

PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, August 26, 2015

Present: Cindy Wermuth (Chairman), Bill Fitzsimmons (Vice Chairman), Brandy Howe, Dennis Kelly, Dan McConaghy, John Wetzel, Jeff Nelson, Mike Crotty, Butch Trevor

Absent: Pete McDermott, Matt Puck

Staff: Shawn Christ, Alan Sabat, Anamaria Vera

Others: Timothy A. O'Neil, Martin Newey, Pastor Flint Miller

1. Swearing in of persons to give testimony.

Mr. Christ swore in the persons who wished to provide testimony.

2. Open Public Hearing

Chairman Wermuth opened the Public Hearing for PC 15-06.

3. PC 15-06: Public hearing to consider proposal from the Moline Plan Commission to rezone eight parcels from I-1 to B-4 and one parcel from O-1 to C-2 located in the 4700 block of 15th Street A, the 1500 block of 47th Avenue and the 1400-1500 block of 52nd Avenue (Shawn Christ, Land Development Manager)

Shawn Christ began the public hearing by noting that PC 15-06 is a rezoning of eight parcels from I-1 to B-4 and one from O-1 to C-2 at SouthPark West. The lots range from one-half to almost four acres and are business, commercial and vacant lots. Mr. Christ noted that the current request derived from an April 8th meeting wherein Town News rezoned four parcels to B-4. The Commissioners then requested that staff study the area to see if further rezoning of the area should be considered. Staff conducted a study in May, and in July, the Commissioners requested that staff present a proposal. Mr. Christ noted that everything is permitted in B-4, however, south of the area does not support the land use. Mr. Christ further noted that the C-2 lot is a wetland and sits much lower than the adjacent properties and thus, should not be developed.

Staff recommends approval without conditions

Discussion ensued among the Commissioners and Commissioner Wetzel noted that two lots were not included on the rezoning and inquired as to why those lots would remain I-1. Mr. Christ noted the two lots belong to Nordav (Town News) and they did not include the lots in their application because they saw potential for storage units on the lots. Commissioner Wetzel asked whether storage units were not permitted in B-4. Mr. Christ clarified that outdoor storage units were in fact not permitted within B-4.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons asked whether there was any feedback from the neighbors. Mr. Christ noted the neighbors he spoke to all seemed to be in support of the rezoning.

4. PC 15-07: Public hearing to consider a request from Tim O'Neil on behalf of the First Baptist Church for a variance to allow installation of a dynamic display sign with a 65' 6" residential buffer, 34' 6" closer than allowed, at 1901 29th Street. (Shawn Christ, Land Development Manager)

Shawn Christ noted that PC 15-07 is a sign variance made on behalf of First Baptist Church at 1901 29th Street to replace an existing sign with a new sign that is digital and have struggled with the residential buffer. Mr. Christ further noted the Church is located on a transition with residential across the street. Mr. Christ highlighted the three requirements that must be met in order for sign variance to be granted. Mr. Christ stated that he compared the request to other churches; however, those locations were all on wider streets.

Mr. Christ stated that the church had other options as opposed to a digital sign, noting that the conditions of approval had not been met by the applicant.

Staff recommends denial

Discussion ensued among the Commissioners with regards to the various options available to the applicants and the specifics of their variance request. Commissioner Kelly asked whether the Commission had the ability to recommend approval with the condition of only allowing the sign during certain hours. Mr. Christ stated he was not in support of such a condition.

Upon discussing the specifics of other churches compared by Mr. Christ it was noted that those churches were located in residential neighborhoods but the larger arterial streets allowed for the placement of digital signs at those locations.

Tim O'Neil, on behalf of First Baptist Church addressed the Commissioners and noted that the basis for the application is because the sign would not otherwise be visible if it was placed 100' back. Mr. O'Neil also noted that the proposed sign is smaller than originally anticipated with the ability to minimize the brightness.

Martin Newey on behalf of First Baptist Church noted that the as a result of lost members, the congregation is looking for ways to attract more patrons, therefore, the Church looked at what other churches were doing and noticed that a dynamic sign is becoming more widely used among churches. Mr. Newey stated that he relates a dynamic sign at a church as a symbol of a growing and vibrant church. Mr. Newey further noted that since the current members of the congregation are much older, a static sign that would require someone to physically walk up to the sign to change in the winter, did not seem ideal.

Pastor Flint on behalf of First Baptist Church stated that since 29th Street is the current sign location is ideal and a dynamic sign would allow for visibility from Avenue of the Cities.

Discussion ensued among the Commissioners with regards to neighboring signs and whether the proposed sign would cause a disturbance or nuisance to the neighbors of the church. Pastor Flint noted that he believed the Church is unique because it is relatively close to other neighboring businesses with dynamic signs. The Commissioners also discussed their concerns with regards to the trend of dynamic sign installations by churches within residential neighborhoods.

5. Close Public Hearing

There being no further comment, the public hearing was closed.

6. Call to Order

Chairman Wermuth called the meeting to order in the Moline City Council Chamber.

7. Approval of Minutes – July 8, 2015

Motion made by Commissioner Nelson; seconded by Commissioner Wetzel, to approve the minutes for July 8, 2015 with a revision that Commission Nelson was present. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Consideration

PC 15-06

Motion made by Commissioner Wetzel, seconded by Commissioner Crotty to rezone eight parcels from I-1 to B-4 and one parcel from O-1 to C-2 located in the 4700 block of 15th Street A, the 1500 block of 47th Avenue and the 1400-1500 block of 52nd Avenue. Motion carried unanimously.

PC 15-07

Motion made by Commissioner Fitzsimmons, seconded by Commissioner Howe to deny the sign variance for installation of a dynamic display sign with a 65' 6" residential buffer, 34' 6" closer than allowed, at 1901 29th Street. Motion carried five to three.

9. Review upcoming meetings

Mr. Christ noted there is no planned business for the next upcoming meeting of September 9, 2015 and expected that meeting to be cancelled. Mr. Christ further noted that a sign variance application is planned for the September 23, 2015 meeting.

10. Other Business

Jeff Anderson, City Planner gave a presentation to the Commission regarding the current, planned, and future Bikeway Plan. Mr. Anderson noted that the Bikeway Plan was adopted by Council as a part of the Comprehensive Plan and will soon become available by way of an interactive map on the City's webpage.

Mr. Christ informed the Commissioners that Holly Jackson has been moved to Public Works and advised that future meeting packets would be sent out by Anamaria Vera.

Brief discussion ensued with regard to Hamilton School among the Commissioners.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anamaria M. Vera, Administrative Secretary