

# **PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES**

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

**Present:** Bill Fitzsimmons (Chairman), Mike Crotty, Dennis Kelly, Jeff Nelson, Butch Trevor, Cindy Wermuth, John Wetzel

**Absent:** Alan Hon, Craig Mack, Pete McDermott, Matt Puck

**Staff:** Ryan Berger, Jeff Anderson

**Others:** None

## **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

## **2. Introduction of new Land Development Manager – Ryan Berger**

Jeff Anderson introduced Ryan Berger to the Commission. Mr. Berger provided the Commission with information pertaining to his past work experience in the field of urban planning and stated that he was looking forward to working with the Plan Commission.

## **3. Approval of the Minutes – January 23, 2019**

Commissioner Trevor made a motion to approve the minutes for the January 23, 2019 meeting. Commissioner Wermuth seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

## **4. New Business**

### **a. Solar Panel code discussion**

Mr. Berger stated that there have been three recent solar panel projects proposed for locations in Moline since his arrival and he thinks there may be a better way for the Zoning Code to respond to such projects. He then referred the Commission members to handouts with information pertaining to solar panels. Commissioner Nelson stated that the state of Illinois currently has an incentive for solar power and this may be contributing to the uptick in such projects. Chairman Fitzsimmons acknowledged that current solar array units may present less of a visual issue today than what was originally anticipated and reflected in the Zoning Code

language from several years ago. Several Commissioners commented and agreed that it has been a few years since the Zoning Code amendment related to solar and wind energy systems had been adopted and that it may be a good time to review for potential updates to the Code. The Commissioners continued with general discussion on the topic of solar power and solar energy systems and then stated their agreement for staff to bring back a Zoning Code text amendment proposal on the subject. The Commissioners also suggested that staff invite a local installer to participate in the discussion and the public hearing. Mr. Berger explained that the Zoning Code currently requires the approval of a Special Use Permit for the installation of solar energy systems within a Historic District; however, the adoption of the Secretary of Interior's Standards related to solar energy systems could provide the appropriate criteria so that such systems could be approved administratively and not require the additional process associated with a Special Use Permit. The consensus of the Plan Commission was to move the item on to a Public Hearing.

**5. Old Business**

- a. Residential Accessory Building – Site & Coverage Limits**
- b. Landscape Dowry**
- c. Building Height**
- d. Fences**
- e. Nonconforming Uses**

Mr. Berger referred the Plan Commission to his Memorandum that was included within the agenda packet (see attached memo dated February 22, 2019). The Commission reviewed the memo and each of the Zoning Code items as listed above in items “a – e” under “Old Business.”

**a. Residential Accessory Building – Site & Coverage Limits**

The Plan Commission instructed staff to take the necessary time needed to finalize recommendations based on the information within the staff memo.

**b. Landscape Dowry**

Mr. Berger acknowledged that the Zoning Code currently contains sufficient flexibility to accommodate special situations where it may be difficult to apply strict standards. Mr. Berger also stated that Code provides for a variance mechanism option. As such, no further action was sought or deemed necessary by the Plan Commission on this item.

**c. Building Height**

The Plan Commission directed staff to prepare an amendment to the Zoning Code text; whereby, the definition of and method for determining “building height” would be measured from the grade elevation at the main entrance of a building.

**d. Fences**

Mr. Berger provided information to the Plan Commission on the possibility of using a graphic designer to create a series of graphics for incorporation within the Zoning Code that would illustrate how the various fence regulations and requirements are applied to different lot types. The Plan Commission directed staff to work with a graphic designer or similar person to prepare fence illustrations for the Plan Commission's review and consideration for inclusion within the Zoning Code.

**e. Nonconforming Uses**

Mr. Berger referred the Plan Commission to the information pertinent to this item contained within his memo. Mr. Berger indicated that he is currently working with the City's Law Department to develop appropriate language pertaining to "Nonconforming Uses" for the Plan Commission's review and consideration.

**6. Public Comment and Upcoming Business**

Mr. Anderson gave an update on recent plan activities related to the Avenue of the Cities Corridor Plan and work related to the I-74 Realignment Zone.

Mr. Berger stated that he was anticipating three Special Use Permit applications to be included on the March 27 Plan Commission agenda.

**7. Adjourn**

Being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Anderson, AICP, City Planner  
Recording Secretary Pro Tem