

CITY OF DECORAH  
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT  
Minutes of January 8, 2020

Sue Sander called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and the following answered roll:  
John Jenkins, Carol Hagen, Kraig Tweed, and Janelle Pavlovec.

Also, in attendance: Zoning Administrator Chad Bird.

Consider election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair

*Hagen suggested Sander remain at Chair. Jenkins stated that the current slate, with Hagen as Vice-Chair was working well.*

**Hagen moved and Jenkins seconded a motion to appoint Sander as chair and Hagen as vice-chair of the Board.**

**Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Unanimously approved.**

**Motion carried.**

Review of Rules and Regulations

*Bird distributed a copy of the Board's Rules and Regulations for consideration. He noted adoption of rules was required per the City Code for the Board. In discussion, the Board did not have any proposed changes and suggested leaving them as-is.*

**Tweed moved and Jenkins seconded a motion to affirm the Rules and Regulations as previously approved.**

**Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Unanimously approved.**

**Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes of the November 25, 2019 meeting

Approval of Minutes of the November 25, 2019 meeting

**Jenkins moved and Pavlovec Seconded a motion to approve the minutes of November 25, 2019.**

**Roll call vote: Ayes: Hagen, Jenkins, and Sander. Motion was approved.**

Alliant Energy – special use permit

for Highland Drive public land requesting permission to construct utility infrastructure contrary to the R-2 single to four family residential zoning district regulations

*Rick Zimmerman, Mike Wagner, and Dustin Mohs presented the site plan and lease agreement noting their project consists of an electric battery installation in the park land site. Zimmerman noted it is a lithium ion battery technology and is essentially a traditional battery just on a much larger capacity scale.*

*Bird noted that electric and gas substations are permitted in these areas with a special use permit. He further noted the area is zoned R-2 Single- to Four-Family Residential Zoning.*

*Hagen asked whether the site would be fenced and Zimmerman noted the site would have an eight-foot chain-link fence around the structures. Andy Nimrod, Parks &*

*Recreation Director notes the fencing would also be screened and have some type of landscaping to help shield the site.*

*Hagen also asked about cautionary signage. Zimmerman and Nimrod noted it would have property signage and in further discussions they both agreed some type of educational and instructional signage would be added to let people know about the site and technology being used.*

*Zimmerman noted the battery is a 2.5 Mega Watt per Hour device and the full station would be capable of 2 Mega Watts of stored power.*

*Hagen and Jenkins continued the conversation about landscaping and both Zimmerman and Nimrod acknowledged they would continue to discuss options once final site work was completed. Zimmerman noted he wanted to properly screen the site as the Parks Dept would want it to be.*

*In Public Comments; Bird read a few comments he'd had with adjoining resident Steve Nordheim. Bird shared Nordheim was about stray voltage, property values, leaking oil and discharge from the battery, and screening of the site.*

*Zimmerman noted if there is stray voltage on the site or with the equipment it means the equipment is not properly grounded and Alliant would address this issue immediately. He also discussed the equipment and safety. He said all the components and equipment are self-contained and if there is oil leakage it is minimal. He also noted the oil is linseed oil and does not contain contaminants.*

*Nimrod noted the Park Board looked on this project in a positive light and was supportive in working with Alliant.*

**Jenkins moved and Tweed seconded a motion to approve the special use permit subject to Alliant working with the Park Board on securing appropriate safety and educational signage.**

**Roll call vote: Unanimously approved.**

Olsgard Auto – special use permit  
for 1658 State Hwy 9 requesting permission to perform auto repair and rebuild services contrary to the C-1 highway commercial district zoning district regulations

*Bird introduced this application for a special use permit and stated Mr. Travis Schluter is seeking to apply for an expanded license through the Iowa Department of Transportation. He noted his license only allows for up to six autos to be rebuilt, he would propose to rebuild more, as time, labor, and resources allows.*

*Bird noted the zoning code does not provide for auto salvage in the C-1 Highway Commercial District but does allow for auto related businesses and activities. Bird state because of this language he believed the Board should determine the extent of what may or may not be allowed for salvage activities.*

*Schluter noted he would only be rebuilding autos as resources allow, maybe ten or so per year. He also indicated he would not be rebuilding larger trucks or other types of vehicles.*

*There were no public comments.*

*Bird stated there may be covenants that run with the land in the Decorah Business Park, he noted any possible approval might be contingent on the covenants.*

**Tweed moved and Hagen seconded a motion to approve the special use permit for Travis Schluter subject to a review of the land and subdivision covenants.  
Roll call vote: Unanimously approved.**

Other Business:

*The board set Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 5:15pm as the next meeting.*

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,

