

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTIES OF POTTER §
AND RANDALL §
CITY OF AMARILLO §

On July 23, 2014, the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Advisory Committee met in a scheduled session at 12:00 P.M. in Conference Room in 306, on the third floor of City Hall, 509 East 7th Avenue, Amarillo, Texas, with the following members present:

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED
Bill Chudej	No	26	17
Bob Juba, Chair	Yes	26	19
Wes Knapp	Yes	26	20
Eddie Scott	No	26	19
Howard Smith, Vice Chair	Yes	26	25
Dana Walton	Yes	26	18
Milford Burrell	No	23	20
Steve Rogers	Yes	10	8
Mark Meister	Yes	5	4

CITY STAFF:

Kelley Shaw, Planning Director
 Kathleen Collins, Planner II

Mr. Juba opened the meeting, established a quorum, and conducted the consideration of the following items beginning with ITEM 1.

ITEM 1: Approve the minutes of the Committee’s June 11, 2014 meeting

Mr. Juba asked if there were any questions on the previous meeting’s minutes. Hearing none, a motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Rogers, seconded by Mr. Knapp, and carried unanimously.

ITEM 2: Discuss and consider proposed amendments to the City of Amarillo Landscape Ordinance

Mr. Juba invited Mr. Shaw to speak on this item. Mr. Shaw stated that with a recent focus to become more water efficient, City staff believed it necessary to review and possibly amend the current Landscape Ordinance. He also mentioned that staff reviewed the method used to calculate required landscaping for a site and have created a more logical way to calculate this requirement. Along with an alternative way to calculate landscape requirements, staff also focused on the need to decrease water runoff and encourage water conservation. Staff believes the proposed ordinance offers more flexibility for the business owners whereas half of the required landscaping could be non-living.

Mr. Shaw noted that City staff held several public meetings where Amarillo citizens were able to ask questions and give feedback on the proposed changes. Mr. Shaw noted that staff contacted several landscape contractors and architects to obtain a price for both drought tolerant planting and sod. He stated that they were hesitant in quantifying a value as there are multiple variables

to think about when creating a value. In general, the cost for xeric installation will be greater than the cost for sod installation. However generally, maintenance cost associated with xeric-type plants is cheaper, due to less water and fertilizer.

Mr. Shaw reviewed the latest draft of the Landscape Ordinance with the Committee. Mr. Shaw noted that a question of “Are the requirements too technical or difficult to understand?” was brought up several times. Ms. Walton mentioned that it is beneficial to have a list of what is required. The specific list will assist City staff in their review process and it will give the property owner a better idea of what their final product will look like.

Mr. Juba requested that this ordinance be enforced to a higher standard than the current ordinance. Mr. Shaw mentioned this comment was given several times during public meetings as well as from City Council members and it will become more of a priority.

Mr. Shaw stated that City staff has been discussing points related to turf grass. The intent of the ordinance is to encourage water conservation. However, we wanted to make the ordinance flexible for business owners. He mentioned if a property owner wanted to install Kentucky blue grass, they could, but points will be deducted and they would need to make up those points in another area. Warm season grasses are listed on the recommended plant list, so property owners wishing to install these varieties could potentially obtain over half of their required points. All Fescues—short and tall varieties—are cool season grasses, however, local commercial growers and landscape architects have stated that tall Fescues are just as water efficient as warm season grasses. Fescue is a very popular grass in the Amarillo area. Mr. Shaw stated that we don’t want to penalize a property owner for planting tall Fescue if it is water efficient, but we aren’t comfortable placing this type of turf on the recommended plant list. Our recommendation would be to eliminate tall turf-type Fescue from the cool season grass category. Property owners who install this type of grass would not be docked points however, they would not receive any points either.

Mr. Juba asked for additional questions or a motion to recommend this ordinance be submitted to City Council. Mr. Knapp moved to recommend the Landscape Ordinance revisions to City Council, Ms. Walton seconded the motion. This motion was approved.

ITEM 3: Discuss Comprehensive Plan and Coordinated Planning Initiative

Mr. Juba asked Mr. Shaw to discuss this item. Mr. Shaw mentioned this Committee was formed to oversee the progress of implementing the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 2010. He noted that City staff has recently been reorganized to include all development-related departments under one umbrella, now called Development Services. He noted Mr. Bob Cowell, Assist City Manager, has created several initiatives to address challenges related with growth and development of Amarillo. One specific initiative he has created is coordinated planning. Mr. Shaw stated this program is designed to coordinate projects that deal with community development, including infill, revitalizing neighborhoods, and new development. He stated the goal is to create a coordinated planning program that reaches the community needs and aspirations and develop a program that ensures the delivery of necessary planning functions, services, and infrastructure to meet those needs and aspirations. He noted that a schedule of short-term and long-term projects will likely be created. Mr. Shaw stated the first project will be pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. He noted the Amarillo Traffic Commission has received numerous comments from a group of citizens regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety. Therefore, a subcommittee comprised of members from Amarillo’s Traffic, Parks and Recreation, and Planning and Zoning Commissions and City staff are reviewing current hike and bike plans and specifically Rails to Trails parkway.

ITEM 4: Public Forum: Comments from interested citizens on matters directly pertaining to City policies, programs or services

None were present.

Kelley Shaw
Planning Director