

City of Decorah
Planning and Zoning Commission
December 10, 2018 – 7:00pm
Meeting Minutes

Members present included: Nathan Thompson, Tony Clarke, Joel Zook (*Zook arrived at the meeting at 7:20pm*), Barbara Massman, and Brian Cook.

Absent: Llew Jenkins and Stan Moellers

Others present: Zoning Administrator / City Manager Chad Bird

Consider approval of minutes from the November 12, 2018 regular meeting and November 16, 2018 special meeting

Motion by Massman and seconded by Thompson to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2018 regular meeting and the November 16, 2018 special meeting.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 102 West Water Street, *The Get Up, new blade sign*

Bird reviewed the application and noted the proposed blade sign meets the applicable sections of the code. He also shared the sign would be required to be hung at least 8 feet above the sidewalk and the applicant knew of this code provision.

Motion by Thompson and seconded by Massman to recommend approval of the C-3 blade sign installation for The Get Up at 102 West Water Street.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 321 West Water Street, *Viking State Bank & Trust sign*

Bird explained the application and noted there are three signs on the application, two fascia signs and one lit sign over the drive-up lanes. He noted the signs are code compliant. He also noted he spoke with the sign contractor about the brightness of the lights as the commission has concerns with illumination. Bird noted he was told the lights on the one sign would be 310 Lumens.

Massman asked about the lights and if the city would regulate and reduce the brightness. Bird noted there is no current code that would require a certain level of lumens be maintained.

There were brief comments about the historical character of signs, a question raised by members of the city's historical preservation commission.

Motion by Clarke and seconded by Thompson to recommend approval of the three signs proposed by Viking State Bank at 321 West Water Street.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 206 West Water Street, *T-Bock's* – sign

Bird reviewed the application and noted the sign is installed and replaced the older version of the sign. He noted the sign meets applicable codes.

Motion by Thompson and seconded by Massman to recommend approval of the sign for 206 West Water Street for T-Bock's.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 102 West Water Street, *Red Roxy*, placement of storage building in rear

Bird presented the application and noted the owner is requesting permission to place a pre-manufactured storage shed on an existing concrete pad. He noted it appeared there was a similar storage unit on this same pad.

Bird noted that if the shed is considered an accessory structure then it meets all applicable codes for setback regulations in the C-3 zoning district.

Motion by Massman and seconded by Cook to recommend approval of the placement of a storage shed for Red Roxy at 102 West Water Street.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous

Motion passed.

Consider waiver of sidewalk requirements re: 710 Vernon Street
Zook arrived at about this time of the meeting – 7:20pm.

Bird introduced a sidewalk installation waiver application for 710 Vernon Street. He noted that before the commission considers the actual action to waive the installation of the sidewalk, he asked the commission to review the waiver permit form and the process.

The commission asked for future permits to have an illustration or provide some context as to how the parcel in question fits into the overall plan and provides some context. The commission also asked for some reference to the adopted sidewalk policy and reference any issues that be relative.

In reviewing the application of the code to the subject parcel, the commission noted the west side of the property does slope a fair amount and there was question of the ability to install a sidewalk without a retaining wall. There was also question as to whether the city would participate in some cross-walk modifications. It was noted by the commission the city needs to address speed control and cross-walks at the intersection of Vernon Street and Upper Broadway Street.

Motion by Thompson and seconded by Cook to recommend granting of a waiver from installation of a sidewalk on the West side of the property at 710 Vernon Street.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous

Motion passed.

Discussion regarding AirBnbs, regulations, licensing

Bird introduced this issue and noted he has been engaged in several conversations about short-term stay units in the community. He provided a recap of a similar conversation the commission held on the topic a couple of years ago. Bird noted there are approximately 27 AirBnB units in the city and about 8 VRBO units (Vacation Rental by Owner). He noted that in his interpretation of the zoning code, these types of units are only allowed in an R-3 multiple-family residential zoning. He further noted that there appears to be four units that would violate this zoning interpretation.

Bird also asked the commission to discuss and consider parking, licensing, registration, and inspections.

In general conversations the commission agreed with the zoning interpretation and agreed these types of units should be regulated by zoning classifications.

There was not much conversation on the parking issues with some members noting there didn't appear to be parking issues and other noting some cities will add requirements for additional off-street parking for additional bedrooms.

The commission asked Bird to seek some other cities' examples and report back. The commission also noted they didn't want to be too restrictive.

Discussion regarding C-3 sign code amendments, historic preservation

The commission welcomed three members of the city's historical preservation commission; Judy Vander Linden, Hayley Jackson, and Steve Kelsay. They noted their commission is interested in beginning a discussion about sign codes in the downtown area. Vander Linden noted that since the downtown district is not on the National Register of Historic Places a sign code would help educate and enhance various aspects of that distinction.

Cook noted he is supportive of historic signage but believes it should be voluntary.

Kelsay referred to other cities as examples of good sign code that can be complimentary to downtown districts, especially those in a historic district.

Bird noted he would work with the historical preservation commission on some examples and he provided the HPC a copy of the city's C-3 sign code for review.

Discussion regarding zoning code amendments

This item was tabled as the city is still waiting for more information from FEMA on the next steps in the process.

Other business

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chad A. Bird".

Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator