

**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**AUGUST 10, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Planning Commission Chairperson Valerie Hall called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Members in attendance included Valerie Hall, Ray Smith and Jesse Christopher. Yvonne Lawrence and Adam Huff excused absence.

**STAFF**

Staff - David Keeley and Mary Schultz.

**GUESTS**

Guests - City Council Member Debbie Gaskin, City Council Member Bonnie Bradley, Bob Arnold, Gloria Squires, John Squires, Krist Matthews, Andrea Matthews, William Emily, Bev Edwards, Wayne Wardlow, Martha Raines, Delmar Jackson and Renee Jackson.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MAIL RECEIVED**

As there was no Announcements and Mail Received, Planning Commission moved on to Meeting Minutes.

**MEETING MINUTES**

**FEBRUARY 9, 2015 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Planning Commission Member Jesse Christopher made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2015 regular Planning Commission meeting. Planning Commission Member Ray Smith seconded the motion.

Motion carried by all. Planning Commission Member Ray Smith - yes and Planning Commission Member Jesse Christopher - yes.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**PUBLIC HEARING - THE KEEPING OF BEES**

Chairperson Valerie Hall opened the Public Hearing regarding Keeping of Bees at 7:09 p.m. (Packet on file)

**STAFF REPORT**

City Planner David Keeley stated he received a complaint back in July regarding bee keeping in the city limits. According to the ordinance there is no bee keeping allowed in the city limits of Kettle Falls. Dave stated bee keeping was allowed 10 years ago, but was changed when a complaint was received. Dave sent Mr. Wardlow a letter letting him know he had until 08/20/2015 to remove the bees. Dave informed the Planning Commission Members that City Council moved to extend the deadline for Mr. Wardlow until the review is completed by the Planning Commission Members. (Packet on file)

Dave read the City Council Member's motion:

City Council Member Debbie Gaskin moved to put the bee keeping issue on the agenda for the next Planning Commission meeting. Council Member Jesse Garret Seconded the motion. Motion carried. Council Member Bonnie Bradley - no, Council Member Jesse Garrett - yes, Council Member Dale Drake - yes and Council Member Debbie Gaskin - yes. (Packet on file)

Dave explained the handouts are ordinances from other cities that allow bees in the city limits. (Packets on file - Redmond, WA, Spokane Municipal Code, Bee Keeping in City Limits and City of Colville, WA Regulations for the Beekeeping.)

Planning Commission Member Jesse Christopher asked City Planner Dave Keeley if he looked at the hives?

City Planner Dave Keeley stated he did not look at the hives, he met Mr. Wardlow on the porch.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Mr. Wayne Wardlow, 955 S. Oak Street, Kettle Falls, stated he is a new resident in the City of Kettle Falls. They have been here since December 28, 2012. Upon arriving in Kettle Falls some friends in the area told him about the bees in the United States. In the United States 35 percent of the bees have been lost due to the economy collapse and a number of diseases every year over the last 10 years. Once upon a time Kettle Falls was absolutely known throughout the Inland Northwest for the center

of bee keeping and honey production. Honey was sold at the Town and Country Days for years and Kettle Falls honey was famous. Very rarely do we see anyone selling honey in Kettle Falls anymore because there are only a couple of bee keepers left.

I was told there was a number of commercial bee keepers around but every hive I went by was empty and I was taught that the value of bees in our environment is necessary for pollinating our gardens. The truth is not that many people are going to be that anxious to keep bees in their backyard. I'll tell you what, I wasn't very excited to stick my head in an angry hive of bees, but how it was explained to me and as I learned the importance of the subject I decided to undertake it and do the best to learn. I am a new bee keeper with only a couple of years' experience. I do keep water next to my bees so they don't bother anybody. They do pollinate our garden and we have a tremendous crop due to that pollination as well as our neighbors.

When Mr. Keeley did visit my house he walk by three humming bird feeders hanging from our front porch and I do believe Mr. Keeley will testify that not a single bee was in any of those humming bird feeders as we did point out and discussed. If you have leafy humming bird feeders they will attract wasps and other insects. We have seven humming bird feeders on our property and not a single bee in them. I will invite anybody that wants to anytime you want, to come to my house. I will be happy to show you my bees and the hives.

Now with that being said in keeping with the five minute time limit we have several real experts here who can more thoroughly explain the value and the necessity of bees in our environment, so I will yield the floor to Mr. John Sparks and Mr. Arnold. These are some of the experts in the Northwest they are quoted in several articles including the Spokesman's Review. Thank you very much!

Bob Arnold, 42615 N. Division Road, Deer Park, WA stated he has kept bees for a long time in California and Oregon. I have been in Deer Park for the last 15 years and graduated from Gonzaga University, so I'm a long time Washingtonian. I am a member of the Inland Empire Beekeeping Association. Spokane had laws against keeping bees in 2006 - 2007 time frame. We petitioned to see if we could get it legalized in the city and we purposed a program that has worked very well. People can keep bees in the city now legally, but there are a few regulations:

Beekeepers have to take a class for apprenticeship in bee keeping.

They can keep up to eight hives in a yard, but it is usually 1 per 4,350 square feet. An average lot is maybe a quarter of an acre or half an acre, which allows them to have a couple of hives.

The hives have to be located so when the bees fly out of the hives they don't fly into people's hair.

They have to have some setbacks, so the bees are not on top of the next door neighbors.

Beekeepers also have to put a fence up to block the bees, so they can't fly into people's hair in the other yard.

You do have to keep water next to the bees.

I have a couple of kids that live in the Boise Idaho area and for years you couldn't keep bees, but that has recently changed. The City of Colville has adopted the same ordinance that Spokane has adopted. People can read that on-line. We also changed the covenant ordinances to reflect some of these same rules. The program has worked very well, because people get educated on how to keep bees and can discuss intelligently with the neighbors why the humming bird feeders are being a problem. There are probably more issues with yellow jackets, because yellow jackets are very aggressive.

I have also lived in the San Diego area and it has recently changed, so you can legally keep bees. The Seattle area has been going crazy about bees.

We really haven't had any complaint in Spokane since this program has been in place. It has been very good, but does require effort to get the training.

John Squires, 965 Juniper Street, Kettle Falls handed out a bee keeping regulations in municipal area sheet. Mr. Squires read from the handout. (Handout sheet on file - Beekeeping Regulations in Municipal Areas)

Gloria Squires, 965 Juniper Street, Kettle Falls stated that her husband John Squires has been raising bees since he was in Junior High School, so he has done this for many years. We have

taught beekeeping at the Community College and have continued to share information regarding beekeeping openly. We have written several books on beekeeping, which is also available plus C/D and DVD's. When I first met John twenty years ago I was scared to death of bees because I didn't understand them. John took me out and put me right in front of the bee hives. I was right in the bee's way but they flew around me. Once in a while they would run into me, but not once was I stung because these bees were properly maintained and controlled. I think John has more skills and experience with bees than anyone I have ever met.

Andrea Matthews, 410 Avey Court, Kettle Falls stated one of her main gardens is about 30 feet from Wayne and Martha's bee hive. I appreciate the bees very much. I am a board member for the Northeast Washington Farmers Market and I am a master gardener. I can tell you that the honey bees in my yard are appreciated and I have never been stung by a honey bee. One of the missions of the farmers market is to provide nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables to low income families and seniors to our community. Without the honey bees none of the grower's network, churches and the food bank committees would not be possible. I would like to encourage the group to recommend changing the ordinance in Kettle Falls so we can continue to provide a service and to enhance our community in the future.

Bev Edwards, 251 S. Horseshoe Drive, Kettle Falls stated her back yard is 25 x 125 and the whole floor of my garden is covered with Portulaca or Coming Moss Rose and the flowers on that are open three quarters of the day they have lots of pollen, lots of bees and not up until the last three years I have always garden barefooted and the only time ever been stung by a honeybee is if I trap one between my toes. People always say that my yard is buzzing, but without the honeybees I wouldn't have the pollination in my garden or for our trees and the flowers. We need them for everything. I would like to see the ordinance change to allow a beekeeper to have up to six hives. Honeybees are not an aggressive insect.

Delmar Jackson, 40 Kifer Rd, Kettle Falls stated he started in the honeybee business 35 years ago and John Squires taught him everything he knows. He too has a large garden and fruit trees in his yard, but not once has he seen honeybees around his humming bird feeders. I go outside just like I am without my hat and no hair but still have not gotten stung. My wife is deathly allergic to the honeybees, but has never been stung not saying they won't.

Martha Raines, 955 S. Oak Street, Kettle Falls stated she is deathly allergic to bees. I work very closely to the bees in my garden. Before I moved here I was a city girl and had to learn more about the honeybees. When I started eating the honeybees honey every day my allergies have gone way done. I'm not having to take my allergy pills every day. It has really helped me a lot.

William Emily, 410 Avey Court, Kettle Falls stated that he is not a honeybee keeper and knows very little about honeybees accept the difference about honeybees and wasps. As a little boy I was one of those kids that would do things to upset the bee hives and would have to run down the trails to get away from them. That was my experience with all types of bees. When I first got married to Andrea she was very much into gardening. When we moved to Kettle Falls and I was kind of apprehensive about bees. One of the great experiences I have had is in my wives lavender garden and it doesn't matter what season it is you can walk in the middle of the lavender garden you can hear the bees sing. It doesn't matter what I do I haven't been stung. I have been stung many times by wasp. Honeybees are not the problem. The wasps and yellow jackets are the problems but that is not the issue the issue is are we going to allow the honeybees to be a part of our natural environment that we live in around here.

Krist Matthews, 310 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave., Kettle Falls stated he is not anti-bee or anti-honey. I have pictures and videos of my humming bird feeders being swarmed. I know that they don't normal show this behavior and so I'm not sure if there is a problem. If I take my humming bird feeders down they seem to dissipate and in a couple of days they are back. I do know the difference between a wasp and a honeybee. I did get stung on top of my foot and lost a couple of days of work, because I couldn't get my shoe on. Like I said I'm not anti-bee. I think they are great. I would like to share some regulations that I looked up. There is the requirement that the hives need to be inspected yearly. I do think that if you change the ordinance you need to look at all of the regulations under the Northwest Bee Keeping Associations. I'm not mad at anybody but something is happen with the bees and my humming bird feeders are full with honeybees.

City Council Member Bonnie Bradley stated that no one is against the bees, because the do wonderful things. The other day I was sitting on my patio for an hour and five honeybees came up into

my face. I have no flowers or bushes. I don't want to sit on my patio with bees. Neighbors should not have to deal with the bees.

Planning Commission Member Jesse Christopher asked Mr. Wardlow if he has a certification of bee keeper.

Mr. Wardlow responded with no, he does not have one but would be willing to get one there just wasn't any requirement. The best information you can get is from other bee keepers. When you start to get into the field of bee keeping that is when you get the best knowledge of the honeybees and bee keeping. With respects with any of the problems involved we sure would like to figure out what is going on because something needs to be corrected.

Planning Commission Chairperson Valerie Hall asked about the height of the fences.

City Planner Dave Keeley stated six feet.

Planning Commission Member Jesse Christopher asked Dave Keeley about the lots sizes in the city and if they are too small for the bee keeping of bees in the city limits.

City Planner Dave Keeley stated the Old Meyer Falls area are 7,500 square feet on average so they are 50 x 150.

Planning Commission Member Ray Smith asked about the lot sizes on Evergreen.

City Planner Dave Keeley stated they are about 6,000 square feet.

Planning Commission Chairperson Valerie Hall asked if Stevens County has regulations of bee keeping.

No one has found any regulations for Stevens County or Chewelah.

Planning Commission Chairperson Valerie Hall asked the bee keeper to explain what reclaiming your bee's means.

It means putting in a new queen in the hive. The queens can sometimes produce aggressive bees. When this happens you go in and kill that queen, so you can replace her. Also, generally most bee keepers re-queen there hives every two years to reduce the swarming. I re-queen my hives once a year for other reasons.

Most of the queens come from California, but can come from the southern states. They are shipped through the mail by UPS or the mail services. The queen doesn't have a bar stinger, she doesn't sting. I would also like to comment on some humming bird feeders. Some humming bird feeders are not good. We have been through several designs ourselves and you got to find a design that the bees can't get into. The problems are still the yellow jackets because when the humming birds go in and out of the feeders they seem to drip a little of the sugar which attracts yellow jackets.

Krist Matthews states he has four different feeders and don't get the wasps.

Bev Edwards states years ago on the coast my mother had some humming bird feeders and also had lots of flower too. She quit doing the humming bird feeder because of the bacteria in the sugar water. About 20 years ago I planted a flower called humming bird weed and it is an annual but it does re-seed like crazy. It has some tubular flowers that has more nectar then most tubular flowers. If you want humming birds in your yard plant some humming bird weed. It is also healthier for them then what you put in the humming bird feeders.

Dave stated that Mr. Squires brought a map to the last City Council meeting where he thought bee hives were. Do you have that map with you?

Mr. Squires stated he did not bring it with him, but there were six locations last year and this year there is four. There is a couple of spots I didn't see any bees this year. Sometimes they have a hard year because of diseases. It takes them a little while to rebuild their stock of bees and most of the bee keepers in spite of losing 38 - 40 percent nationwide, split their hives in order to rebuild. The quantity of the bees out there has increased a little bit in the last year. The bees work in a circle of where they are located. Most of them work the alfalfa fields around town, but some of the bees do come into town. To be able to get the pollination for the fruit trees some bee keeper set the hives right in the orchards or next to the orchards. To have bee keepers in town would be a benefit.

Mr. Wardlow stated that the queens get a colored dot to identify the year of the queen. It also helps to identify your queen.

Chairperson Valerie Hall announced the Public Testimony portion of this hearing is now closed. The Public Hearing closed at 7:45 p.m.

Planning Commission Chairperson Valerie Hall thanked everyone for coming and their testimony. We're going to have to discuss this further and also with the two Planning Commission Members that are absent. I would like their opinion on the bee keeping before recommending anything to City Council. Planning Commission should be able to make a decision or recommendation at the next meeting on September 14, 2015.

**OLD BUSINESS**

As there was no Old Business, Planning Commission moved on to Historic Preservation.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

As there was no Historic Preservation, Planning Commission moved on to Public Comment.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

As there was no Public Comment, Planning Commission moved on to Adjournment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2015 7:00 p.m. at Kettle Falls City Hall.

Approved:

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Valerie Hall, Chairperson

Attest:

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Mary Schultz, Secretary/Clerk