

CITY OF DECORAH
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
March 8, 2021-7:00pm
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 Council members and the public.

In support of Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' proclamation declaring a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency the Decorah City Hall will have limited seating to remain under 50% capacity at required social distancing protocol during the March 8, 2021 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. Access to the Chambers will be limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. However, the meeting will be made available electronically. The public will be able to hear and participate in the Commission meeting by calling:

Members present included: Ryan Delaney, Terri Byrnes, Tony Clarke, Marla Klocke, Joel Zook, and Nathan Thompson *via Zoom*.

Absent: Jared Essa.

Others present: Various citizens logged into the Zoom platform

Consider approval of minutes from the February 8, 2021 regular meeting.

Motion by Zook and second by Klocke to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2021 regular meeting.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design Review re: 222 West Water Street, *Ethos Design Group – change in sign design*

Bird reviewed the sign application submittal for Ethos Design Group, a local architectural firm has purchased this building and is changing the signs "skins". No other changes proposed.

The triangle sign on the front of the building (two sided) will be removed in favor of a single panel flat fascia sign. There are two awning signs, one on either end of the awning. Three total signs. All signs appear to meet codes and suggested approval.

Clarke called for commission discussion.

Zook asked if the 2-sided sign will remain or will it be removed.

Bird clarified that it would be removed and a new flat sign would be put in the same location.

Clarke called for public comment.

No public comments were made.

Motion by Delaney and second by Byrnes to recommend approval of the C-3 Commercial Design application for signage.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Consider C-3 Commercial Design review re: 121 West Water Street, *JKN Properties, LLC, front façade work*

Bird stated that this is the Hacker Nelson building adjacent to their main office facility.

The proposed plan is to modify / remodel the front façade of the existing building at 121 W. Water.

Proposed plans and concept design are in the packet. The plan appears to carry the design features from the main Hacker Nelson building over to the newly acquired building at 121 W. Water (Happiness Is).

Bird also noted that this was a full façade renovation and the background info provided included a review from Historic Preservation and to take that info into account.

Clarke invited Hacker Nelson to speak.

Ryan Bullerman and Kelly Brickley, representatives of Hacker Nelson, explained they plan to match the existing building at 123 west Water Street and the design they provided is straight forward with intent to tear off the old front and replace it. They did state they had considered moving or building new but knowing they are hiring additional staff and want to remain as a presence in the downtown, the option of restoration of the next-door property was a better option.

Clarke called for commission discussion.

Thompson and Zook stated the info provided was vague and questioned what was planned for the structure under the façade. Also, the commission should consider the report from the Historic Preservation Commission, they have put a lot of effort into the C-3 guidelines.

Mark Muggli, representing the Historic Preservation Commission, hoped that their report had been considered, gave highlights as to why preservation was important to the community and the report more resembled historic accuracy and hoped they would follow its findings.

He also added the commission is urging the applicant to explore alternative options for the façade before complete demolition.

Judy Van der Linden, from the DHPC, also added sees the commission's proposal as a win to preserve the intent of the C-3 codes. Their proposal more resembled the historical accuracy and hoped that they would follow the guidelines.

Byrnes supports the application and sees this as a pro-business project for Downtown and thanked HN for their investment.

Muggli noted he doesn't see the commission's proposal as anti-business or resisting development and change but does appreciate the efforts of HN.

Clarke called for public comment.

No public comments were made.

**Motion by Klocke and second by Byrnes to recommend approval the C-3 Commercial Design application for 121 West Water Street, JKN Properties, LLC, front façade work.
Roll call vote: Ayes; Klocke, Byrnes, Delaney, Zook, Clarke.
Nays; Thomason
Absent: Essa
Motion passed.**

Consider an amended Site Plan Review re: 909 South Mill Street, *Mill Street Mocha – commercial building*

Bird stated the Commission originally approved the site plan for this commercial application on February 8 subject to Board of Adjustment approval of variances.

The Board of Adjustment (March 3) approved variances for:
Three parking spaces from the code required four
1.5-foot setback on the South side
11.5-foot setback on the North side
Two-foot setback for the East parking spaces

During conversations with Board of Adjustment and City staff, the application has made modifications to the site plan which improve overall flow for the site.

Because of these minor modifications, Bird said staff recommend an amended review by the Commission.

Modifications include:

Flipping the drive-thru to the South of the site.

Elimination of the need for the two-foot parking space setback, the applicant is able to provide the required ten-feet.

The ADA stall shifts to the West and is re-oriented to a Division Street access. This change eliminates the need for a required 15-foot driveway.

Bird and Swanson noted the rezoning application and final site plan approval will be in front of city council on March 15.

Byrnes noted this is a large building on a small lot and appreciated the efforts to make this work out.

Zook wondered why the city would require any parking. Swanson noted the city codes did require some onsite parking and the applicants had received a variance to reduce the required number of onsite parking to three spaces and any further reduction would be a Board of Adjustment decision.

Motion by Zook and second by Thompson to recommend approval of the amended site plan for 909 South Mill Street, Mill Street Mocha.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Discussion and possible action on amendment to Chapter 15.04 – C-3 Design Criteria

Zook raised the question of staff approval of sign application within the C-3 district. He wondered if simpler sign application couldn't be approved at the staff level. He noted he was not aware of any applications having been denied by the commission.

Bird noted that if the sign and application met codes, he would see this suggestion as a way to streamline the process.

Bird recommended a discussion on this proposed code amendment with DHPC first then bring suggested language to the commission for action in April or May. The commission agreed with this recommendation.

Thompson said he agreed with the sign ordinances and believed it would be alright to extend approval authority to the zoning administrator.

Discussion and possible action on creation of a stormwater management ordinance

Bird and City Engineer Jeremy Brill presented a draft of a new stormwater management ordinance.

Brill reviewed the ordinance and said it would primarily impact commercial and residential subdivision projects in the future. It is designed to better manage stormwater issues in new developments.

Thompson said this is a positive step for the community and will help decrease storm runoff for these types of developments.

Brill and Bird also noted the draft had been reviewed by the Sustainability Commission.

Motion by Thompson and second by Klocke to recommend approval of the draft stormwater management ordinance to city council.

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Other business

1. *Discussion and presentation of proposed plans for 318 Washington Street*

Scott and Kerry Johanningmeier discussed their proposed exterior maintenance work at this location. There was general discussion and the commission saw this work as "maintenance" under the C-3 design guideline process.

In other business, Klocke raised the idea of changing the start time for meetings from 7:00pm to 5:30pm. The commission agreed to consider this for future meetings.

Delaney expressed concerns for an early start time in summer months.

The commission agreed to consider a time change at the April meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager
Zoning Administrator