

Manti City Council Meeting

MINUTES

OCTOBER 10, 2019

7:00 PM

MANTI CITY BUILDING

50 SOUTH MAIN STREET

MEETING CALLED BY	Mayor Korry L. Soper
TYPE OF MEETING	Meeting with Merchants Concerning Changes to Commercial Zoning
ATTENDEES	Mayor: Korry Soper Councilmembers: Darren Dyreng, Jason Maylett, Jason Vernon and Mary L. Wintch Administrator: Kent Barton
ABSENT	Councilmember Gary Chidester
WELCOME	Mayor Soper

Agenda Items

ITEM 1	Discussion Concerning Proposed Changes to the Commercial Zoning
<p>The Mayor opened the meeting by reading the following statement:</p> <p>Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen –</p> <p>We welcome you and thank you for taking time to meeting with us concerning zoning in our downtown district.</p> <p>As I said in my opening comments at our hearing 3 weeks ago, one the findings of our 2016 General Plan was that in order to protect our central business district, we needed to develop reasonable zoning restrictions, in order to protect property owners, their businesses and the character of our downtown.</p> <p>Since our plan was adopted, over the roughly past 2 years, the Planning Commission & City Council worked with a professional planner to develop a proposal. Prior to considering a vote to adopt the proposal, we called the Public Hearing to take input.</p> <p>Not only did we learn at the hearing that the proposal was very unpopular, we were also accused of not being “transparent” with the business of the city, even though every meeting we have held on this matter, as well as other city matters, have been publically noticed, and each of you received an invitation to the hearing in your utility bill.</p> <p>The purpose of the public hearing was to take comment concerning the zoning proposal so we could make changes or adjustments. For our efforts we were called back stabbers,</p>	

shameful, and told that we were both insults and embarrassments to the community we serve. Finally, we were ridiculed one by one, as we were asked, “if we even worked in Manti City”.

I’ve thought a lot about that question in particular since the public hearing – and if I could answer again I would say: “yes, I do work in Manti”.

- I have worked on this council for 14 years
- I worked on the volunteer Fire Department for 10 years.
- Along with my wife I worked as the youth city council advisor for 12 years.
- And as the Christmas Light Parade Chair for 15 years.

These people sitting here beside me also work in Manti. In addition to their combined 31 years of service on this Council they have served:

- On the Planning Commission
- The Board of Adjustment
- The Fire Department
- The 4th of July Committee
- And Pageant Dinner Committee, to name a few

Obviously, we don’t serve for any appreciation we receive. We serve, because we love this community and because we want Manti to be successful and to continue to offer a great quality of life for its citizens. And, believe it or not, we also want our merchants to be successful. We believe that one role we can play in helping you to be successful is bringing people to town, whether as visitors or new residents – so that they will find their way into your places of business and become your customers.

And, while we may not receive your appreciation for the work we do, we believe that we deserve the same common respect that you would give to any other potential customer.

Zoning is one of the most difficult projects any city council will work on. We understand this – there are competing interests in zoning, whether it be commercial or residential. Most people are inherently uncomfortable with change.

Zoning change has been very difficult in our community. In 2007, under Mayor Natasha Madsen’s leadership, our City Council, which at the time included myself, Larry Lund, Kent Barton, Diane Keeler and Alan Justesen, passed a very good and comprehensive updated ordinance, which by the way, included more restrictions in the commercial zone than our current proposal does.

Due in large part to protests with the large animal restrictions in the ordinance, it was struck down by a referendum vote and the entire piece of legislation was lost.

One thing I want to make perfectly clear about our proposal is that it changes nothing in the way you currently do business. None of you will be required to move out of your business or change your windows or paint or anything else as rumors have suggested. Your businesses have grandfather protection.

What the proposal does mean (if adopted) is that if someone were to purchase property adjoining your property, that there would a set of reasonable restrictions they would have to work within as to not detract from your businesses or properties.

Because our proposal also deals with newly created commercial zones at the north and south entrances to the city we referred to the current commercial zone as the C1 or Historic Commercial Zone.

