

City of Decorah
Planning and Zoning Commission
May 11, 2020 – 7:00pm
Meeting Minutes

Electronic meeting pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8 – In circumstances where such a meeting is impossible or impractical due to concerns about COVID-19 and social distancing for the safety of commission members and the public.

In support of Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' proclamation declaring a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency in Iowa, the current COVID-19 situation makes it "impossible and impractical" to meet in one location. Due to this the Decorah City Hall was closed to the public for the May 11, 2020 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. The public was invited to participate via electronic means.

Members present included: Nathan Thompson, Ryan Delaney, Jared Essa, Tony Clarke, Barbara Massman, Llew Jenkins, and Joel Zook.

Others present: Zoning Administrator / City Manager Chad Bird.

Consider approval of minutes from the April 13, 2020 regular meeting

Motion by Zook and seconded by Jenkins to approve the minutes from the April 13, 2020 regular meeting.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

7:00pm – public hearing

Public hearing on a request for rezoning of property; *Downing Commercial subdivision, 172nd Avenue parcel(s) from A-1 Agricultural District to C-1 Highway Commercial District and Scenic View Estates Subdivision from A-1 Agricultural District to R-3 Multiple Family Residential District, three areas*

Bird stated this hearing is required for the proposed rezoning of these area. He further stated the property owners are in agreement to the proposed rezoning as this was contemplated in the recent annexation agreement requesting annexation of these parcels.

Bird clarified there are four areas being rezoned; three R-3 residential areas and one C-1 commercial area.

The two annexed areas would be rezoned from A-1 Ag to the City zoning of R-3 multi-family residential zoning and from A-1 Ag to C-1 Hwy commercial zoning.

The two clean-up areas are simply restating the intended zoning to R-3 multi-family residential zoning.

Two of the smaller areas noted on the map include, and are a result of, final annexation and some clean up necessary due to overlap of several additions / subdivisions to the original Scenic View Estates subdivision platting.

No public comments were received during the hearing.

Consider **Resolution No. 2020-05**, a request for rezoning of property; *Downing Commercial subdivision, 172nd Avenue parcel(s) from A-1 Agricultural District to C-1 Highway Commercial District and Scenic View Estates Subdivision from A-1 Agricultural District to R-3 Multiple Family Residential District, three areas*

There was no further commission discussion.

Motion by Clarke and seconded by Delaney to approve resolution no. 2020-05, a request for rezoning of property; Downing Commercial subdivision, 172nd Avenue parcel(s) from A-1 Agricultural District to C-1 Highway Commercial District and Scenic View Estates Subdivision from A-1 Agricultural District to R-3 Multiple Family Residential District, three areas.
Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.
Motion passed.

7:00pm – public hearing

Public hearing on Decorah City Code amendments to Chapter 15.04 – Design Criteria in the City of Decorah

Bird reviewed the lengthy discussion and review of this chapter. He stated the chapter is sometimes known as the C-3 design guidelines. The code section was proposed by a committee and adopted by city council in 2005, and Bird said except for minor revisions, the code has been untouched since its inception.

Bird noted some of the prevailing arguments for the review of this code and proposed amendments stem from the Downtown District's inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. This prompted some to ask if the code is compatible with National level review standards. Other considerations came from a desire to begin a more formalized review of design applications by the Decorah Historic Preservation Commission.

Bird reviewed some of the meeting and discussion dates in the review process.

SSMID – November 6, 2019

DDBA – November 20, 2019

Retail Committee - January 14, 2020

Can this be mailed directly to businesses downtown?

DHPC – endorsement – February 10, 2020

City Council work session – February 24, 2020

Meet with contractors and realtors

Realtors – March 3, 2020

Planning & Zoning Commission review – March 9, 2020

Planning & Zoning Commission review – April 11, 2020

Planning & Zoning Commission public hearing and recommendation – May 11, 2020

Bird concluded remarks by noting the staff and the Historic Preservation Commission submitted the final draft version to the State Historic Preservation Office and comments have been received. Staff and DHPC members are reviewing those comments.

Steve Kelsey, 500 Center Avenue, and a member of the Decorah Historic Preservation Commission noted the commission is working on a pictorial design guideline to accompany the code section.

Zook asked about ongoing, and future education and enforcement of the code. Bird noted he had met with several user groups but that he was open to suggestions for ways to better communicate the code to the public.

Massman suggested having the code attached to property titles or abstracts. Bird noted he would research that option with legal counsel.

Consider **Resolution No. 2020-06**, an amendment to Chapter 15.04 – Design Criteria in the City of Decorah

In further commission discussion, there was agreement with the commission that the study team could review the State's recommendations and make amendments before sending the final version to the city council. Bird agreed that if there were significant changes, as determined by the committee, the final draft would be brought back to the commission for review.

Motion by Jenkins and seconded by Massman to approve resolution no. 2020-06, an amendment to Chapter 15.04 – Design Criteria in the City of Decorah
Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.
Motion passed.

Consider an amended Site Plan Review re: 105 St. Lawrence Street, *Quandahl Investment Properties, LLC, multi-family residential unit*

Bird noted that on April 13, 2020 the P&Z Commission had approved the submitted site plan contingent on the developer / applicant reviewing parking with the Board of Adjustment for a possible variance.

Bird confirmed the Board of Adjustment considered the matter on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 and because they believed changes to the parking lot layout to be significant, the Board set the site plan back to P&Z for reconsideration.

Kole and Dexter Quandahl presented a modified site plan showing 17 parking spaces in the rear lot of the property. The new site plan also showed an entrance drive to the off-street parking to the West of the principal Structure.

Jenkins asked about storm water control as she had received comment from a resident concerned with storm water control. Quandahl noted storm water from the principal structure was being piped to the city system unground. Parking lot storm water was to be shed to the street.

Zook made comment that he appreciated the work the developer had put into the amended lay out and reconfigured parking.

Clarke commented that he also appreciated the changes and believed they present a better site plan and that the changes better reflect the character of the neighborhood.

Thompson asked about accommodations for solid waste collection and Quandahls noted they would provide space and work with the local hauler on the best site.

Massman also asked about bike racks and Quandahls noted they would provide them, probably in the front yard.

Karl Knudson spoke against several of the design features and the site plan review process. He noted he is speaking for several of the residents as they had hired him to oppose the site plan.

Knudson voiced objections over lighting, landscaping, the overall parking layout, and indicated there are no building plans.

City Engineer Jeremy Bril noted the parking lot would appear to be a "low turnover" parking facility and he referenced SUDAS guidelines as providing some direction.

Clarke asked Bril to comment on storm water discharge and Bril noted it is being sent to the City's system. He noted the system is older but is not one of the most deficient in the city. He said this area does not warrant attention by his staff when there are localized flood events.

Massman voiced support for the project noting Decorah needs more of this type of housing.

Zook commented on site drainage and noted the curb on the East side of the entrance drive. Thought discussion the Quandahls agreed to slope the entrance drive away from adjoining properties and to lengthen the provided curb to channel the storm water to the city storm water system via the street.

Delaney moved and Thompson seconded a motion to approve the amended site plan and to recommend approval to the city council.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 110 Washington Street, *Euro Team Physical Therapy Clinic* – awnings above windows and change signs

Bird presented the Euro Team application proposing changes to the façade of their building at 110 Washington Street. Three changes are noted:

- 1) The addition of awnings above the windows*
- 2) The addition of lighting above signs*
- 3) New signs*

Bird said there is a photo rendition of the proposed changes is in the packet with the application. He confirmed the proposed changes appear to meet the C-3 code provisions.

Steve Kelsey, 500 Center Avenue noted he was disappointed to see the lack of detail in the application and asked the Commission to call for more details on the mentioned trim and sign specifications. He urged the commission to table the application until June.

Mark Muggli, 722 Washington Street, issued a written comment that the application appears to be underdeveloped and lacking relevant information. He urged the application be tabled pending more complete information.

Adrienne Coffeen, 900 Pleasant Avenue also urged the commission to table the matter pending more complete information.

Judy van der Linden, 101 Grove Street, also urged the commission to table the matter pending more complete information.

Clarke moved and Zook seconded a motion to approve a C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 110 Washington Street, Euro Team Physical Therapy Clinic – awnings above windows and changes for signs
Roll call vote: Ayes, Clarke, Zook, Thompson, Essa, Massman.
Nays, Jenkins, Delaney.
Motion passed.

Consider setting a date for a public hearing on a request for rezoning of property; *Tom and Barbara Massman, 1513 Laurel Drive parcel from A-1 Agricultural District to R-1 Single Family Residential District*, and setting a date for a public hearing June 8, 2020 at 7:00pm

Bird noted this property was recently annexed in to the City. He said the property comes in to the city as A-1 Ag and the owners are requesting a zoning changed to R-1 single family residential zoning.

Essa moved and Zook seconded a motion to set a date for a public hearing on a request for rezoning of property; Tom and Barbara Massman, 1513 Laurel Drive parcel from A-1 Agricultural District to R-1 Single Family Residential District, June 8, 2020 at 7:00pm
Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.
Motion passed.

Other business

In other business Bird mentioned consideration to amending zoning regulations regarding parking space requirements and shipping containers.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:49pm

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator