

City of Decorah
Planning and Zoning Commission
September 14, 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 September 14, 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 August 10, 2020 regular meeting

Motion by Thompson and second by Klocke to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2020 regular meeting.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 207 Washington Street, *The Clay Studio* – *repointing mortar replacing bricks*

Bird reviewed the application and noted it also comes with a recommendation for approval from the Historic Preservation Commission.

Bird noted the majority of the proposed work includes masonry and repointing work, lime stone replacement and brick work.

Zook questioned that the application appears to be focused on repair and maintenance and wondered why an application was presented to the Commission. Bird replied staff is still working through the new processes since the Chapter 15.04 amendments.

Motion by Thompson and second by Delaney to recommend approval of the C-3 design application for 207 Washington Street for the Clay Studio.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on code amendment; shipping containers ordinance

Bird provided 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 said he had pulled examples from other comparable cities for a draft.

In conversation, Thompson questions why the City would regulate the aesthetics of these structures if they otherwise meet code.

There was also question about whether the city should grandfather existing uses if a new code is adopted or if the city should allow any such existing uses until their demise.

Klocke questioned if the time period for temporary use was long enough, thirty days may be too short a period of time for construction or related activities.

Discussion and possible action on code amendment; loading and parking spaces ordinance amendments

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

He specifically noted an attachment E as being confusing and rudimentary in nature. Bird recommended the commission look to the Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) standards as a reference and perhaps SUDAS could be adopted by reference and some sections amended in or out as the case may be.

There was general discussion regarding residential dwelling unit requirements, landscaping, and general parking lot designs.

The commission agreed looking into SUDAS specs might be a good review of more timely code provisions. Bird stated he would amend the draft to include SUDAS language.

Discussion and possible action on code amendment; residential definitions, dwellings, room houses, boarding houses

Bird presented this proposed code amendment as 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".

Discussion and possible action on Chapter 17.140 – Floodplain Management Ordinance
17.120 – F-1 Floodplain District (*either or both sections – FEMA recommendations*)

Bird noted the recommendations highlighted for this section come from FEMA, through the DNR. 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.

Bird proposed the commission lay out a code amendment recommendation schedule with the October meeting being a final review date to set a public hearing on these provisions. The hearing would be held in November followed by formal recommendation action to send the proposed amendments to the city council. The city council would then consider the recommendations in December.

Other business

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11pm

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator