

**New Castle Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting  
Wednesday, September 28, 2016, 7:00p.m., Town Hall**

**Call to Order**

Commission Chair Chuck Apostolik called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Present    Chair Apostolik  
              Commissioner Borgard  
              Commissioner Gates  
              Commissioner Metzger  
              Commissioner Ruggles

Absent     Commissioner Urnise

Also present at the meeting were Town Planner Tim Cain, Deputy Town Clerk Mindy Andis and members of the public.

**Meeting Notice**

Deputy Town Clerk Mindy Andis verified that her office gave notice of the meeting in accordance with Resolution TC-2016-1.

**Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest.

**Citizen Comments on Items NOT on the Agenda**

There were no citizen comments.

**Items for Discussion**

**Discussion of Revisions to the Town's Comprehensive Plan.**

Mr. Doug Dodson presented his report to the commission. Mr. Dodson summarized the discussion from the July 13, 2016 meeting by stating that the intent of the plan was to establish a path for community growth that, while accommodating new housing, businesses, services, jobs, parks/open spaces, non-motorized access systems, transportation, environmental protection and community infrastructure, would ensure that growth and change would not adversely impact the small-town character and community values that residents wanted to preserve.

The Comprehensive Plan also stated that it should be reviewed and updated every five years. More than five years had passed since the Plan was adopted. The Planning Commission found that the Plan should undergo an assessment to ensure that it could continue to guide growth and development in the community in a favorable way. The purpose of the document was to provide that general assessment of the Plan and to make recommendations for the next steps to implement the recommendations in the Plan.

The Commission believed that New Castle had been for some time, and continued

to be a bedroom community, with many residents working in Glenwood Springs or elsewhere in the Roaring Fork Valley. This affected the stability of the local tax base as much of the disposable income appeared to be spent outside of the New Castle economy. Further, it diminished peoples' attachment to the community. The lives and work of many of the residents were focused on Glenwood Springs or the resorts in the upper part of the Roaring Fork Valley. The commission believed that a revival of the growth pressures could move New Castle in a positive direction, one that was more consistent with the 2050 Vision. The economics of the Roaring Fork Valley, including high property values and limits on growth in the upper valley communities, will continue to push growth further down the Valley, adding to the growth pressures on New Castle. The commission also found that growth and traffic congestion throughout Glenwood Springs would likely continue to become more problematic over time, further adding the growth pressures in and around New Castle. Because of those factors, New Castle will have the opportunity to move beyond its current bedroom community status to one where residents can live and increasingly work and participate. It is likely that the community will continue to have difficulty retaining and seeing expansions in existing local businesses without a critical mass of the population that is connected to the community that works and spends locally.

The Commission felt that the Town must focus on strategies and actions aimed at attracting businesses that can provide primary (living wage) jobs for current and future residents. With that in mind, the commission determined that it was time to reassess the land use and zoning plans and annexation policies that came out of the 2009 effort to identify the best possible and realistic locations for business development/ job producing uses that are consistent with the desired future. The commission felt that it should be a high priority.

While mixed land uses continue to be compatible with the 2050 Vision, the town should gain a better understanding of the residential housing needs that will best serve the community going forward while growth pressures remained calm. In the future, New Castle will likely offer the most affordable supply of housing in the Roaring Fork and nearby Colorado River Valleys. However, the commission agreed that simply providing affordable housing for those that are committed to up valley communities, through schools, work, socially and for other reasons, may not be in the community's best interest. The commission felt that while there must be a range of affordable housing options, the town should proactively identify and pursue with developers those options that will attract those people (future residents) that will contribute to the community in the future. The commission also believed that the Town, working with developers, should begin to gain a better understanding of how "affordability" can best be accomplished in the context of mixed-use development, traditional neighborhood development, and the standard practices of housing development that occurred in the past in New Castle. The strategy should be a priority going forward.

The community's main intersection, Castle Valley Boulevard and Highway 6, continued to be one of the most significant problems. It does not present the desired community character and image. Adequate information in a clear and easy to understand format is not offered at or near the intersection to provide direction and information about the community. A detailed plan should be developed to

address the concern. Also, the land use and zoning plan developed in 2009 should be re-evaluated to ensure that it was providing the best possible direction for improving the community character and image, providing appropriate information about the community for both residents and visitors and contributed appropriately to the overall economic development of the town. The effort may require interim steps that should commence soon. The overall plan for the area should anticipate past developer commitments for future improvements to the roadways and understanding the triggers for those future improvements.

Consideration should be given to taking proactive steps to grow the Town's tax base to support residential and economic growth, while allowing the Town to provide a proper range and amount of services that will maintain/contribute to the quality of life in the community. The commission had the following concerns:

1. Without supporting business development New Castle will remain a bedroom community.
2. A considerable amount of potential tax dollars is spent outside of the community. That will continue unless there is a better means to capture those tax dollars locally. The Town might consider measures that will cause it to either capture retail sales locally or gain tax revenues for expenditures made elsewhere.
3. The Town might reconsider current Town policies that may restrict some tax revenue growth that could otherwise be possible immediately.

