

City of Fruita – Livability Commission
Minutes – January 18, 2024, at 4:00 pm
Fruita Civic Center – North Council Chambers

Members in Attendance – Al Condor, John Rodwick, Terri Potente, Dave Karisny, Tom McNamara, Connie Overton, Jeaninne Purser, Kimberly Preisser, Jessica Ruffle, Sheila Adamson, and Jamie Vavra

Members Absent: Chris Taggart

Staff In Attendance: Shannon Vassen and Mike Bennett

Guests: Jean Rodwick

I. Call to Order/Roll Call:

Dave Karisny, Chair for the Livability Commission, called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

II. Welcome and Introductions – Amy Miller, new Council Liaison for Livability Commission

Dave welcomed City Councilor Amy Miller to the group. Councilor Miller will be the new Council Liaison for the Livability Commission. Councilor Purser sits on 3 boards and Councilor Miller’s Board was disbanded, so the decision was made to have Councilor Miller replace Councilor Purser. Councilor Purser wanted the group to know that it was a difficult decision for her to leave this board as she has truly enjoyed working with the group, but she thinks Councilor Miller will be a great addition. Dave then asked the group to introduce themselves to Councilor Miller and each member introduced themselves.

III. City Manager Report

City Manager Mike Bennett wanted to say thank you to all the board members for their service and their accomplishments. Mike said the way the City of Fruita Boards are structured allows one staff liaison and one council liaison to serve on every board. What this board has accomplished in a short period of time, especially with the Adopt a Trail/Street program, has been a great success. Mike then went over a flyer on the budget as well as the transmittal letter that he writes for the budget each year. He said there are some large expenditures in the 2024 budget. He also said there are a lot of economic developments coming this year. The Beach property development could include river access, open space areas, commercial development, there won’t be a surf park, but rather river restoration. The City is looking at what fits the goals of the

community. The City purchased 169 S. Mulberry and is negotiating a turnaround development. Currently there is overflow parking, enough space for 20 cars, in the lot. The City got involved due to its location within the downtown corridor. There are also several art projects and parks projects, including the overhaul of Reed Park, with the addition of new and replacement ADA amenities. This is also an election year. Monday is the last day to turn in a packet to run for City Council. As of today, there are 6 people running for 3 Council seats. We are also focusing a lot of time on internal efforts. One of the main focuses is experience over transactions. City Staff are trying to keep positive interactions within the City by maintaining trust and building more trust with the public. One way we are doing this is by working to make simple transactions special. We are also making some process improvements. We are trying to make things easier for the customer by improving processes that are more antiquated. We want everyone to be able to speak to a person for help if that is what they want, but we also want to provide online or virtual processes for those who prefer to do business that way. We have also brought the building dept in-house and that has helped a lot. In one year, we processed over 700 building permits, and we offer same day inspections as well as help people walk through the process. With this comes some huge communication processes, both internal and external. The City has implemented a WIG process. The WIG process hastens and individuals making a weekly communication commitment. Teams meet weekly to hold each other accountable. Results are also measured through various surveys during the year. We now have a communications department and brought in another person to do Parks and Rec communication as well as Tourism Marketing.

Shannon Vassen, Assistant City Manager let the group know that the Adopt a Trail Recognitions start next month at the Feb. 6th City Council meeting and then Jamie's HOA will be next. We have also installed AEDs throughout the City as a direct result of a scary event that occurred in December at the Rec Center. The City staff have also undergone CPR and First Aid training and are hoping to offer that training to others in the community at some point. Mike then brought up the creation of the three new teams which are the wellness team, innovation team, and the project execution team. Mike then asked if there were any questions. John asked what the City is doing to control growth to not lose the small-town feeling. Mike said there was a lot of growth from 1998 until 2008, when the population went from 4,500 to 12,000+. Since 2008, we have only averaged about 1% growth per year, bringing our current population to about 13,700. We conduct a survey every four years and we use the results from that survey regarding what the citizens deem as small-town qualities to reevaluate our policies and values. We also have a map showing the city limits, and the future growth area. We are planning for growth ahead of time. For example, our wastewater treatment facility was built to include that future growth area. It is currently operating at half capacity. We recently redrew our future growth area and moved the east boundary in a bit. The east boundary is about a ½ mile past 19 Road, the north boundary is to about L Road. From there it goes over to 16 Road. On the south side, we are about as far as we can go before, we get into public lands. Each new house pays an impact fee to cover infrastructure upgrades. We don't do heavy tourism marketing to increase numbers of

people, as a lot of our tourists eventually become residents. We do market tourism toward people who have similar values so that tourists who move here have Fruita values. Tom asked what the city is doing about affordable housing and real estate transfer fees. Mike explained that we have focused on other efforts, as real estate transfer fees are highly litigated. We do have one low-income tax project currently being constructed which is the 50 units called the Fruita Mews. It is currently the only affordable housing project Fruita offers. The City has a lot of rentals coming up, but they are market rate apartments. Mr. Karisny asked that these apartments have been marketed as housing for teachers, nurses, police officers, and other important positions, but asked how do we know if that is who is renting the units out? Mr. Bennett shared that there is no way to tell who the apartments are being rented out to as far as profession, but the developers could disclose that information. Mr. Bennett explained the income that will be required to rent these units fit along those lines of those positions. Additionally, the hope is that with a lot of new apartments coming into the market that the rents will come down. There is also a project that is trying to get funding for 170 units and a childcare facility located next to La Quinta that would also be an affordable housing complex. The City has also made it easier to have ADU's in the City core to help with affordable housing. Dave asked if there was a way to track who was renting the Mews. Once they start renting, they are hoping to track it. Shannon said that there is an agency offering \$24,000 in down payment help. CHAFA also offers down payment assistance. The Fruita Mews won't pay property tax for 15 years and rent will be 30% to 100% of AMI. Fruita is in a special limited partnership with the Mews owners. Fruita has the first right of refusal after 30 years if the current owners would like to sell. Often, the owner reups to keep it going. The City has not looked at running or operating housing. There are a lot of regulations to keep it at the rent controls and owners who back out before the 30 years are up may have to pay penalties. The project near the La Quinta could be the same type of regulation. It is looking at 80% to 120% of AMI. Councilor Miller said that the developers are really stepping up and bringing different products. Jessica asked about Habitat buying property. Councilor Miller said that the land either must be donated or very low cost for habitat projects. The organization in the valley is very small. Dave asked about the community survey. Mike said it will be 2025. Jessica asked about what was happening with the old middle school. Mike said the City hasn't started those conversations yet.

IV. Action Items

a. Officer Position Nominations Next Month

Shannon let the group know that there would be three officer positions available for election at the next meeting. Those positions are Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

b. AARP Community Challenges Grant Due March

Shannon let the group know that the AARP Community Challenges Grant application was due in March and wanted to know if the group wanted to continue with a previous application, such as the book locker or the community garden, or to come up with something else. He said it could be discussed at the

next meeting, as there would be time to complete the application following the next meeting. John said that there are some new dimensions to the application process to be aware of. Shannon let the group know that Kaydee, the City Communications Office intern, is a good writer and will be working on the grant for the Commission.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.