

**Minutes**  
**Planning Commission Meeting**  
**Town of Paonia, Colorado**  
**September 21, 2023**

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Roll Call**

PRESENT

Commissioner Mary Bachran

Chair Dave Knutson

Commissioner Lyn Howe

Commissioner Steve Clisset arrives at 4:13PM

**Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Knutson makes a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bachran, to approve the agenda as posted with the addition of Appointment of Officers.

Motion carries unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

No Minutes for Approval.

**Actions & Presentations**

**Appointment of Officers to Planning Commission**

Commissioner Bachran nominates Commissioner Knutson as Chairperson, seconded by Commissioner Howe.

Voting Aye: Commissioner Bachran, Commissioner Howe

Abstain: Commissioner Knutson

Chairperson Knutson nominates Commissioner Bachran as Vice-Chair and Commissioner Howe as Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Howe.

Motion carries unanimously.

Town Attorney Cotton-Baez states town has a full slate of officers appointed for 2023. Officers are to be reappointed in January 2024.

**Public Hearing**

Public Hearing for Blue Sage Center for the Arts requesting a Special Variance on Alley Setbacks and Parking Requirements.

Chairperson Knutson opens the Public hearing at 4:11 pm

Vice-Chairperson Bachran expresses a disclosure that she served on the Board of the Blue Sage for some time. She has no financial benefit received from the Blue Sage, but she does donate to them. After discussion with the Town Attorney, she will not recuse herself at this time because she believes she can be unbiased towards evidence presented. The Town Attorney concurs with Vice-Chairperson's decision.

Commissioner Clisset arrives at 4:13PM

Town Administrator Wynn arrives at 4:15PM

Town Administrator Wynn provides a staff report that includes background & general information on Blue Sage, and details steps taken by venue for installation of covered back porch. He also explains that issues regarding parking requirements, as outlined by the code, would be met with existing parking areas.

Town Attorney Nick Cotton-Baez provides an overview on Chapter 16 and the requirements that need to be met to grant a variance.

Town Attorney Cotton-Baez and Administrator Wynn present the options available, and the conclusions reached in their research of the Code.

Staff recommends approval based on information received and applicant information provided.

Debra Muzikar, Executive Director of the Blue Sage Center for the Arts, presents the history of the outside structure and the benefits to the business, community, and artists.

Public Comment:

B. Hass – Board member of Blue Sage explains that they received a grant for the structure and can lose the project if no progress is made.

M. Triserivic (sp) – expresses support for venue changes and discusses drawbacks to having events indoors.

D. Shepard – local musician in support of venue.

M. Barns – Blue Sage board member, speaking as private citizen. Supports venue changes to enhance the alley lot currently there.

K. Hopkins –Blue Sage board member, in support of venue offering other organizations space to use outdoors.

E. Brening – supports staff recommendations for approval. Avid supporter of Blue Sage, regarding parking, they feel there is plenty of parking and are unsure where new spots would come from. They also request that the Town reviews the parking ordinances.

K. Powell – Speaking as a patron, in support of venue changes, due to the benefits of being involved with other community members and social interactions, while being outside provides a better experience in the later evening events.

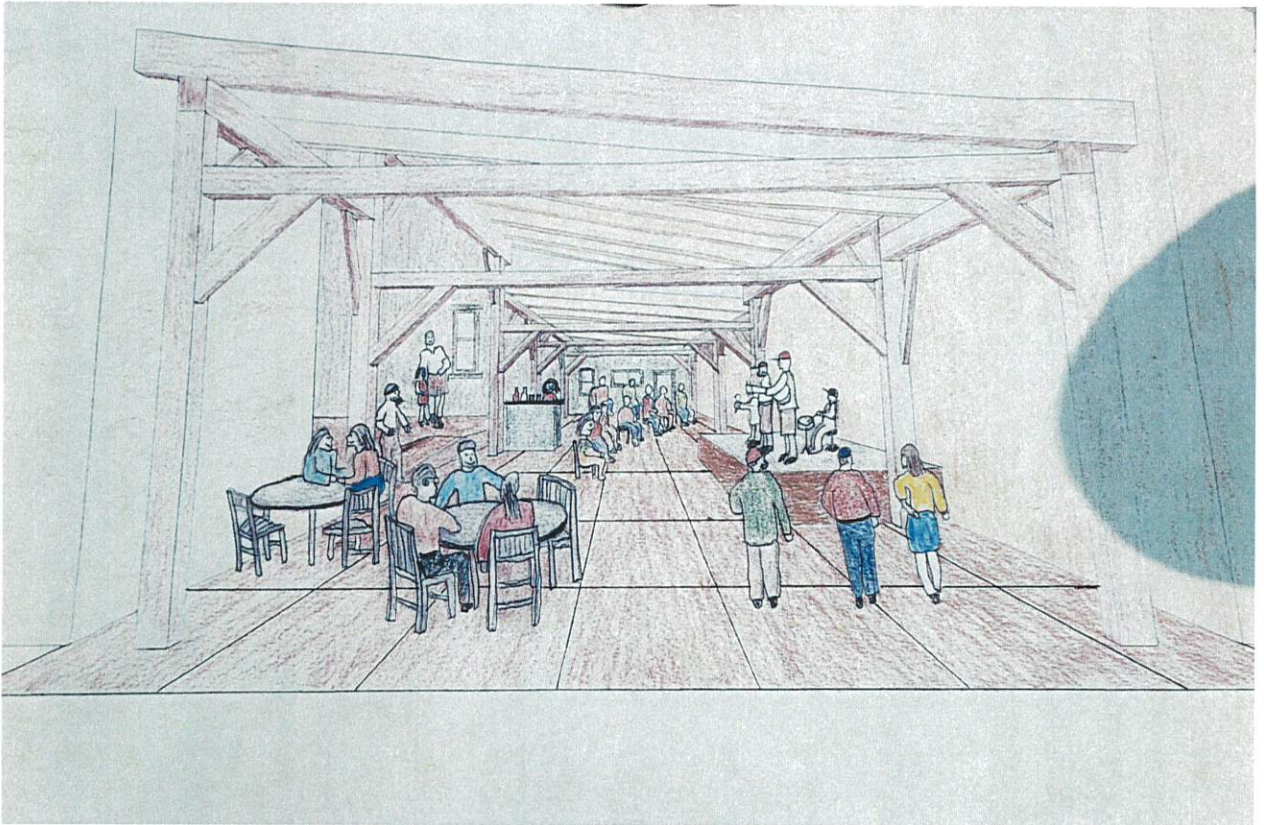
L. Hunter – reiterates all support and explains that occupancy will not increase.

End of public comments.

Chairperson Knutson asks if there is any further evidence from the applicant.

B. Hass shows a drawing of the proposed structure. (Picture taken by Deputy Clerk, see attachment).





Commissioner Clisset, Town Administrator Wynn, and Town Attorney Nick Cotton-Baez discuss side set-backs and Code requirements and determine that code obligations are met.

Vice-Chairperson Bachran and Town Attorney Nick Cotton-Baez discuss the hardship provisions and how it affects the zoning code or applicant.

Vice-Chairperson Bachran and Town Administrator Wynn discuss if the parking solutions are acceptable. Town Administrator Wynn points out that parking outside town hall and using the parking lot off main street should be sufficient.

Chairperson Knutson asks if there are any objections; no objections are noted.

Commissioner Clisset and Secretary Howe say that occupancy questions are moot since they won't change, and parking shouldn't be a problem since spaces are used at different times throughout the day. They feel it is a great benefit and a historic aspect of the Town. The changes will meet other existing setbacks and is unsure how parking plays into approval.

Chairperson Knutson and Town Attorney Nick Cotton-Baez suggest closing the public hearing and moving into deliberations.

Chairperson Knutson asks about building permits, emergency exits, and drainage. Town Administrator Wynn answers questions and explains that all these things will be addressed by a building permit.

Public hearing is closed at 5:05 pm.

Vice-Chairperson Bachran explains how this is a good example of good use of a variance and feels it will be a great public benefit. She points out that the hardship was not created by Blue Sage and feels that an approval is in order.

Chairperson Knutson makes a motion, seconded by Commissioner Clisset, to recommend the approval of Variance 2023-02 because it meets the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Motion carries unanimously.

## **Adjournment**


Commissioner Clisset makes a motion, seconded by Secretary Howe, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carries unanimously.

Meeting adjourns at 5:06 pm

  
Ruben Santiago, Deputy Clerk



  
Dave Knutson, Chair