

Vacant Red Lion Hotel to be turned into apartments

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 24 December 2021 05:05



Housing in Gallup continues to be an issue, but the city is taking one step forward in trying to change that.

During the Planning and Zoning committee meeting Dec. 8, Director Clyde Strain presented an ordinance to the committee to allow apartments to be built within Heavy Commercial and General Commercial Zone Districts.

“We feel that [this ordinance] is necessary for the city to tackle a couple of problems; one is the housing shortage of course, and the other is just to repurpose those vacant buildings and vacant hotels, put them to a good use that’s needed in town, rather than boarded up,” Strain explained.

In an email to the *Sun*, Strain stated he was in contact with a company that wants to repurpose and convert the Red Lion Hotel into apartments. He said that he didn’t know the company’s name, but that they were waiting until the ordinance was approved to commit to the project. The project is still in very early stages.

No plans have been drawn up yet for the Red Lion Hotel project, but Strain said he was excited

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for the investment in the city.

“That building’s been vandalized so many times; it’s gonna take a lot of money [to fix up], but they’re willing to do it, and they have the money to do it,” Strain said of the company. “I think it’s a good investment for the city and the community.”

The ordinance that permits these changes does have some regulations. For example, all buildings that are on the same lot must be 25 feet apart from one another. In addition, a minimum of 10 percent of the total site must be recreational. Strain explained that if a property can’t meet that minimum, it has to get as close to it as feasibly possible.

According to the city’s definition in the ordinance, recreational spaces can include lawns, landscapes, community gardens, rooftop decks, plazas, courtyards, covered patios, walkways, recreation rooms, swimming pools, and playgrounds. The definition does not include parking lots.

Strain explained that the change was made in an attempt to revitalize the city, specifically the west side of town. He noted that Albuquerque has places where commercial spaces are available in a building below and apartments are above.

The Planning and Zoning committee approved the ordinance, and it went on to be discussed during the Dec. 14 city council meeting.

Fran Palochak, Dist. 4, was quite excited about the possibility of new apartments on the west side of town.

“I just think this opens up a lot of opportunities for the west side, and so it makes me very happy to see this change, because that’s the opportunity to grow the west side that I have been wanting to see,” Palochak said.

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The council approved the ordinance, and Strain explained it would become law 30 days after the approval.

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