

1. 2:00 P.M. Agenda

Documents:

[2021-04-20 Planning Commission Agenda.pdf](#)

2. Meeting Materials

Documents:

[Survey.pdf](#)

[Fwd\\_ Residential Unroofed Barriers - Fences, Hedges And Walls.pdf](#)



CITY OF YACHATS  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
Yachats OR  
Tuesday, April 20, 2021, 2020 at 2:00 pm  
Public Meeting via ZOOM Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

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**Work Session**

- I. Land Use Issues presentation by Hui
- II. Other Business
  - A. The Commission
  - B. The Staff

**Regular Meeting**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Announcements and Correspondence
- III. Citizen Concerns
- IV. New Business
  1. Ocean View Walkway Project
- V. Old Business
  1. Fences, Hedges & Walls survey questions
  2. Survey & Comments
- VI. Planner Report
- VII. Other Business
  1. From the Commission
  2. From Staff

This meeting is open to the public and all interested persons are invited to attend the ZOOM Meetings. This meeting will be audio taped. All items to be considered by the Commission must be submitted to City Hall no later than one week prior to the meeting. The minutes of this meeting is the Audio Tape which will added to the packet after the meeting within 24 hours. In accordance with ORS 192.630, City of Yachats will make a good faith effort to provide accommodations for any person desiring to attend a public meeting, if the request is made at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting time; a sign language or foreign language interpreter may be available, with advance notice. Call City Hall at 541- 547-3565 or Oregon Relay 1- 800-735-2900 (TDD) two days in advance. Posted 04/15/2021

## JGD Fences, Walls & Hedges Planning Questions:

Not having any experience in developing surveys, I looked up some thoughts on how to write questions that help get a more substantial understanding of how people really feel about the issues at hand. One important element is to ask the same question in different ways so that on balance the complete information comes through. For instance, if we simply ask if people want regulation many will answer “no” because they associate the regulation only on how it will affect what **they** might want to do. But if you ask in a later question if they would like to see regulation of a neighbor or business they say “yes” because it **affects them** and perhaps protects them.

I wrote the following paragraph to include in the questionnaire because as we heard at our previous meeting, currently, Code Enforcement is out looking for problems rather than waiting for a complaint. Training and direction to Code Enforcement is needed but perhaps stating that we are developing design guidelines might help.

*The Planning Commission is looking at setting design guidelines in place for fences, hedges and walls, so that new and remodeled fences, hedges and walls follow clearly defined design specifications. Any existing fences, hedges and walls that become non-compliant would be handled through a complaint resolution process. In an effort to include the community's desires around these guidelines the following questions have been developed.*

- 1. Specifically addressing the homes, buildings and landscape of Yachats, what makes it a special place to live?*
- 2. Thinking about what makes Yachats special do you feel that developing guidelines around architectural elements such as fences, walls, and hedges aids in maintaining that special quality?*
- 3. Specifically, when thinking about your neighborhood would you say that materials used in the construction of homes and landscaping make a difference to the architectural character?*
- 4. Thinking more broadly, when visiting communities how large of an impression does architecture make on you?*
- 5. Currently in Yachats Municipal Code height restrictions for fences, hedges and walls are in place regarding the safety of a clear vision around the intersecting of roads, alleys, streets and driveways. Do you feel that this kind of safety related height restriction is enough?*
- 6. The enclosing of properties can take many different forms. Thinking about Yachats do fences, walls and/or hedges have an effect on your sense of place?*
- 7. If you were thinking about building some kind of fence or wall would having specific design guidelines be helpful?*
- 8. Thinking about fences, walls and hedges in your neighborhood how important is it to you that the materials used are in harmony with the architecture of the home?*
- 9. The ambiance of Yachats has often been described as a “quaint coastal village”. With that description in mind do you feel that the height and materials used for fencing in and around the city has the potential of enhancing or detracting from that description of “place”?*
- 10. Hypothetically speaking; your neighbor is thinking about enclosing their yard. Would you appreciate the City having design guidelines outlining the height, type and materials that they can use as part of the permitting process?*
- 11. Thinking specifically about how you interact with your neighborhood do you feel that defining such things as allowable height of fences, walls and hedges would have an impact on your enjoyment of living in and traveling through your neighborhood?*
- 12. Hypothetically speaking; someone has recently bought one of several vacant lots on your street. The construction plans call for a garage facing the street and the rest of the property*

- located behind a wall, fence or hedge. In your view, would that type of construction enhance or detract from the architectural coastal village feel on your street?
13. And expanding on the previous question, would design guidelines make a difference on the final effect?
  14. Do you feel that having clear direction outlined in the building process is helpful for experienced developers as well as homeowners?
  15. Many people move to Yachats for the natural beauty surrounding the city. Do you feel that limiting the height of property enclosing structures such as fences, walls and hedges aids in keeping views accessible to everyone?
  16. One reason for the enclosing of yards is to keep dogs within the owner's property. Many dog rescue organizations require enclosed yards before allowing dogs to be adopted by families. Do you feel that design guidelines around fences, hedges and walls can still allow for people to adopt and safely contain their dogs?
  17. Hypothetically speaking; a new housing development is slated for Yachats and the plans call for a gated and walled development. In your view, would that significantly affect the "quaint coastal village" character of the city?
  18. Again, thinking about the previous question, do you believe that having design standards in place would benefit the community in this example?
  19. Height restrictions around fences, hedges and walls can be developed for safety reasons but they can also be developed based on view sheds and aesthetics. Do you feel that view sheds and aesthetics warrant height regulations?

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 \*\*\*\*\*  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 \*\*\*\*\*



Sat, Apr 3, 5:30 PM  
 (12 days ago)

**Loren Dickinson**

*to Jacqueline, me,*

*Yachats*

Good questions all. Suggestion: Rather than having the respondent write in a long answers for each question, it might be easier to use the responses if they were written to an AGREE - or NOT AGREE format, say "1" being NOT AGREE, "2" being SOMEWHAT DISAGREE, "3" being

NO OPINION, "4" being SOMEWHAT AGREE, and "5" being STRONGLY AGREE ..... or some similar "rating" system. Much easier to tabulate. Perhaps include a final section for "REMARKS", where the respondent can enter concerns that they have.

LOREN DICKINSON

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*Tue, Mar 30,  
9:37 AM*

**Christine Orchard**

*to me*

Thanks for the reminder Lance. I am not feeling very creative but here are my candidates that can be used with your suggested format.

1. I would like for Yachats to have an ordinance regarding the maximum height allowed for walls around private property. (I didn't want to lump the three things together -- that is, walls, fences, and hedges -- so this question can be repeated twice more.)
2. If there is a maximum fence height, there should be different maximums for solid fences (e.g, wood or stucco) versus "see-through" fences (e.g., wire, spaced metal bars, or chain-link)?
3. Yachats should have a standard for the upkeep and appearance of fences, walls, and hedges.

Before asking our questions to the Yachats public, we need definitions and illustrations (or photos) for each of the three categories (wall, fences, hedges). They should be included with the questions so it is clear what we are talking about.

Christine

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**Yachats ordinances currently regulating the height of fence and walls.  
(In the Comprehensive Plan the city encourages tree planting on ridgelines to  
protect the view.)  
(5.08.090A minimum heights)  
(9.28.030 view screening required)  
(9.64.010 maximum heights in required yard)  
(9.68.030 minimum heights)  
(9.68.040 maximum heights)**

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Do we need a general ordinance regulating the heights of fences, hedges and walls?  
(circle one)

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither agree or disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree

*Do we need an ordinance regulating the maintenance of hedges between properties?  
(circle one)*

- 1. *Strongly agree*
- 2. *Agree*
- 3. *Neither agree or disagree*
- 4. *Disagree*

5. Strongly disagree

*If the Planning Commission regulates the height of fences and walls, should solid hedges get the same height limits?*

*Yes or No (circle one)*

*If a fence is not solid and light blocking the height should still be regulated. (circle one)*

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree or disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*If a hedge is not solid and light blocking the height should still be regulated. (circle one)*

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree or disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*If you feel a limit on the height of fences, hedges, and walls is needed, what height should that be?*

*Between residential properties? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-no limit in feet (circle one)*

*Between residential and commercial properties? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-no limit (circle one)*

*Do you agree that good fences make good neighbors? (circle one)*

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree or disagree

4. *Disagree*
5. *Strongly disagree*

*Fences are ugly. (circle one)*

1. *Strongly agree*
2. *Agree*
3. *Neither agree or disagree*
4. *Disagree*
5. *Strongly disagree*

*Walls are ugly. (circle one)*

1. *Strongly agree*
2. *Agree*
3. *Neither agree or disagree*
4. *Disagree*
5. *Strongly disagree*

*Hedges are ugly. (circle one)*

1. *Strongly agree*
2. *Agree*
3. *Neither agree or disagree*
4. *Disagree*
5. *Strongly disagree*

*Fences, hedges and walls are needed to separate properties. (circle one)*

1. *Strongly agree*



2. *Agree*
3. *Neither agree or disagree*
4. *Disagree*
5. *Strongly disagree*

**From:** [Lance Bloch](#)  
**To:** [Kimmie Jackson](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Residential Unroofed Barriers - Fences, Hedges and Walls  
**Date:** Sunday, April 11, 2021 6:55:34 AM

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Kimmie, Could you add this letter to the packet for the Planning Commission meeting on the 20th?

Thank You,  
Lance

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Douglas Conner** <[lemoco@me.com](mailto:lemoco@me.com)>  
**Date:** Sat, Apr 10, 2021, 2:43 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Residential Unroofed Barriers - Fences, Hedges and Walls  
**To:** Lance Bloch <[lancebloch1@gmail.com](mailto:lancebloch1@gmail.com)>

Lance,

Thanks for the information. I'd like to make a constructive suggestion.

My specific complaint is caused by the inconsiderate use of an, unregulated, unroofed barrier. But my complaint is justified and valid because Goal A of the Comprehensive Plan promises to protect scenic views - the very thing the barrier obstructs. Since Title 9 ordinances are, technically, the implementation of land use policy, I find it more logical to propose amendments to Title 9 in the context of the goals, policies, and proposed actions enumerated in the Comprehensive Plan.

One proposed action under Goal A is to develop view protection strategies, and it seems reasonable that limiting the height of unroofed barriers could be an element of that strategy. By engaging the public about "View Protection Strategies", rather than the narrower focus on "Fences, Hedges, and Walls", the Commission can widen the conversation, get a better idea of the kind of issues people are dealing with, and actually implement an action specifically called for in the Comprehensive Plan.

Why not kill two birds with one stone?

Doug

On Apr 3, 2021, at 11:24 AM, Lance Boch <[lancebloch1@gmail.com](mailto:lancebloch1@gmail.com)> wrote:

Doug,  
I wanted to let you know that the Planning Commission is currently working on a review of City of Yachats ordinances relating to "Fences, Hedges, and Walls". We are presently putting together a survey of the Yachats citizens relating to this topic. I have heard discussion by the City Council on the topic of citizen surveys and public

hearings. Perhaps we can combine our efforts to survey our neighbors on multiple topics.

The Planning Commission wants to do the survey as a lead in to a public hearing on "Fences, Hedges, and Walls". This will be followed up by consideration of changes to city ordinances.

However, this will not address all of the topics you brought up. I noted that you addressed your email to the city's enforcement officer. The actions of the Planning Commission will not answer the issues concerning enforcement. However, if we can clarify city ordinances, and make explicit what is currently implicit, we may make enforcement somewhat easier.

Please be patient. I know the wheels grind slowly. The issue is being addressed.  
Lance Bloch, Planning Commission Chair

On Fri, Apr 2, 2021 at 10:21 AM Douglas Conner <[lemoco@me.com](mailto:lemoco@me.com)> wrote:

Matt,

I am providing this narrative, at your request, to describe our experience navigating a land use issue that arose when Sherry and I moved into our new home in 2016. Because of recent changes in the City Council and staff, and because the responsibility for conducting the three phases of land use (planning, implementation, and administration), belong to different entities within our Council/City Manager form of government, I will also provide this information to the City Council, Planning Commission, City Planner, and City Manager, all in the hope that they will understand that you alone cannot resolve this issue – however, we both thank you for trying.

The bone of contention is the permissible height of unroofed barriers in residential neighborhoods. What are the permissible heights of fences, hedges, and walls in residential zones? This is a question that commonly arises with the issuance of new residential building permits, and it is a question we asked City Planner Larry Lewis when we built our home on Lemwick Lane, because we couldn't find an answer in Title 9 – Zoning and Land Use. The answer we received turned out to be demonstrably wrong, and we will demonstrate why it was, and continues to be, wrong.

The issue arose because our neighbor maintains, and continues to maintain, a fence immediately adjacent to the boundary between our two residential properties. His fence is a continuous, unroofed, vegetative barrier that stands eight feet tall. The barrier completely obscures visual access along the entire western depth of our property - ocean view property only a few hundred feet from the water. We inquired about the permissibility of sight-obscuring fences in residential zones, and the City responded by saying that eight-foot-tall sight-obscuring barriers are

permitted; apparently anywhere, except where restricted by the Clear-Vision standard – and I'll get around to that later.

It is true, that stripped of all nuance, the statement that eight-foot fences are allowed in Yachats is true. But that doesn't mean they are automatically allowed in residential zones. Eight-foot tall, sight-obscuring barriers are an element of commercial and public facilities standards, not residential. I've been arguing for several years that the purported eight-foot standard is arbitrary because it is not found in our municipal code. And just a few weeks ago, the Planning Commission confirmed that, indeed, the claim that eight-foot fences hedges and walls are permitted in residential neighborhoods is not supported by the Yachats municipal code. The Planning Commission determined that our Yachats Municipal Code, including Title 9, does not cover residential unroofed barriers of any kind.

The City argues that since our municipal code does not prohibit sight-obscuring barriers in residential zones, they are therefore allowed. However, this argument is directly contradicted by YMC 9.88.140 which says that anything not covered by Title 9 is, by default, not permitted, unless it is permitted by a unanimous vote by the City Council, after a public hearing. But for the past five years, Yachats has worked to preserve the barrier, while denying Sherry and I due process. There has been no public meeting. There has been no public vote.

Our land use policies have the force of law. As a matter of fact, according to the DLCDD, the land use policies outlined in our Comprehensive Land Use Plan are enforceable, and do not require enabling ordinance to be enforced. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan describes the scenic environment as our most valuable natural resource, and Goal A obligates the City to protect scenic views. The Plan expressly proposes the development of view protection strategies, including, but not limited to, tree trimming standards. But despite a land use goal to protect views, there is no protection in the city of Yachats for river, estuary, shoreline, and ocean views from residential properties. Instead of protecting views, the city is protecting view obstructions. If you doubt this assertion, stop by my place and have a look at my obstructed ocean view.

In 2016 there was only one municipal code that limited the height of fences, hedges and walls between residential uses. YMC YMC 9.52.030(B) limited fences, hedges, and walls to three feet in the front

yard setback. So I requested, at the very least, that YMC 9.52.030(B) be enforced. But the City refused to enforce YMC 9.52.030(B) because, they said, Lemwick Lane is a private street. It is a fact that every square inch of the state of Oregon is regulated under land use, and the scope of our Comprehensive Land Use Plan covers every square inch of land within the city limits. Private streets are not exempt from Title 9 ordinance, and our ex-City Planner and Planning Commission both disagreed with the ex-City Managers decision not to enforce. But the ex-City Manager just ignored the ex-City Planner, Planning Commission and me and refused to budge. I personally asked the last City Council to break the deadlock, but Mayor Moore declined to do so, and left the deadlock in place – and it continues today.