The Commission felt the town had begun to build momentum in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Town had made significant trail improvements since 2009 and there were plans to continue to build upon the success:

1. The construction and improvement of trails in and near New Castle will have a significant, positive impact on the community in the future.
2. The pedestrian bridge across the interstate and the river had been a big success.
3. The New Castle Trails Group was working on the Town Loop Trail, which will be a significant improvement.
4. There will be a connection to Glenwood Springs needed in the future – the Lower Valley Trails Group (LoVa) trail with a connection between River Park and the community north of the interstate will have a major positive effect.
5. Continue to work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to improve access to public lands and for trail improvements on the public lands.
6. The completion of the Roaring Fork Transit Authority (RFTA) Park and Ride near the intersection of Castle Valley Boulevard and Highway 6.
7. Downtown Streetscape has been completed. The improvements included curbing

and drainage, landscape planters and historic lights.

8. The Town organizes numerous community events, the objective of which is to bring together residents to create community cohesiveness.

Mr. Dodson felt that the commission's next actions and steps should be the following:

- a. Proactively identify and pursue with developers and property owners those options that will attract the type and amount of residential growth (future residents) that will contribute to the community's future. The Commission found that the Town, working with developers, should start now to better understand how "affordability" can best be accomplished, whether in the context of mixed-use development, traditional neighborhood development, or within the standard housing development practices that have occurred in the past. The Town should work with local developers to develop a special area concept plan that integrated affordable traditional neighborhoods into the community fabric of New Castle, as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan, and evaluate current zoning and subdivision regulations of the town to determine if new techniques are possible to further promote affordable housing in the community.
- b. Working with local businesses and property owners and with citizen input, New Castle should develop a special area concept plan for the community gateway (Castle Valley Boulevard-Highway 6 intersection) addressing existing and future land use and the configuration of development that will best promote community values and contributes appropriately to the overall economic development of the community. The plan should address congestion and ways to provide appropriate information about the community for both residents and visitors. The commission should recommend, both interim and long-term actions and financing strategies be developed.
- c. The town should develop a special area concept plan for the improvement of the Colorado River Corridor through New Castle. The plan should consider both periphery and in-river improvements (e.g., water park), and provide a plan of development for a variety of safe uses and attractions for residents and that are easily visible from I-70 to help attract travelers and tourists to the community
- d. In support of involved citizens, the town should continue to actively pursue construction and improvement of trails in and near New Castle, including working with the BLM and others to improve access to the public lands and actively pursuing a connection to Glenwood Springs.
- e. The town should continue to actively pursue a strategy for creating a community brand, defining the community's image, opportunities and vision to current residents and both potential residents and businesses. The brand, as it is developed, should drive the actions for improving the community, from the way the town met the needs of the residents to the ways the Town

will entice new residents or businesses to New Castle. With a community brand the Town should develop the means to actively market New Castle to the intended customer base. The work must be well connected to all of the work in the action plan. A branding and marketing budget should be a component of a community investment strategy.

- f. The town should develop a community investment strategy, as part of its traditional municipal budgeting; identifying ways the Town will gather and invest in on-going community improvement beyond its normal service requirements and capital commitments. The strategy should also channel appropriate available capital, (e.g., financial, social, intellectual or human), to create partnerships and joint ventures and establish a variety of other actions focused on "the Big Picture." It should be a priority.
- g. Town council should consider potential options for initiating expansion of the local tax base in the near future to support the action plan, from buying local educational campaigns, improving information about what New Castle has to offer its residents and ways to capture tax dollars that are now being spent outside of the community. It should also be a priority.

After some discussion, the commission agreed to first focus on affordable housing and sales tax revenue to help sustain the cost of the town's infrastructure for the increase of development.

They agreed that the trails system had begun to be developed, therefore it could be tabled until a later point in the comprehensive plan update. They also agreed that in regard to the downtown, the issue was more about maintaining or preservation of the downtown rather than development of the downtown. The Historic Preservation Commission would handle preservation issues.

#### **Items for next Planning and Zoning Agenda**

Discussion of revision to the town's comprehensive plan.

\*Discuss affordable housing

\*Discuss sales tax revenue

#### **Commission Comments and Reports**

There were no comments or reports.

#### **Staff Reports**

There were no reports.

#### **Review Minutes from Previous Meeting**

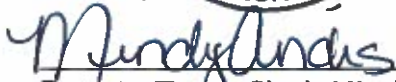
**Motion: Commission Chair Apostolik made a motion to approve the July 13, 2016, meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Gates seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**Motion: Commissioner Metzger made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commission Chair Apostolik seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:53p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



  
Deputy Town Clerk Mindy Andis, CMC

  
Planning and Zoning Commission Chair  
Chuck Apostolik