Perhaps this was a mistake. There is nothing in our proposal about historic buildings or historic protections. Although we recognize that property owners who have made their own efforts to preserve the character of our Main Street such as Main Auto, Candies on Main, Manti Mercantile and others, certainly add to the charm and character of our downtown district.

We believe that reasonable zoning restrictions will enhance your property values and potential much more than they will limit or hurt you. That being said – and as I said at the recent hearing – we are willing to take a step back to seek your input and evaluate your comments about the proposal.

We are not going to “re-hear” the proposal tonight but what I am going to open the floor for questions. And then, I’m going to give each one of you a copy of our proposal and a copy of the commercial section of the 2007 proposal. I invite you to then study these, mark them up and get your comments back to us before October 25th. **Tell us what protections if any you want.**

We will then take the issue up again and using your comments decide what, if anything to do in the Downtown Commercial Zone. If you all want a two-word ordinance “**No Restrictions**” to continue, to govern downtown, then perhaps that what you’ll get.

If we see that there is some support from you all for some reasonable restrictions, we’ll give this another go and using your input redraft the proposal and schedule another public hearing on the matter at a future date once that is completed.

The Mayor then invited any who desired to ask a question or to make a comment to come forward.

Linda Nielsen said that she appreciates the work the council does, but the problem with the proposal is the restrictions. She said a better proposal would say “suggest and encourage” rather than “shall and must”.

David Tibbs said we need to capitalize on the uniqueness of our city’s character. He said he likes the proposal and that it would protect our downtown area. He said unique communities are becoming huge draws for tourists.

Dave Hall said we need to develop a vision for the city and that he supports zoning restrictions - that it actually presents an opportunity for the city and its businesses. He also suggested creating a theme such as “don’t just visit, experience Manti”. He also recommended engaging a designer to help with ideas for store fronts.

Kay Jensen said she is confused why we want to change something that is already beautiful. She said a committee of business owners to help make the rules, rather than some man from Provo.

Todd Miller said it’s tough to make a business go in Manti. He said several areas of the proposal concern him such as the zero set back from the street. He said elected leaders need to develop thicker skin referring to criticisms made at the previous hearing, and said that zoning regulations should encourage investment rather than detract from it.

Michele Serra said she wants to see Manti stay a “hometown” with no high-density housing. She said we don’t want a lot of people moving here. She suggested angled parking on Main Street and said with need to develop areas for children to play.

Paul Cox said the parking lane should be lined for more efficient parking. He said we need to start thinking like a community and “work together”. He said we need to start looking for ways to bring people here and we need to support our downtown businesses. He said if we attract people to visit and move to our town, business will follow.

John Jensen said our code should say “suggest” not “must”. He then went on to say how difficult is to run a retail business in Manti and remarked that he has more people come into his store to process Amazon.com returns than to shop. He said “I need more people from town to shop in my store”.

Travis Miller said I appreciate the work you do but we need to have thicker skins in our discussions and not be so quick to take offense. He went on to say the front and side setbacks and parking requirements in the proposal are problematic for his business. He said otherwise he does like a lot of what’s in the proposal.

Gerald Christiansen said that his remarks from the earlier meeting concerning that most of the councilmembers don’t even work in Manti weren’t meant to belittle but rather to illustrate that you don’t understand how difficult it is to make a living in Manti. He apologized that his comments were taken otherwise. He then said that he doesn’t cater to tourists but to citizens. He added that he believes we need some zoning restrictions but what is proposed doesn’t work for businesses such as his and others in that area.

Jeff Killian, Planning Commission Chair, said that the thought occurred to him during the discussion that the scope of the “zero setback” area could possibly be narrowed to the two blocks between 100 North and 100 South streets. He then stated that zoning restrictions need to be specific and that “suggestions” in an ordinance mean nothing and that zoning requires specific rules. Then, referencing the overall feeling that the businesses had communicated about being left out of the discussion he strongly recommended that the business re-establish their Chamber of Commerce, which could become a conduit of information and an advocate for business interests with the city.

CONCLUSIONS

Mayor Soper then thanked all for attending and reminding them to take a copy of the proposal and get their written comments back on or before October 25th. He then adjourned the meeting.

Korry L. Soper, Mayor

Kent Barton, Recorder/Administrator