chair. She was happy to say that a new Chair has been appointed, which is Jean Bodeau. Mayor Ing-Moody will stay on as Vice- Chair. Council typically conducts interviews of newly elected officials; they will be invited to the next Council Meeting.

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

### **Presentation: Clean Air Methow Art Installation- Liz Walker**

Liz Walker presented a slide show before the Council for the art exhibit called “The Fifth Season” asking that it be set up in the Civic Building; moving it for a more permanent installation from the Winthrop library.

Council Member Easton stated that he is assuming the audio portion would not be part of it. He also asked if the cost of installation would be on the Town or Clean air Methow.

Liz responded that there will be printed cards that would be put on the wall next to the portraits; the audio is also available online. She stated that Clean Air Methow currently does not have the funding for installation.

Council Member Smith stated that they would need to work with Public Works to ensure proper installation.

Council Member Easton made a motion to approve the art installation, Council Member Auburn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Discussion/Action: Mike Maples/RedTail Development LLC Annexation Request – Parcel 3322170256**

Planner Danison introduced the letter requesting annexation referred to as Mill Hill, the hill above mill property. Maples is requesting an annexation of two acres and a property line adjustment. The letter is basically for a yes or no from Council. They plan on working on the boundary line adjustment to add to the Town.

Council Member Smith had observations on the letter. He asked if the BLA would change ownership to Lloyd, Planner Danison responded that yes it would. Council Member Smith stated that looking at this annexation request, it is different from another one that has been brought forward as that one has a planned development on it. He would like to have a committee discussion and bring that forward to Mike Maples so that he can understand what the Town is asking.

Planner Danison stated that he will get a meeting set up with Mr. Maples.

### **Action: Planning Commission Appointment Position #4- John Battle**

John Battle stated that he has served on the commission for six years and has been Chair for last four. He feels that he understands the role that the commission plays in Town. He has missed very few meetings and knows that Twisp has many upcoming challenges and would like to continue serving.

Council Member Easton asked, since we have an annexation with Orchard Hills property and Blackbirds, do you feel at this point we would be better served with a full-time Town Planner or part time? Mr. Battle stated that there is an awful lot of work to be done in planning and that Kurt cannot be replaced. We have a good team and would like to think that we can work through it. He stated that he knows budgets are limited and having a full-time planner would be a big step. He suggested we work with what we have for the time being.

Council Member Smith made a motion to appoint John Battle. Council Member Studen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action: Planning Commission Appointment Position #2- Jasmine Minbashian**

Jasmine Minbashian stated that she has learned a lot over the past year and feels like she has gotten a better grasp of how it all works and sees the important work ahead. She is really excited to dig into that. She stated she has a real desire to look at all the plans together and how it impacts the Town and said that the work gets her excited as it entails creativity and problem solving.

Council Member Caswell made a motion to appoint Jasmine Minbashian, Council Member Auburn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action: Twisp Airport Advisory Board (TAAB) Appointment Position #1- Derek Van Marter**

Van Marter stated that he is excited to continue working with the Town as a member of TAAB.

Council Member Smith made a motion to appoint Derek Van Marter. Council Member Easton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action: Twisp Airport Advisory Board Appointment (TAAB) Position #2- Dan Kuperberg**

Council Member Smith made a motion to appoint Dan Kuperberg. Council Member Auburn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action: Parks & Recreation Commission Appointment Position #3- Sandy Liman**

Sandy Liman stated that there is lots going on that he is excited to be a part of it all.

Council member Auburn made a motion to appoint Sandy Liman. Council Member Studen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Action: Parks & Recreation Commission Appointment Position #4- Andrew Brandstetter**

Andrew Brandstetter stated that he has a personal interest in skate park and would like to continue to be on the commission. He is excited about everything happening.

Council Member Auburn made a motion to appoint Andrew Brandstetter. Council Member Studen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda**

- Accounts Payable/Payroll

Vouchers audited and certified by the auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing, which has been made available to the Town Council. The following voucher/checks are approved for payment by a majority vote on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2023.

Accounts Payable	Checks #37577-37610	\$280,864.96	01/24/23
Payroll	EFT Trans #50-59	\$12,232.38	01/24/23

Council Member Easton moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Caswell and passed.

**Adjournment**

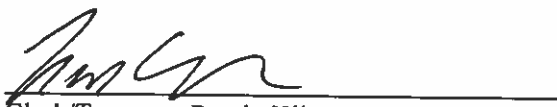
There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Ing-Moody adjourned the meeting at 6:48 pm.

**APPROVED:**



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Mayor Soo Ing-Moody

**ATTEST:**



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Clerk/Treasurer Randy Kilmer