While refusing to enforce YMC 9.52.030(B), the City began the process of moving YMC 9.52.030(B) into the Clear-Vision standard. The Planning Commission made specific changes intended to break the deadlock, and open the way for enforcement. They changed the definition of “Street” to explicitly include private streets. The Planning Commission also inserted language into the Clear-Vision standard to explicitly state that it applies to all streets (public and private.) The Planning Commission also expanded the Clear-Vision standard to include the intersection of streets and driveways.

The amended Clear-Vision standard was transmitted to the City Council, where it languished for a year before being voted on. Oct. 16, 2019, Planning Commission Chair Anderson made clear to the City Council that the changes in the ordinance were intended to specifically address my specific complaint, and the ongoing enforcement deadlock. The Planning Commission intended that the amended ordinance would apply to the specific hedge that the City had been protecting.

Prior to the vote, ex-Mayor Moore, who is neighbors with the hedge owner, asked for a change to the language of ordinance. He said he was concerned that perpendicular hedges might be unfairly swept up in the Clear-Vision standard. It is a strange concern because the Clear-Vision standard is based on the area inside a right-triangle, which of course has two sides that intersect at right angles – parallel and perpendicular. It is also unclear why he was only concerned about hedges, and not fences or walls. It is also unclear why the ordinance wasn't remanded back to the Planning Commission for the change, as is required by YMC 9.84.20C. I was on the Planning Commission at the time, and I certainly would have object to the Mayor's changes, but since the ordinance wasn't remanded back to the Planning Commission, my voice, and that of the rest of the Commission, was circumvented.

All of those ambiguities aside, the ordinance was approved with the Mayor's stipulated changes, and became law, but enforcement still didn't occur. When I asked Mayor Moore why the three-foot height limit still wasn't being enforced, he said that the changes he had asked for, protecting perpendicular hedges, disqualified my complaint. Ostensibly, the Planning Commission still disagrees with the ex-Mayor's interpretation of the new ordinance – that it nullifies the Planning Commission's stated intent - but the ex-Mayor's interference has effectively re-established the deadlock – which I believe was his intent.

So, for the past five years, the City of Yachats, has enforced what is not law, and refused to enforce what is law, and in doing so have diminished the value of our property, diminished our enjoyment of our property, and diminished the livability of Yachats in general, not to mention keeping the general public in the dark about the entire issue. I have formally applied to initiate an amendment to Title 9 under YMC 9.84. I'm asking the City, as an affected property owner, to develop reasonable, and enforceable standards for residential unroofed barriers, and to do so in accordance with our land use policies and procedures. So far, I've received no response, confirmation, or acknowledgment from the City at all. We consider the lack of response to be very unprofessional, and a harbinger of the City's intent. We believe a representative government should be responsive to the legitimate concerns of its citizens, and we are disappointed by the dismissive treatment we have faced here in Yachats.

There are two things that need to happen:

1. Enforce the Clear-Vision Standard as interpreted by the Planning Commission, rather than the ex-Mayor's interpretation.
2. Make a public and transparent land use decision (hopefully a decision based on land use policy) as to the permissibility of using sight-obscuring barriers in residential zones, and formalize that decision by passing a land use ordinance which reflects that decision, and applies to everyone – not just Sherry and I.

We think that allowing sight-obscuring barriers in residential zones is a terrible idea, and is not only incongruent with our land use goal of

preserving the scenic environment, but myopically dismissive of the expectations that people have about the use and enjoyment of their property. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan describes, perfectly, land use on the west-side of Hwy 101 as: "taking advantage of private property available for river, estuary and ocean shoreline views". If taking advantage of available views is a salient feature of property use in Yachats, then the City should be enthusiastic about minimizing the adverse impacts that sight-obscuring barriers obviously have on that use.

Thank You,

Doug Conner and Sherry Smith

490 Lemwick Lane

Yachats