

City of Decorah
Planning and Zoning Commission
October 12, 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 partially closed to the public for the October 12, 2020 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Seating was limited to ensure distancing. The public was invited to participate via electronic means.

Members present included: Nathan Thompson, Jared Essa, Ryan Delaney, Terri Byrnes, Tony Clarke, Marla Klocke, and Joel Zook.

Others present: Various citizens logged into the Zoom platform.

Consider approval of minutes from the September 14, 2020 regular meeting

Motion by Zook and second by Klocke to approve the minutes from the September 14, 2020 regular meeting.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 411 West Water Street, *The Dress; signs and front façade paint*

Bird reviewed the C-3 application for this property and noted the Decorah Historic Preservation Commission has also reviewed the sign application.

Bird further noted the applicant had a sudden availability open in the painting schedule and asked that the Commission review her proposed paint theme for the outside façade of the building. The building owner apologized stating she had planned on painting in the spring but the painter was available at this time.

Mark Muggli, speaking for himself offered some comments on the painting elements and offered to work with the building owner.

There were no other commission comments.

Motion by Clarke and second by Klocke to recommend approval of the C-3 design application for 411 West Water Street for signage and painting of the façade.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 202 West Water Street, *Magpie Coffee House; blade sign*

Bird apologized for the last-minute addition of this item to the agenda, he noted he was trying to help the applicant perform the work prior to the end of the construction season.

Mark Muggli, speaking for himself noted the sign seemed to fit with other signs and general design in the district.

Zook asked about the material the sign would be made of. Bird state he was unsure but would determine the material for a complete application.

Motion by Klocke and second by Byrnes to recommend approval of the C-3 design application for 202 West Water Street for a blade sign.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on site plan amendment re: 105 St. Lawrence Street, *Quandahl Investment Properties, LLC, multi-family residential unit*

Bird explained the process on this application and noted the original site plan had been approved on July 13, 2020. He also reviewed the appeal to the site plan approval that was filed by Karl Knudson on behalf of several property owners.

Bird explained there is no clear recourse in the zoning code for staff level approval of minor amendments and changes to the site plan, thus he is presenting the original site plan with a slight change proposed by the developer.

Bird explained the change includes reducing the number of residential units from eight to seven. Because of this proposed change, there is less parking required. Bird said the submitted amended site plan shows the building essentially the same, original size, but the required and provided number of parking spaces reduced to 14. Bird also noted there is no change in the parking lot layout, just the number of parking spaces.

There was no commission discussion.

Motion by Clarke and second by Delaney to recommend approval of the amended site plan for 105 St. Lawrence Street to reduce from eight to seven residential dwelling units.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider setting a public hearing on zoning code amendments, Chapter 17 – Zoning; related to storage containers in the City of Decorah; *November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm*

Bird reviewed some of the history on the this proposed code amendment. He noted others had recently engaged in conversation about these structures in the community and asked Bird to review possible code language to govern and regulate their use.

Bird reviewed changes previously discussed by the commission; grandfathering and permitting processes and timelines being the most pressing matters.

Essa noted the ordinance should use consistent labels and descriptions; replace cargo with shipping / storage, etc.

Thompson and Delaney noted they would like to see a deadline imposed on permits and containers' use on a residential property.

In section C, there was general consensus to strike subsection D.

Motion by Essa and second by Zook to set Monday, November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm as the time and date for a public hearing on zoning code amendments, Chapter 17 – Zoning; related to storage containers in the City of Decorah.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider setting a public hearing on zoning code amendments, Chapter 17.52 – Zoning; parking spaces in the City of Decorah; *November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm*

Bird reviewed the proposed amendments and noted the general parking and loading section is approximately 27 years old and some of the subsections are in need of update and revision.

There was general consensus and discussion about inserting and referring to SUDAS in the loading and parking section. Bird noted he still needed to complete a compare and contrast with some of the specific subsections in regards to off-street parking requirements. He noted some are more and some are less restrictive than current city code.

There was no other commission discussion.

Motion by Delaney and second by Thompson to set Monday, November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm as the time and date for a public hearing on zoning code amendments, Chapter 17.52 – Zoning; loading and parking spaces in the City of Decorah.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider setting a public hearing on zoning code amendments, Chapter 17.68; 17.72; 17.76 – Zoning code; residential definitions, dwellings, room houses, boarding houses in the City of Decorah; *November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm*

Bird reviewed this section and noted it is an effort to update the section to be in line with the new rental licensing codes recently adopted. He noted that, while his proposed amendments are minor, he wanted the commission to have the opportunity to consider the entire “R” sections during this review.

There was general discussion about removing subsection “K” in relation to agricultural practices and the commission wondered why Ag practices should be allowed to continue in residential districts. Initial recommendation of the commission is to repeal subsection “K”.

Motion by Zook and second by Delaney to set Monday, November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm as the time and date for a public hearing on zoning code amendments, Chapter 17.68; 17.72; 17.76 – Zoning code; residential definitions, dwellings, room houses, boarding houses in the City of Decorah.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider setting a public hearing on zoning code amendments, Chapter 17.140 – Floodplain Management Ordinance 17.120 – F-1 Floodplain District in the City of Decorah; *November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm*

Bird noted the recommendations highlighted for this section come from FEMA, through the DNR representatives. He noted the proposed sections are amended to bring the older code sections in to alignment with the pending Flood Insurance Rating Map (FIRM) adoption which is expected late in 2020.

There was little to no comments from the commission.

Motion by Zook and second by Klocke to set Monday, November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm as the time and date for a public hearing on zoning code amendments, Chapter 17.140 – Floodplain Management Ordinance 17.120 – F-1 Floodplain District in the City of Decorah; *November 9, 2020 at 7:00pm*

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Other business

Klocke asked Bird to review the C-3 Downtown Design District enforcement procedures.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm

Respectfully submitted,

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

Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator