

ELK RIDGE  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
AUGUST 1, 2024

**TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING**

A public hearing and the regular meeting of the Elk Ridge Planning Commission was held on Thursday August 1, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at 80 E. Park Dr. Elk Ridge Utah.

**ROLL CALL**

*Commissioners:* Maureen Bushman, Ron Gailey, Ron Hill, Greg Shelton, Lisa Graham

*Others:* Royce Swensen, *City Recorder*, Laura Oliver, *Deputy Recorder*

*Public:* Karl Shuler, Larry Lee

**7:00 pm OPENING ITEMS**

Opening Remarks was given by Melanie Paxton

Pledge of Allegiance led by Maureen Bushman

LISA GRAHAM MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH CHANGE CORRECTION OF  
THE DAY RON GAILEY SECONDED

VOTE            AYE (5)            NAY (0)            APPROVED

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**GENERAL PLAN**

Maureen Bushman opened the public hearing which is a second public hearing for the General Plan since further changes had been made

Karl Shuler - Appreciates the time spent on the General Plan, adding the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to the plan corrects some incorrect data presented during the CE3 zone. Likes the note of the "private property" concerning the trails. He proposed to have the 2 trails in 1 parcel be revised and move one of the parks.

Bob Paxton sent in remarks – Letter stating as a landowner in the CE3 zone he would like the CE3 code to be overturned.

Maureen Bushman stated The WUI section in the General Plan refers to the Utah Code that the parks are not set but will be determined when the area is developed.

Larry Lee commented on defensible space

MAUREEN BUSHMAN MOTIONED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING LISA GRAHAM SECONDED

**1. WILDLIFE PRESENTATION, WES ALEXANDER**

Wes Alexander stated he is the district biologist for the Nebo District of the Fish and Wildlife Resources. The Nebo District covers from about the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon to South of Gunnisen. He deals with big game, deer, elk, bear, mountain goats, sheep, and birds. The district studies the population, movement and survival of the animals. They use GPS tags to track movement. The past couple winters they used helicopters to pick up deer and elk at the Gladstan Golf Course and off Goosenest to tag. Some feel it's controversial but it's very important research in order to preserve natural corridors. The tags mark GPS points every 2 hours the location of the animals to monitor and understand challenges, corridors, health, and habits with all the development in the district to try and preserve a healthy wildlife population. I-15 disrupted the migration to the western desert. A master study is being done in conjunction with BYU. They have collared roughly 70 mule deer and 50 elk in the district and 1600 statewide, which just scratches the surface. The severe winter of 2020 killed a higher population of deer, but they have rebounded, and numbers and health are good. They are also monitoring mountain lions and cougars in the district. Elk Ridge does have an urban deer population and is being allowed to reduce some of those numbers, but the state has tight restraints on the program. Most of the deer go back to P Mountain (Little Mountain, Rocky Ridge, Tithing Mountain) and the deer that are targeted are resident deer during August when herds generally are out of the area. They concentrated tagging on mountain deer. Wes

Alexander brought up a map showing the GPS marked locations for the deer and elk and zeroed in on 5 individual animals. The general migration area showed a corridor from Rocky Ridge, Fourbay, above Elk Ridge and across Loafer Canyon to Woodland Hills. The locations show the location of the deer every 2 hours. They cover a lot of ground, mostly around the mountains and ridges and a lot of time at Gladstan Golf Course. The tagged animal migration data also depends on what deer are tagged and may not show true numbers from certain areas. The distract, has roughly 14,000 deer, they are not broken down into subareas. Those numbers fluctuate. Migration corridors can be devastating to herd migration as development happens. The winter range is along the I-15 corridor along the mountains. Drive down to Nephi and you can see the herds. By air you can see thousands. There is a large herd of elk in the area, about 2400 district wide and several hundred in the immediate area. They don't move as much as the deer and are hardier than deer. They congregate below Woodland Hills, Fourbay and Rocky Ridge. The area below Woodland Hills is being developed and will displace the herd in that area. They calf in the lower areas around May and head back up into higher elevations. When there are large open areas for herds, they are more spread out, as development comes in, they condense down. Karl Shuler stated he lived here 50 plus years and there are more deer in the area now than there ever was and wondered if it was because of the loss of habitat and the food resource from people's yards. Wes Alexander stated if there is a resource, like trees, rose gardens they will find it, which isn't the healthiest for the deer. When a calf is born it does not stay where it was born, it's the opposite. Doe kick off yearlings as they have more calves, and those calves move on to different areas. Maureen Bushman stated this is good information to have about the wildlife in our area for whatever decisions are made moving forward or the best solution. In the 30 plus years she has lived here there are many more deer here in the city than when she first moved here, and they seem to be smaller in size. There are trends and changes and there are things that citizens need to be aware of such as deer resistant plants but when the deer are hungry, they will eat anything. Melanie Paxton asked what the city can do, there is a lot of private property. Wes Alexander stated as a city there isn't much it can do regarding private property and property rights. Targeting migration corridors and creating open space for migration is absolutely beneficial to sustain the population. Ron Gailey asked what exactly is considered a corridor. Wes Alexander stated the animals will use the same trail, or path and are creatures of habit. The obvious answer is to leave as much open space as possible, but that is not practical. Most of the mountain deer don't come into residential areas. Leaving a hundred yards wide would be great, the animals don't like tight places. Deer will use an overpass or tunnel made for a game trail, but elk will not use them. Salem City has not reached out to the department in regard to the development below Woodlands Hills and the elk herd that congregates there. Once the elk are pushed out, they will go up into the mountains, but they don't want to be there when there's snow. Elk are very hardy and can live anywhere and are adaptable. Losing the Woodland Hills area won't decimate the herd but it's not helpful either. As an agency his job is to preserve wildlife, but they have restraints. He appreciates the city having him and trying to learn what more can be done to preserve the wildlife in the area. Wes Alexander showed the location of different animals such as cats (mountain lions, cougars, which skirt around lower elevations and towns but rarely go into towns but probably go into residential areas more than they know. Most of the time you don't even know they are there. They have no tagged cats that have even come close to Elk Ridge.

## **2. GENERAL PLAN DISCUSSION**

Lisa Graham stated the transportation map has High Sierra and Hayleys Lookout as a dotted line. Maureen Bushman stated Andrew Jackson still needs to format the general plan and beautify it. The marked future parks are just placeholders and not where they will actually be located.

RON GAILEY MOTIONED TO MOVE THE GENERAL PLAN TO THE CITY COUNCIL WITH THE STATED CHANGES FOR THEIR FINAL CONSIDERATION RON HILL SECONDED

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) APPROVED

## **3. POSSIBLE PLANNING COMMISSION PROJECT DISCUSSION**

Maureen Bushman stated she had made a list of the strategies that are in the General Plan and asked what items on the list that are in the scope of the Planning Commission that. Discussion ensued on what the priorities are for the city and to think about what the planning commission needs to pursue.

## **4. APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR MAY 2, 2024**

RON HILL MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR MAY 2, 2024  
LISA GRAHAM SECONDED

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) APPROVED

**5. APPROVAL OF JOINT WORK SESSION WITH CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION MAY 30, 2024**

Note that Mayor Haddock was there but came in late.

GREG SHELTON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JOINT WORK SESSION WITH  
STATED CHANGE RON HILL SECONDED

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) APPROVED

**6. APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR JULY 16, 2024**

Line 32 fix facilities spelling

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) APPROVED

RON HILL MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES FOR JULY 16, 2024  
WITH STATED CHANGE LISA GRAHAM SECONDED

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) APPROVED

RON GAILEY MOTIONED TO ADJOURN GREG SHELTON SECONDED

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) APPROVED

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Planning Commission Coordinator