

Housing...

Continued from page A1 including city planning director Jeff Reinhart, planning assistant Sommar Johnson, Moab City Manager Donna Metzler, com-

munity development director David Olsen, and Grand County Council member Audrey Graham, along with several interested citizens.

Walker also answered questions from the members of the public who were in attendance. A couple of the attendees said they wondered about whether developers would actually bother with affordable housing, and where such projects might be located. At least one person questioned whether affordable housing would negatively impact property values.

"It's a common misconception that affordable housing projects make (surrounding) property values go down, but that is not the case," said Walker, who showed pictures of several successful projects done elsewhere around the state. "The commission and the public

should be willing to accept new and innovative designs as affordable housing solutions."

Walker noted that alleviating the negative stigma that many people associate with affordable housing is part of the challenge.

"Our goal is to educate the public and officials about the complexities of affordable housing," Walker said.

Moab has as many as 14 zones, Walker noted, adding that many of the city's zones could be simplified or consolidated. The existing R-3 zone should also be modified to allow up to 30 units per acre, Walker suggested.

In addition, he recommended that a "lesser standard" of code compliance be applied to affordable housing projects, especially those that involve remodeling. Bringing an entire

building to current codes often results in prohibitively high costs, making an otherwise affordable project unaffordable, he said.

Planning commission chairwoman Kelly Thornton cautioned against arbitrarily "cutting corners," particularly when residents' safety may be at stake.

"But these are definitely things we can look at," she said. "This is the beginning of a process. There will be lots of meetings and opportunities for public input."

Graham suggested that planners and interested parties lay out a map of the city and use M&M candies to mark areas where more families could potentially live.

"We could see what could be done to make it happen," she said.

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General Plan...

Continued from page A1 ing a definition that indicates industrial development should be consistent with "community values" - a term he will also define.

Regarding the electrical grid in the county, the plan suggests stepping up efforts - if the

power grid can handle the extra load - to bring more power to the Interstate 70 corridor, where heavy industry and the production of solar power may be feasible.

Wright explained that the current grid from Green River to Thompson has no capacity for additional power transmission. Electrical power to Cisco, he said, is transmitted from Spanish Valley via La Sal and Castle Valley. Expansion of the grid will be very expensive, he said, and cannot happen until there are users willing to pay for it.

The group's 14 members were selected by the county planning staff for their knowledge of the community and their ability to communicate with their constituencies, according to Grand County Planner Kristine Killoy. All but one of the members attended Monday's meeting.

Dates and agendas for the meetings, along with reports and drafts of all documents are available on the planning and engineering section of the Grand County website, www.grandcountyutah.net.

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