

City of Decorah
Planning and Zoning Commission
September 9, 2019 – 7:00pm
Meeting Minutes

Members present included: Llew Jenkins, Tony Clarke, Stan Moellers, Ryan Delaney, Joel Zook, and Barbara Massman.

Absent: Nathan Thompson.

Others present: Zoning Administrator / City Manager Chad Bird.

Consider approval of minutes from the August 12, 2019 regular meeting and August 21, 2019 special meeting

Motion by Massman and seconded by Delany to approve the minutes from the August 12, 2019 regular meeting.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Motion by Zook and seconded by Massman to approve the minutes from the August 21, 2019 special meeting.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

7:00pm – public hearing

Nathan Thompson arrived at this point in the meeting.

7:06pm

Public hearing on zoning code amendments – City Code Chapter 17 - 17.08, 17.64, 17.63, 17.68, updates, definitions, and allowable uses for solar equipment

Bird reviewed the proposed code amendments and noted the amendment reviewed the definitions of solar and expanded on solar collectors, roof mounting systems and ground mounting systems. The code amendments also clarified which zoning districts could allow solar appurtenances by right. Bird further stated this amendment would bring the code sections into line with the current practices in the zoning department.

Zook added the amendments will also help the City qualify for the SolSmart city certification.

There were no comments received at City Hall prior to the meeting and Chair Moellers called for public comments three times during the public hearing with no resident stepping forward to speak to the issue.

The public hearing was closed.

Consider **Resolution No. 2019-06**, an amendment to Chapter 17.08, 17.64, 17.63, 17.68, updates, definitions, and allowable uses in zoning districts in regard to solar equipment

Bird reiterated the City signed on this national “city designation” program for communities designed to:

Recognizing cities, counties, and small towns that are open for solar business. SolSmart helps local governments bring new business to their community, promote economic growth, and foster the creation of new jobs. As a program

funded by the **U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office**, the goal is to make it faster, easier, and more affordable to go solar.

The Winneshiek Energy District is currently administering a grant to work on the designation with the City and the outcome would be a significant honor and bragging rights.

Bird noted the Commission's resolution calls out amending sections 17.08.010; 17.64 – A-1 Agricultural, 17.63.030 – Permitted Accessory Uses; 17.68 – R-1 Single Family Residential, 17.64.030 – Permitted Accessory Uses and the following to the "Permitted Accessory Uses" section of C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, HM, and M-1.

Motion by Jenkins and seconded by Thompson to move to approve Resolution No. 2019-06, an amendment to Chapter 17.08, 17.64, 17.63, 17.68, updates, definitions, and allowable uses in zoning districts in regard to solar equipment
Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.
Motion passed.

Consider **Resolution No. 2019-07**, Riverwalk Second Addition subdivision, final plat amendment

Bird reviewed this submitted replat of a previous subdivision of land noting the owner / applicant is proposing to amend the Riverwalk Second Addition subdivision by dividing this larger last lot into three. Bird reviewed the city code, namely section 16.04.040 which requires any such subdivision to be recommended for approval by the Commission and final approval by the City Council. He stated this submission will be considered a subdivision but amending the previous final plat approved in March 2016.

Bird introduced owner Steve Munkel who explained he intends to subdivide lot 8 into three smaller parcels and sell them individually rather than put a four or five-plex unit on the lot. He and Bird also noted one area of the plan that needs to be addressed is to move the Lot 2 property line, so the sidewalk remains in the right-of-way (ROW). They explained this proposed subdivision is in an R-3 subdivision.

Motion by Clarke and seconded by Thompson to approve Resolution No. 2019-07, Riverwalk Second Addition subdivision, final plat amendment contingent on the sidewalk matter being resolved prior to city council approval and recording. Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.
Motion passed.

Consider site plan approval for Barthell Eastern Star Assisted Living Addition – *site plan amendment*

Bird introduced the team from Eastern Star and noted they are modifying and amending their original plat / site plan from April 2018 and considering a smaller addition to the main care facility. Bird noted much of the site work is unchanged from existing conditions or from the original site plan approval. The main revisions consist of a smaller building addition and some storm water provisions that provide underground detention.

Staff has provided April 2018 plan sets and the newer amended plans for comparison and completed a review of the newest submittal. In the staff comments, Bird review the following points with the Commission and the owner / applicant;

- *Add sidewalks to the plan documents,*
- *Need to confirm the diameter of the effluent pipe from the stormwater detention system.*
- *Does the detention system have an overflow for larger events – please note location on site plan.*
- *There appears to be an intake with a short stub of pipe on the far west side of the project. Don't know if this is supposed to be there or if it's just a linework mistake.*
- *Planning to abandon the existing water and sewer service?*
- *Clarification on the SWPPP for Phase II. Given the past issues at this site, we just want to make sure adequate erosion control is provided.*

Laurie Kreul noted she would share this information with her design team and respond to the city's questions as soon as possible.

Motion by Zook and seconded by Moellers to recommend site plan approval for Barthell Eastern Star Assisted Living Addition – site plan amendment subject to addressing issues raised by staff and to staff's satisfaction.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider Site Plan / C-3 Commercial Design Review re: building relocation; 337 Washington Street

Bird noted Steve Olson is proposing to move an older building from 302 Washington Street / Decorah Building Supply and move it to the vacant lot at 337 Washington Street.

Bird stated he attempted to review this application in the context of a C-3 checklist review, he admitted many of the points in the code checklist did not seem to apply to this specific application. He noted while this is a commercial site and a C-3 design site, much of the proposed project does not match up to some of the code review requirements.

Olson explained he wanted to preserve the old building and move it to this site and use the area for storage with the idea that it may become a shop at a later date. He explained he would tie the storm run-off to the existing systems if possible but no other site improvements were intended for the property at this time – other than to move the building to the site and set it on concrete pillars.

Discussion and review of Chapter 15.04 – Design Criteria - C-3 Design Guidelines

a. *Discussion with John Jenkins and Historic Preservation Commission*

Jenkins presented information relative to the history of the downtown C-3 design code and guidelines stating several individuals spent about 12 months reviewing developing

the codes about 15 years ago. He believed it was time to again review the codes and make

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some changes. He proposed changes in administration of the code, perhaps there may be some elements that could be modified to include a staff review and approval; he noted possible improvements to window and door review; and he and Historic Preservation Commission Chair Mark Muggli would like to propose an HPC review at some step in the process be discussed.

The Commission engaged in discussion about the codes and agreed with Jenkins to form a team to review the code and provide some guidance on the administration and permitting process. Thompson, Massman, and Llew Jenkins all expressed some interest in volunteering to assist in the process.

John Jenkins and Muggli agreed to convene a group to begin the review process. They thanked the Commission for the support and encouragement to proceed with a review of these codes. They both shared that it is now more important to improve the C-3 review process since the Downtown District is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Discussion and possible action on zoning code sections related to short-term lodging units and rentals

Bird provided a map of the AirBnB and short-term rental units in the community, a carry-over from the August meeting and discussion about the number of units in the community.

Bird again share information summer intern Ira Kuehn has collected regarding short-term rentals in the community. In 2017 there was a total of 26 different Airbnb listings within the city limits of Decorah. Since then, 53 new listings have gone up on the Airbnb website while 8 of the original 26 are no longer listed.

There was general discussion and Bird shared that he would begin looking into some licensing information and comparable information from other cities.

Other business

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26pm

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator