

CITY OF DECORAH  
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT  
Minutes of May 13, 2020

This meeting was an 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 13, 2020 Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting. However, the meeting was made available telephonically. The public was able to hear and participate in the board meeting.

Sue Sander called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m. and the following answered roll:  
John Jenkins, Carol Hagen, Janelle Pavlovec, and Kraig Tweed.

Also, in attendance: Zoning Administrator Chad Bird.

Bird noted the only agenda item is the site plan for Quandahl Investment Properties, LLC for 105 St. Lawrence Street requesting permission to construct a multi-family residential unit and to seek a variance for parking.

Kole Quandahl for Quandahl Investment Properties, LLC for 105 St. Lawrence Street requesting permission to construct a multi-family, parking area on a residential lot contrary to the R-3 Zoning District regulations (*section 17.52.020*)

*Quandahl presented his application and noted he had shown 16 spaces on the site plan but was seeking a variance to 12 spaces and he believed it would provide better site layout and traffic flow. He noted city code requires two spaces per unit for a total of 16 spaces. Quandahl also noted the site plan was approved by the planning and zoning commission.*

*Attorney for several adjoining property owners, Karl Knudson presented a letter and information arguing the site is not suited for multi-family residential and that this type of parking does not fit the lot.*

*Knudson argued that four of the parking spaces are unusable. He stated he believes only 10 of the spaces shown are compliant and usable.*

*Knudson discussed site drainage for storm water and provided a lengthy overview of SUDAS regulations. He said there are major exceptions and problems with this plan and he recommends against it.*

*Gary Ronnie, 504 Washington Street, asked to see a copy of the site plan and it was noted a copy is in the Board's electronic packet.*

*Carol Hagen asked for clarification of which spaces Knudson thought were not compliant.*

*Piper Hobbs, 202 St. Lawrence Street asked where the trash area is located. She also expressed concerns with frequency of trash pick-up, when the hauler might come around, how they might maneuver the area, and with the limited off-street parking she felt there would be too much on-street parking.*

*Hobbs believed this project was like putting ten gallons of water in a five-gallon bucket. This project is simply too big for this lot.*

*She believed, from a sustainability standpoint, one does not put new structures on older lots and older neighborhoods. She believes it goes against sustainability efforts.*

*Lee Hackman, 500 Washington Street, urged the Board to use SUDAS or use City Codes, but not both. He felt this project was being shoe-horned in to a small lot.*

*Ron Moffitt, 508 Washington Street, said the developer was proposing to seek a variance for parking spaces that weren't usable anyway. He believed the developer was trying to cram this project in a tight spot.*

*Brian Weir, address unknown, said this project is too big and asked what the overall hardship really is. He said less parking doesn't equate to more greenspace in this site plan.*

*Kole Quandahl wondered about the parking regulations for the Washington Street Apts.*

*Kari Hanson, 504 Washington Street, said there are non-parking issues. She said most of this issue could have been resolved with just talking. If the developers had talked to their neighbors. She urged the Board to stick to the codes.*

*There were no additional public comments.*

*In board discussion, Tweed moved to deny the application for a variance from 16 parking spaces to 12. Pavlovec seconded the motion.*

*Hagen asked the applicant if they would consider a four-unit complex. Quandahl said the finances just don't work with less units. He noted they had considered a six-unit but indicated it was still a very difficult financial situation.*

*Jenkins asked about Baker Street parking. Bird indicated that still presents a code issue.*

*The Board had no further questions or comments.*

**Tweed moved and Pavlovec seconded a motion to deny the application for a variance from 16 parking spaces to 12 parking spaces.**

**Roll call vote:**

**Nays, Tweed, Pavlovec, Hagen, Jenkins**

**Ayes, Sander**

**Motion was approved 4-1 and the application was denied.**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

